Influencing Change

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In fact, WACSI presents a unique environment where you come with your experience but you learn much more when you are open to new ideas.”

Pearl Atsou-Dzini

“I can proudly say that I was able to achieve a number of things during my stay at WACSI... WACSI has equipped me to be time conscious and to be able to work under pressure in my current workplace where I serve as the Communications Officer.”

Lilly Oseyda Mensah

“I am confident that the knowledge and experience I gained at WACSI will help me be a more effective development professional.”

Dragana Marinkovic

“All these skills gained [at WACSI], make my current work as Communications Officer of Social Watch Benin easy. I am confident working as an experienced Communications Officer.”

Rosine Kededji
“Thanks to the knowledge and skills that I gained from WACSI, I was employed in my country soon after I completed my internship to work as the assistant to the National Coordinator in the human rights NGO, Tostan. Since returning to my country, I have been able to apply my knowledge and skills to advance development in my country.”

Yussuf Sane

“Thank you WACSI, for preparing me and adding value to my career. The immeasurable knowledge I gathered at the WACSI training has helped me to enhance my writing of articles on Africa.”

Emelia Aryee

“Through the coaching support provided by WACSI, UCSOND has successfully leveraged on this to win a four-year funding facility from CARE Ghana”

Wisdom Quikoo

“The training provided me with very useful tips to sharpen and improve my writing for communication purposes. It provided me insights into the use of social media and how it could be used to improve IBIS’ communication with some specific target audiences, especially the youth…”

Mohammed Nurudeen Salifu

“Thanks to the training, we learnt to identify and effectively communicate with our stakeholders, mainly youth.”

Aaron Weah Weah
Influencing Change through Fruitful Collaborations

“WACSI has become a strategic partner for CIVICUS in the generation of knowledge about the state of civil society in West Africa and the identification of capacity needs for civil society organisations (CSOs). Through its membership of our Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) we have managed to reach out to new CSOs in the region and we are working towards the definition of a joint capacity development strategy in support of national and regional CSO networks with the aim of providing them with a stronger collective voice in different parts of the world.

We always appreciate the professionalism and responsibility of the WACSI team and their constant engagement with CIVICUS’s and AGNA’s mission and vision.”

Patricia Deniz, Coordinator of the CIVICUS Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA), a global network of more than 80 CSO platforms from around the world.
Establishment

In response to the capacity challenges identified in a regional needs assessment of civil society organisations (CSOs) in West Africa, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) created the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) to strengthen civil society in the region. WACSI serves as a resource centre engaged in capacity enhancement, knowledge management and policy influencing in West Africa.

Vision

WACSI envisions a West Africa of efficient, effective, influential and sustainable civil society functioning as strategic partners for democracy, good governance and sustainable development.

Mission

WACSI is a non-governmental organisation that seeks to strengthen civil society through capacity enhancement, knowledge management and policy influencing for the promotion of development, good governance and democratic values in West Africa.

WACSI’s specific objectives are as follows:

a. To serve as a resource for capacity enhancement, knowledge management and policy influencing for CSOs in West Africa;

b. To bridge the apparent gaps in capacity and activities of CSOs towards effective engagement with the State, its policy processes, the private sector and other key development stakeholders in West Africa;

c. To improve the sustainability of CSOs; and

d. To advocate for the development effectiveness of civil society in West Africa

Theory of Change

We enhance the capacity of civil society to adequately and effectively partner government and the private sector to achieve sustainable and equitable development in West Africa.

Track Record

WACSI is recognised as a leading capacity development organisation for CSOs in West Africa. “As the only organisation of its kind in West Africa, WACSI has become a major force to be reckoned with”, affirms Abdul Tejan-Cole, Executive Director of OSIWA.

Between 2007 and 2014, our capacity building programmes have impacted over 2303 practitioners from 1837 organisations across Africa. Since we began operations in 2007, the Institute has implemented over 90 capacity development programmes that have enhanced the capacities of 2094 practitioners and contributed to an increased efficiency of 2015 organisations.

WACSI’s trainings have benefitted practitioners from all West African countries and other African countries such as Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Madagascar, Zambia, South Sudan and Ethiopia. Practitioners from Belgium, England, Spain and Germany have equally benefitted from WACSI’s trainings.

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“WACSI’s trainings have benefitted practitioners from all over West Africa and many other countries.”
It is always a pleasure to write an introductory message for the annual report of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). In the 2013 annual report, I highlighted some challenges that WACSI faces with regards to issues related to the adoption and implementation of its current strategic plan, and the need to diversify its funding sources.

I am very much enthused about how the management team of this Institute handles these challenges. Despite the gradual reduction in the financial support from its strategic partner, OSIWA (Open Society Initiative for West Africa) and despite the departure of some of their key support staff who play an important role at the management level, WACSI still strives for excellence.

The Institute has recruited some new members to the Board of Directors who are very talented and dynamic in order to equip its members. It also recruited new support staff who will be as motivated as those who have left.

Because of this initiative, there is always a very supportive team that shares in the dynamism, enthusiasm and dedication of the Executive Director, Nana Asantewa Afadzinu. All these efforts resulted in WACSI’s staff being able to coordinate new activities with ease despite the challenges posed by the Ebola Virus Disease in the West African sub region, particularly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The four major activities that were carried out by the Institute in 2014 are:

1. Development of adopted programmes with focus on: (i) activities that aligns with the Institute’s strategic plan; (ii) enhancing knowledge on the requirements of civil society in West Africa through new research topics and debates; (iii) designing new training programmes to respond to emerging debates on the needs of civil society;

2. Search for strategic partnership to make activities carried out by the Institute more dynamic and visible and also gain new experience;

3. Internal capacity building in order to respond to new needs of civil society in West Africa;

4. Mobilising and diversifying financial resources to be able to offset the gradual reduction in financial support from the strategic support.

These are the results of the different activities that constitute the main framework of this 2014 report. This attests to the good health of the Institute and also creates new opportunities for the years ahead.

In the following pages, friends of WACSI acknowledge the progress made by this Institute since its establishment and the credibility that it has earned in the West African sub region, the whole of Africa and the world at large.
WACSI’s goal is to strengthen civil society in West Africa to contribute effectively to sustainable development in the region. In 2014, WACSI worked with beneficiaries of its programmes to share their stories. It is a matter of pride for WACSI when these organisations and civil society actors that have benefitted from the Institute’s programmes use the skills and knowledge acquired to improve their performance and achieve the expected results. We are happy to share these stories with you too.

In accordance with its value of collaboration, WACSI entered into a partnership with IREX, a well-established organisation in the United States of America with operations in different parts of the world, to co-implement the Mandela Washington Fellowship (MWF) in West Africa. The MWF is a component of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), an Obama initiated programme to groom African youth for leadership on the continent. This programme aligns with WACSI’s goal of strengthening the capacity of the next generation of leaders in West Africa. The Institute is excited about the partnership and looks forward to the years ahead of achieving the desired impact.

Our partnership with CIVICUS was founded as we partnered the organisation to conduct the Civil Society Index: Rapid Assessment (CSI-RA) for West Africa, and also joined the CIVICUS Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) as an affiliate. We continued to build on WACSI’s relationship with the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) as we explored ways of strengthening WACSOF at both regional and national levels to deliver on its mandate, with the support of the Commonwealth Foundation. In December 2014, WACSOF and WACSI organised the first annual civil society forum to discuss pertinent issues related to the post 2015 development goals and particularly, its alignment with ECOWAS Vision 2020.

The onset of Ebola, tested the organisation’s resilience and preparedness for change, even as it did the sub-region. Thankfully, WACSI has been up to the task and also had support from its partners, specifically OSIWA, the Nexus Fund, Ford Foundation, Humanity United and the Commonwealth Foundation who have shown admirable empathy and extended the duration of joint programmes with WACSI to the first quarter of 2015. Due to the travel restrictions and imposed limits to physical human interaction in the region, the Institute had to cancel most of its trainings scheduled for the last quarter of 2014. For the couple of trainings that were held before the epidemic spread, several precautions were put in place to assure the safety of participants.

WACSI joined other organisations in Ghana, led by SEND Ghana to discuss possible ways to support civil society in the worst affected countries. We are optimistic that the Ebola challenge will be dealt with and trust that governments in the region will use this experience to strengthen our governance and health systems to enable us withstand such shocks. West Africa cannot comprehensively achieve regional integration if we do not pay attention to this.

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu
Strengthening Civil Society during a Tumultuous Year

The Institute’s training and capacity building programmes were guided by its 2013-2017 organisational strategic plan. Under this strategic plan the Institute had set to strengthen the capacity of 100 CSOs in West Africa in 2014.

Through its interventions in 2014, one hundred and twenty-eight (128) development practitioners from 75 civil society organisations (CSOs) benefitted from the Institute's capacity building programmes.

The Institute continued to enhance its civil society specific curriculum for training, which improved its capacity building approach through effective trainee-centred facilitation techniques, customised content design and delivery, and the facilitation of experience sharing among beneficiaries who work within civil society.

There was a noteworthy increase in the subscription of the Institute’s open fee-paying courses. Each course attracted an average of 25 participants as opposed to an average of 12 participants per course in 2013. This development translates into a percentage growth of 101% attendance from the previous year.

The Institute also focused on cultivating and developing strategic partnerships and responded to capacity building requests from partner organisations. These included a hands-on training on Financial Management and Grants Reporting, based on WACSI’s financial management system model for eight (8) Trust Africa grant partners, an assessment and planning programme for the regional secretariat of the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF) and the conceptualisation and delivery of Results-Based Communication training for eleven (11) staff from National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections (NAYMOTE) in Liberia.

25 OSIWA partners from Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea and Niger benefitted from an onsite coaching programme to strengthen their institutional and operational process, systems and structures following their participation in earlier trainings on this.

WACSI entered into a partnership with IREX, a US-based International NGO to provide technical support and facilitate the internship placement process and professional exposure of about 200 Mandela Washington Fellows in West and Central Africa. This initiative added value to the Institute’s Next Generation Programme, which includes a 6-month professional internship and volunteering opportunities for young West African graduates.

2014 was a year of severe development challenges in West Africa. Admittedly, the Ebola outbreak posed a threat to various development programmes across the region and WACSI was also directly affected. The Institute postponed some of its open courses and the maiden edition of the Civil Society Leadership Institute (CSLI) to the first quarter of 2015. Despite this challenge, there was a lesson learnt: that an organisation with a well-defined strategy and implementation plan, when faced with unforeseen external challenges, no matter how turbulent, will be able to absorb the shocks and maintain its robustness.

Benetta Davies, Programme Associate at NAYMOTE lauded the strategy session, “prior to this training, we were communicating in an ad hoc manner. We are now clear on what message to share, with whom and when to do so. This has helped us to achieve better results. The results were for all to see especially during our Ebola sensitisation campaign”, she said.
Building Influential and Sustainable CSOs using a Long-term Capacity Development Approach

In West Africa, there is a growing consciousness within civil society on the need to be sustainable and CSOs continue to seek the answers to the question of their sustainability.

Findings from research conducted on the state of civil society in West Africa between 2013 and 2014 pointed out that CSOs do not offer sufficient in-house opportunities, such as training, coaching or mentoring to enhance staff capacity. Low capacity affects quality of work, and also CSOs’ relevance and legitimacy.

In response to this, WACSI developed a long-term approach to institutional and operational strengthening of CSOs. This approach has yielded significant gains as the few organisations that have benefitted from it have witnessed operational transformation that has boosted their ability to adequately respond to social challenges they work to address. Our long-term approach to capacity development has also contributed in enhancing the performance of organisations that have benefitted from it.

From February – May 2014 WACSI worked with 25 grant partners of OSIWA from four countries - Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea and Niger – using a context specific approach to coach these organisations.

The intervention consisted of onsite technical assistance with a specific emphasis on hands-on coaching and the transfer of knowledge at the locations of the beneficiary organisations.

Our Coaching team facilitated the onsite sessions using a methodical approach that was sensitive and responsive to the strengths and challenges of respective organisations. This included 1) reviewing the performance and health of beneficiary organisations, 2) assessing outcome of trainings conducted prior to the coaching and their usefulness to the organisations, and 3) encouraging staff of organisations to brainstorm, share and learn recommended professional practices within the sector and how to apply them in their respective organisations.

The areas of focus were institutional governance, leadership and operations, policy influencing and networking. Each coaching session culminated in the articulation of recommendations based on strengths and weaknesses identified during the initial discussion stages.

1 Can be accessed here: http://www.wacsi.org/en/site/publications/?tpl=11&tpid=24

Mme Saran Toure, President of FONGDD in Guinea saw the coaching phase of the long-term capacity development approach to be very relevant to her organisation. She expressed satisfaction with the process.

“This programme has enabled us to do a self-evaluation of our organisation and to identify our potentials, strengths and weaknesses and to enhance our current mode of operations. This has reinforced our ambitions and vision and has empowered us to strive to achieve higher results. This was a very useful exercise to us”, she stated.

The programme ascertained the degree of ownership of the process by beneficiary organisations and application of the knowledge and skills acquired. It also enabled them to become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and assess their capacity needs.

Feedback from beneficiary organisations demonstrate that significant changes have occurred since the intervention, including the setting up of advisory boards, adoption of procedures manual, design and development of strategic plans, enhancement of financial practices, and more effective project management and grant reporting.
Strengthening the Governance Systems of Social Watch, Benin

During the coaching session at the Social Watch Benin, a network of non-governmental organisations, in Benin from 11 to 12 March 2014, it was realised that the organisation held its last General Assembly in 2012 and there was a need to hold another which was pending.

WACSI’s coaching team therefore emphasised the need for Social Watch to hold a general assembly to revisit critical governance issues that it was faced with, and, take the necessary measures to reinforce governance systems for more robust and effective network operations.

The coaching team urged the management and staff to use the general assembly as an opportunity to validate policy documents that govern the organisation, restructure its leadership in order to ensure fluid coordination, transparency and accountability at the helm of the organisation.

Among other vital recommendations to strengthen the organisation and rebuild its credibility, the Social Watch Benin team that took part in the coaching session heeded to this. Today, the organisation is reaping the benefits!

Assah Gustave, who was formerly the National Coordinator of Social Watch Benin affirmed that the paradigm shift at the helm of his organisation’s leadership was inspired by WACSI. “We held an extraordinary general assembly meeting in May 2014 and this witnessed a huge participation of members from across the national territory. During this general assembly, the former “Coordination” team was replaced with a “Board of Directors”. Following this administrative reform, there have also been changes in the responsibilities of some of the board members”, Assah Gustave, now Chairman of the newly constituted Board of Directors of the organisation, stated.

He added that with the existence of a Board of Directors and an Executive Committee that works to oversee the daily operations of the organisation, there has been a significantly improved coordination at the leadership level and a better management of oversight and operational roles.

In addition to the revamped leadership and coordination mechanisms at Social Watch Benin, the organisation has enhanced its professional standards by implementing the following changes:

- Recruited an accountant to monitor financial procedures of all the projects and programmes of the organisation.
- Developed a salary scale for staff, a staff development plan and a performance bonus scheme.
- Enhanced the capacity of personnel in strategic and operational planning with support from a Distance Education Centre.
- Strengthened its communication strategy and taken steps to increase visibility through its website and social media engagement.
- Instituted an operational and functional monitoring and evaluation system for all Social Watch Benin activities, which is updated regularly.

Recognising the impact these systemic changes are having within Social Watch Benin, the Chairman of the Board of Directors who took part in all the phases of this long-term capacity development programme – both training phases in Guinea (2012) and Cote d’Ivoire (2013) and the coaching phase (2014), did not hesitate to share his organisation’s gratitude to WACSI for effectively implementing this programme with support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

“Social Watch would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank WACSI for the follow-up and also its mandate to restructure civil society organisations (CSOs) in West Africa and Benin in particular”, Assah
A Wave of Change in OFACI

Organisation des Femmes Actives de Côte d’Ivoire (OFACI) is rebuilding its image as a leading women’s association that works to promote the rights of Ivorian women.

Fanta Doumbia, a member of the Executive Committee of OFACI in 2012, participated in a carefully designed capacity development programme by WACSI with support from OSIWA.

In recognition of the impact this capacity development programme had on her organisational management skills, she was voted as the Executive Secretary of OFACI during a general assembly meeting held on September 27, 2014. “The previous general assembly was held in April 2006”, Fanta noted.

During the on-site visit to OFACI between April 31 and May 1, 2014, WACSI’s coaching team highlighted the need for the organisation to organise a general assembly meeting as soon as practicable using the contributions of all members and partners.

Heeding to further recommendations shared by WACSI’s coaching team to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of OFACI, the Executive Secretary says, OFACI has recorded significant milestones in enhancing the governance of the organisation.

The following laudable successes are evident gains after WACSI’s coaching visit:

- The development of a new organisational policy;
- The functions of the governing Board have been clearly distinguished from those of the Executive Committee. It now plays an oversight role rather than its initial involvement in the day-to-day operations of the organisation;
- The Board held its first meeting in January 2015;
- A procedures manual was developed and approved by the general assembly;
- The current staff of OFACI have well defined service contracts;
- Members of the organisation now pay their monthly contributions;
- Members hold regular monthly meetings and document the minutes of the meetings.

OFACI is set for a more vibrant engagement in promoting the rights of Ivorian women.
Enhancing CSOs’ Capacity to Influence Regional and Global Policy Debates

As part of its policy advocacy strategy, WACSI, in 2014, 1) strengthened civil society organisations and actors’ abilities to influence public policies, engage policymakers and actively participate in both local and global policymaking processes and, 2) created tactical spaces for CSOs to engage and debate on various topical policy issues between and among themselves and with other development partners. These topical issues include Civil Society development effectiveness including CSOs’ sustainability, post-2015 sustainable development agenda, the Responsibility to Protect, Aid and Development effectiveness among others.

Despite the Ebola hurdle, about eighty (80) CSOs benefited from the different policy engagement, analysis and advocacy trainings organised by WACSI, thus exceeding the targeted number of organisations (70) for the year.

Curbing the Spread of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) through Information Sharing

WACSI convened an information session in Accra, in August 2014 as part of its contribution to regional efforts towards curbing the spread of the deadly Ebola Virus disease, which took the lives of over 10,000 people from West Africa. The information session educated people about the causes, symptoms and dangerous effect of the diseases and participants discussed Ghana’s readiness to manage any possible entry of the disease in Ghana. It attracted over sixty (60) participants from CSOs, government agencies in Ghana such as immigration services and border control, private companies, media agencies and development partners across the country.

Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Increasing West African Civil Society’s Participation in Global Development Debates

WACSI co-organised the First Annual West Africa Civil Society Conference themed “Strategizing for the Post-2015 and ECOWAS Vision 2020 Development Agenda for West Africa” with the West Africa Civil Society Forum, (WACSOF). This was convened from December 8-9, 2014 with the support of the Commonwealth Foundation.

This conference outlined a West African development agenda and highlighted priority areas for action by West African civil society in the post-2015 era. It also detailed strategies and action plans towards addressing the identified areas. At the end of the convening, the over 50 participants coming from different ECOWAS countries highlighted the following 6 areas that CSOs and national governments should prioritise, as the negotiations on the the Post-2015 MDG/SDG agenda gathered momentum. These were to:

- Ensure access to quality education
- Strengthen democratic governance
- Promote peace and security
- Improve agricultural development and food security
- Effectively manage and govern natural resources
- Promote youth development

To partner government and the private sector and effectively contribute to addressing these priority areas, CSOs recognised the need to build their capacities in the areas of resource mobilisation, strategic partnership building especially with private organisations, knowledge building and sharing, technical and organisational management, communication, advocacy and lobbying and policy analysis.

Delegates called on WACSI, having the mandate and

competence for strengthening civil society capacity in West Africa, to design and deliver targeted trainings for CSOs in these areas – a call WACSI is adequately equipped and ready to undertake with the support of ECOWAS and other development partners.

**Strengthening CSOs’ Capacity to Promote Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) Norm**

As part of its efforts to promote peace and security in the sub-region, the Institute with the support of Humanity United organised a 5-day RtoP training for civil society and the media components of WACSOF’s Peace and Security Clusters in Accra in June 2014. The training brought together 25 CSOs and media representatives from 14 West African countries. It provided a unique platform to educate CSOs and media personnel on RtoP as an international norm as well as the crimes associated with it. Participants were exposed to various strategies through which national governments can be held accountable to their commitment at the 2005 world summit, and came up with practical action plans for their organisations. This included research and analysis into RtoP in the different country contexts, education of their constituents on the norm, popularisation of the norm, and active networking to build a force around the norm leading to advocacy at the governmental levels on domesticking the norm and calling for its inclusion and implementation under countries’ existing laws and frameworks.

Prior to the training, a strategy meeting hosted by WACSI and themed “ECOWAS, West Africa and Responsibility to Protect (RtoP)” was convened for key partners driving the RtoP agenda at the international and regional levels. Organisations represented at this meeting included the West Africa Network for Peace-building (WANEP), the International Coalition on the Responsibility to protect (ICRtoP), the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Center (KAIPTC), the Global Centre for Responsibility to Protect and Humanity United. The meeting discussed the state of RtoP in West Africa and elaborated strategies for CSOs’ engagement on RtoP over the next five years.

Stakeholders were entreated to share information on the norm among themselves and across their networks and form an active working group to promote the domesticking of the norm in West Africa.

It was also recommended that key stakeholders such as the media, academic professionals, CSOs, RtoP focal points in West African countries, parliamentarians and security personnel be trained to have a better understanding of the RtoP norm. This is to enable them to map out strategies on how to leverage on the preventive measures embodied in the RtoP norm to prevent the devastating effects of conflicts in the region, which is prone to conflicts.

**WACSI and Akina Mama Wa (AMwA) Promote Gender Equality in the Oil and Gas Sector**

In April 2014, the Institute collaborated with Akina Mama wa (AMwA) Africa’s African Women Leadership Institute (AWLI) to train young women leaders from Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia. The training examined women’s roles, contributions and marginalisation within the oil and gas sector. The one-week training themed “Economic Justice for Women in Oil and Gas” brought together fourteen women from the three oil producing countries. The training examined the level of women’s involvement in the management of natural resources (especially oil and gas) in these countries. It also highlighted the prevailing gaps in the laws and policies as well as the leadership and structures in the oil and gas sector, and discussed strategic means to promote women’s economic justice and rights. WACSI helped participants to come up with a 12-month advocacy plan to influence decision makers in their countries and also introduced them to the WACSI/ AWLI leadership development models for African women through a feminist perspective.
CSO Sustainability: WACSI’s Quest

The question about an organisation’s sustainability plagues every serious organisation at one point or another in their organisational life. For a number of civil society organisations, this is factored into the organisation’s design and addressed right from its establishment. For others, it is considered some time later in the organisation’s life. Ideally, it should be the former but as is the case, for many organisations in West Africa, it is a question that comes up much later.

Even though sustainability for WACSI is a matter that was considered at the early stages of its establishment, the plan for it and its implementation has been a priority focus for its board and staff since 2011. It was thus a major subject for consideration in the Institute’s 2013 to 2017 strategic plan and the roll out of this plan begun in 2013 and continued in 2014. Also important for WACSI, was the need to address the issue of sustainability for civil society as a whole. The questions WACSI grappled with, as a civil society organisation operating in West Africa are the same that many of its kind face: How do we ensure that we do not only survive but thrive? How do we ensure that we achieve our mission doing so? What are the resources that we need to achieve this mission? How do we get it? Who do we need to engage? How do we need to engage? How do we reduce our dependence on donor funding? How do we get the best-qualified staff for our organisation and retain them? How do we ensure that our organisation is sustained but even more so, that its impact remains?

As an organisation whose main interest is in strengthening civil society to be effective, efficient, sustainable and an influential development partner to government and the private sector, it behooves WACSI to find the answers to civil society sustainability in West Africa and not only WACSI’s. With the support of STAR Ghana therefore, in 2014, WACSI commissioned research into the sustainability of civil society, using Ghana as a case study. The study’s findings illuminated key areas that civil society needs to focus on to ensure sustainability. These are; the identity sustainability, operational sustainability, interventions sustainability and financial sustainability. In partnership with Trust Law, WACSI is also working with a number of legal firms in Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire and Senegal to produce papers on the legal requirements for NGOs and the possibilities presented for NGOs to engage in social entrepreneurship and other revenue generating options without sinning against their non-profit nature.

The learning from these will feed into WACSI’s capacity development programming on sustainability for civil society in West Africa, that will be rolled out in 2015 and subsequent years. As the world discusses financing for development, it is equally important that civil society in West Africa takes cognisance of its critical role in development and pay serious attention to how to sustain the organisations within the sector and the important work they do. It is a major issue that needs to be dealt with if we are focused on getting sustainable development. The time to address it is now and WACSI has taken the lead.

“As an organisation whose main interest is in strengthening civil society to be effective, efficient, sustainable and an influential development partner to government and the private sector, it behooves WACSI to find the answers to civil society sustainability in West Africa and not only WACSI’s.”
Inadequate Capacity of CSOs in West Africa Mars their Effectiveness: CSI-RA Reveals

The Civil Society Index: Rapid Assessment (CSI-RA3) is a participatory action-oriented project that aims to help CSOs assess their conditions in different areas. Between 2013 and 2014, CIVICUS: Alliance for Citizen’s Participation and WACSI collaborated with organisations in West African countries to conduct the CSI-RA in six countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The study demonstrated that CSOs are making significant efforts to achieve their mandates, however, it further exposed a critical challenge facing CSOs in the region, that is, insufficient capacities and resources to be able to achieve their respective mandates.

The study revealed that almost all CSOs in Nigeria have formal internal structures and are enrolled with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), thus, possess a solid foundation on which to operate. Findings documented by the study portrayed the need for CSOs in Nigeria to improve transparency. It highlighted that collaboration among CSOs is high but it has to be strengthened and information sharing among CSOs has to be enhanced. The study acknowledges that government support is the least reliable funding source to CSOs in the country.

In Sierra Leone, findings portray that collaboration among CSOs is very poor and there is a high level of competition for funding. There is duplication in the mandates and memberships of many CSOs. CSOs need administrative and governing instruments strengthening. Donors have to assess CSOs’ internal governance performance and mandate accuracy as conditions to grant fund. The CSI-RA saw the need for CSOs to organise themselves and create platforms that will bring existing CSOs together to speak with one voice on critical issues affecting Sierra Leoneans.

CSOs in Liberia fall in two broadly divided categories: CSOs in Montserrado county where the capital is are sharply different in size and funding as compared to those in the other counties of the country. CSOs in Montserrado rely heavily on international donor funding and their counterparts in the rural areas have developed multiple sources of funding. Almost all CSOs in the country have weak writing skills. In addition to this, organisational development, monitoring and evaluation poses a big problem to the organisations. Communication Network (roads and mobile) also constitute a source of operational challenge to these organisations. Collaboration amid CSOs is weak partly because of infrastructures challenges.

In Benin the CSI-RA focused on two main areas notably, the internal governance of CSOs and their access to resources. The study revealed that, in terms of funding, local partners (Maison de la société civile, government and municipalities) are the main sources of funding. External funding is low. In terms of internal governance, the Beninese CSOs lack technical skills, there exist problems of leadership within organisations, there is conflict of jurisdiction, non-specialisation, among others are impeding on their functioning.

Findings from the CSI-RA helped in classifying CSOs in Ghana into four categories (communal groups, community-based organisations (CBOs), national CSOs, and networks and coalitions). It was noted that communal groups and CBOs are believed to be fast growing in Ghana. The study found that most CSOs in Ghana are engaged in public sensitisation and education, advocacy, or capacity building and professional development.

A critical finding that stands as a barrier to the progress of the work of CSOs in the country is a high level of mistrust between CSOs and the state and its agencies. The state perceives civil society as being an incoherent arena that does not speak with one voice. Thus CSOs in Ghana are heavily dependent upon monetary support from outside the country. The study also reveals that Ghanaian CSOs are mostly accountable upwards, to their donors. There is a lack of downward accountability to citizens. The study also noted a high level of staff attrition among CSOs and a weak staff capacity in most CSOs.

The study found out that there is multitude of organisations with diversity of interests in Senegal. However, this is based on the fact that what constitutes the essence of CSOs is their willingness to take on state power, and to challenge power holders on behalf of the people. Since the last presidential elections in 2012, CSOs in Senegal have become more assertive as key players in the democratic process. But confusion remains as some
Arming CSOs to Contribute to the Fight

The deadly Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that ravaged lives in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2014 presented a major challenge to several CSOs working in these countries. In Liberia, NAYMOTE, one of WACSI’s beneficiaries countered this challenge strategically, using a carefully thought through approach.

In May 2014, WACSI supported NAYMOTE to enhance its communication system by providing a five-day training on Communication Skills and Strategies for 11 NAYMOTE staff and volunteers. With the skills and knowledge obtained from this training the organisation was able to overcome a significant challenge it faced over thirteen years prior to the training; not being able to effectively communicate with its stakeholders despite the fact that it had done a lot to advance citizen’s participation in democratic processes in Liberia since its establishment in 2001.

This training also enhanced NAYMOTE’s approach of reaching out to its stakeholders during the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia. Through an Ebola Awareness Call Center, a project inspired by the organisation’s enhanced communication prowess, NAYMOTE strategically reached out to thousands of Liberians across all 15 counties, educating them on the signs and symptoms of Ebola, and how to avoid being infected by the deadly virus.

"Thanks to the training, we learnt how to identify and effectively communicate with our stakeholders, mainly youths. We identified all youths in our database. We called and educated them on the virus and it was very effective in the fight. NAYMOTE’s visibility has also been enhanced", said Aaron Weah Weah, Program Director of NAYMOTE.

The efforts by NAYMOTE were effectively coordinated by the women’s league of the organisation. Benetta Davies, Programmes Associate and a key member in the women’s league further explained how communication played a crucial role in the success NAYMOTE registered in using ‘effective communication’ as a strategic weapon to fight Ebola.

“We set up the first NGO Ebola Awareness Call Center on August 5, 2014, and used mobile phones to educate citizens about the EVD without getting in direct contact with them. We provided them the opportunity to ask questions about the EVD for a better understanding of what the virus is, how it manifests itself and how citizens can prevent themselves from being affected and possibly killed by the virus.

“We voluntarily called and educated citizens about the prevention and control of the EVD. We disseminated messages to citizens from across the country. The Ministry of Health approved the messages. Under the banner of the Women’s League of NAYMOTE, we reached over 5,000 Liberian citizens with messages that prompted them to keep themselves, their families and their communities safe from Ebola”, she stated with joy and relief, after Liberia had been declared ‘Ebola Free’ by the World Health Organization in May 2015.

Similarly, Henry Orlando Joseph Tucker, Advocacy and Communications Officer of the Defence for Children International in Sierra Leone attended a similar training for civil society practitioners across West Africa in June 2014, prior to the EVD outbreak in his country, Sierra Leone. He testified that the communication techniques he acquired from the training were useful in his organisation’s efforts to respond to Ebola.

“I have been actively utilising the knowledge and skills in the social mobilisation drive immediately after the outbreak of the EVD through radio programmes, jingle broadcast, media engagement, and community engagement on EVD prevention response”, he stated.
CSOs actors have aligned themselves with political parties or particular civic movements. In terms of social groups’ representation and leadership of CSOs, women, ethnic minorities and rural groups are underrepresented.

The level of cooperation between civil society thrives but it appears not to be systematised and for some people, it is insufficient. In terms of State - CSOs relations, the study reveals that CSOs act freely in disseminating their duties but they are subjects to reasonable control due to legitimate reasons of public interests. Senegalese CSOs have expertise and reputation to develop capacity for analysis, they design and implement programmes at the national and sub-national level on some topics, they lobby and influence government on issues such as trade, fight against poverty, human rights and peace related issues. They lack some institutional and professional capacities, such as sufficient qualified staff and limited coverage of the country. They are faced with weak internal democratic processes and low level of transparency, lack of autonomy (depend on partners both internal and external).

Based on the above findings, the following are some of the recommendations that were raised:

- Internal governance of CSOs should be strengthened;
- CSOs should create capacity building opportunities in some technical areas of their work such as resource mobilisation, organisational management, and collaboration, among others;
- CSOs should work as partners and not competitors;
- They should develop peer review mechanisms in organisations to promote democratic decision-making;
- CSOs need to find new ways of generating funds locally to fund their activities;
- CSOs need to pay their staff adequately and sustain their organisations;
- CSOs should develop their human resource functions to redress the impact of high attrition levels;
- CSOs should do more to build the capacity of staff members internally and make every effort to attract and retain experienced staff.

Continued from Page 16
The training has played a key role in effectively harnessing partners’ communication with their stakeholders, including Oxfam in Ghana. It also helped Oxfam in Ghana’s partners to understand the relevance of having a robust and user-friendly communication framework for their respective organisations.

“The training revealed how important developing a communication strategy to assist you use the right tools to communicate effectively to your different audiences”, Obed Asunka, one of Oxfam in Ghana’s partners noted after the training. Courtesy of Oxfam Quarterly Digest GHQ001

Equipping UCSOND for Greater Heights

By Wisdom Quaikoo, Executive Director, UCSOND

The United Civil Society Organisations for National Development (UCSOND), was awarded a grant by STAR Ghana to undertake a project on “Enhancing information sharing among the key stakeholders in the Oil and Gas Industry and ensuring effective monitoring of the Ghana Gas Project within three Nzema Districts”.

WACSI supported this by enhancing the policy advocacy capacity of UCSOND. As the Executive Director of UCSOND, Wisdom Quaikoo, puts it, WACSI's role was “to mentor and serve as a critical friend throughout the implementation of our project”, a role the Institute played sufficiently well because it significantly strengthened UCSOND’s policy advocacy capacity.

CARE Ghana, with support from CARE Denmark, is implementing Forestry and Extractive Industry Civil Society Support (FEICS) Program dubbed “Yen Sore” with a focus on working with and supporting the advocacy agenda of CSOs already in forestry, mining, oil and gas, and the environment sectors.

UCSOND’s engagements with WACSI led to the preparation of UCSOND’s public policy advocacy action plan in oil and gas, which was used to engage the team from Care International. The specific areas of support received from WACSI focused on Policy Advocacy for the Oil and Gas Call.


Broadening my Knowledge and Improving my Journalistic Skills

Emelia Aryee, Journalist, Modern Ghana

I had the opportunity, as a media practitioner, to participate in one of the numerous advocacy trainings organised by WACSI, dubbed “Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) and Advocacy Training for CSOs and Media Personnel in West Africa”, from May 26 to 30 2014.

It was a highly technical and interesting training that brought together knowledgeable individuals from all spheres of civil society organisations across West Africa, and seasoned facilitators to handle the entire training.

I seized the opportunity to widen my knowledge as a young journalist, to learn more about conflicts in Africa and strategies to protect citizens through the insightful training sessions we had.

We worked in groups every day to share ideas and information. During one of the group sessions, I was put in a group to discuss issues on Kenya and was appointed secretary of the group, responsible for scribbling down every member’s input. By so doing, I was learning more, thereby, widening my knowledge on the issue.

Eventually, I became ‘current’ with issues regarding Kenya, which made me develop an instant interest in the East African country.

Two weeks after WACSI’s training, I flew to Kenya to participate in a week’s training in Sustainable Land Management, organised by the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) in collaboration with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and the Open Society Initiative for East Africa (OSIEA).

At the Kenya training, we were made to discuss the political issues that had effects on sustainable land management in the country. Behold! This was where my application of what I learnt from WACSI’s training became vital. I resorted to the things I had learnt from the group work during the RtoP training.

Without that training on the RtoP, I wouldn’t have made valuable contributions to the discussions. Thank you WACSI, for preparing me and adding value to my career. The immeasurable knowledge I gathered at the WACSI training has helped me to enhance my writing of articles on Africa.
Mohammed Nurudeen Salifu is the Communications Officer of IBIS Ghana. He participated in WACSI’s training on Results-based Communication for Non-profits in 2014 to gain more knowledge on how to communicate effectively with IBIS’ target audiences in Ghana and across the globe.

“I was very much interested in learning more about communication in the organisational context, especially doing communication that brings results for the organisation”, he said.

In terms of communicating in a way that ‘brings results for the organisation’, as he put it, Salifu said the training has contributed greatly in helping IBIS Ghana to gain some milestones, particularly in terms of increasing the visibility of the organisation and attracting more partners.

“Our audience is better informed about the work we do and consequently have a positive perception of the organisation, which is leading to greater cooperation and buy-in”, he said.

For him, this is a significant accomplishment and he attributes this milestone to the knowledge, skills and techniques in effective communication that he acquired from the training.

“The training provided me with very useful tips to sharpen and improve my writing for communication purposes. It provided me insights into the use of social media and how it could be used to improve IBIS’ communication with some specific target audiences, especially the youth. Also, it offered me an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other participants who have been managing communication in their organisations”, he stated.

Four months after the training, the Communications Officer affirmed that the training helped him to improve upon his writing skills. “I have improved upon my writing since that session on writing at the training”, he testified.

He has written better articles for IBIS’ website and produced newsletters which are disseminated widely. He says these innovative communication tools coupled with improved writing skills have attracted compliments from partner organisations with some of them seeking to learn the secrets of his excellence.

“The Communications Officer for Savana Signatures, our partner in ICT for Development, Francis Npong called to praise the quality of the newsletter and followed up for a discussion on how to prepare same for his organisation”, he noted.
DCI-Sierra Leone Enhances its Visibility

Henry Orlando Joseph Tucker, the Advocacy and Communications Officer for DCI-Sierra Leone, has been highly commended by his immediate supervisor for putting into use skills gained from a training on Results-based Communication for non-profits run by WACSI, to the benefit of his organisation.

"Henry’s participation in the Result Based Communication Training for Non-profit organisations in 2014 has helped to increase our visibility among the general public. His work with the media has been extraordinary in increasing press coverage on all our activities”, noted Abdul Manaff Kemokai, Executive Director of Defence for Children International, Sierra Leone (DCI-SL). He made this statement in recognition of the work Henry, the Advocacy and Communications Officer is doing for DCI-SL after taking part in WACSI’s training on Results-Based Communication for Non-profits.

Affirming the benefits he received from the training, Henry said “After my participation in the Results-Based Communication Training organised by WACSI in June 2014 I have been able to fully utilise the additional skills acquired to increase our social media engagement on Facebook and Twitter. I was able to learn about new communication tools and how effectively I can make use of them in order to increase visibility of my organisation”, he said.

Beyond managing the social media accounts of the organisation, Henry regularly develops content for, and updates the website of DCI-SL. In addition to these, he is effectively using the techniques shared during the training on how to work with the media and this is yielding results.

Impact of WACSI’s Training on the Use of Social Media by WoCiP

The Centre for Women Citizenship and Peace (WoCiP) is an NGO based in Conakry, Guinea. In 2014, the organisation benefited from a pro-bono training on how to use social media to promote their work. In addition to putting into practice the knowledge gained from the training to promote women’s issues and empower Guinean women and girls to play key roles in promoting peace and national development in the country, the organisation capitalised on the skills gained from this training to sensitise Guinean women and youth (mainly using its Facebook page) on how to prevent themselves from being affected by Ebola during the worst days of the epidemic in the country.

A year on, the Executive Director, Michelle Sona outlined the benefits of this training to the organisation as follows;
Enhanced international visibility of WoCiP
Currently, we operate a Facebook account as well as a YouTube page. People from all over the world follow and appreciate the activities of the Centre for Women, Citizenship and Peace (WoCiP). Activities posted on the social media pages show how dynamic the Centre is and also encourages members to be more proactive. This platform makes each one of us proud because we are able to review most of our activities. It also facilitates our engagement with other NGO practitioners who visit our social media pages.

Easy monitoring of interventions and programmes
Partners are able to easily monitor and evaluate ongoing projects and activities being implemented by the organisation. The number of people who benefit from our intervention programme usually exceeds those targeted. This is because, people who are not physically present are updated on our ongoing activities. They like and comment on posts shared during the implementation of programmes although they are not present.

Encouragement from followers
The statistics of people visiting our page; by liking the page and sharing their comments and views encourages us to do what we do best.

Positioning of Centre as a key development actor at the national level
We have become a point of reference to NGOs in the country and to special partners for those who want to address problems in the same domain. Partners who usually collaborate with us, follow updates on our page to support their decision to collaboration with us.

Revolution for NGOs in Guinea
Though many individuals have personal Facebook accounts, creating one for NGOs in Guinea was not the norm. This phenomenon rapidly changed as organisations followed WoCiP’s approach of engaging with stakeholders using Facebook.

In 2014, WACSI had its first trainee from South Sudan, Simon Bhan Chuol. Based on a recommendation from a friend who had taken part in one of WACSI’s training, Simon was convinced to participate in one of the Institute’s flagship courses: Results-Based Communication for Non-profits. As Executive Director of the Universal Network for Knowledge & Empowerment Agency (UNKEA), based in South Sudan in East Africa, Simon understands that communication is a crucial tool for the growth of any organisation and said he attended this course “to gain broader knowledge and skills on communication techniques. He stated that, ‘the skills and knowledge ... acquired from the training have made a huge of impact on my organisation’s communication approach. We now have a very effective donor’s chain of communication and our internal and external communication is very effective.

This comes after two staff of Amnesty International Zimbabwe participated in WACSI’s trainings in 2013. Cousin Zilala, the Executive Director and Sibongile Zimbeva, the Finance Officer took part in the Policy Advocacy and Engagement and Resource Mobilisation and Proposal Writing courses respectively.
OUTSTANDING CAREER INITIATION AT WACSI

By Rosine Kededji

I worked as an intern in WACSI between August 2013 and February 2014. During this period, I learnt a lot by working with colleagues at the Institute.

Sincerely, the Next Generation Internship Programme uncovered some outstanding qualities in me, which I wasn’t aware of and helped me to develop a roadmap to achieve my career objectives.

I worked closely with the communication unit of the Institute and gained many skills in leading an organisation’s communication portfolio.

The varied tasks I was assigned to exposed me to pivotal responsibilities of a communication professional within the not-for-profit sector. By delivering on my duties, I gained skills in video editing, managing a website and social media accounts of an organisation and taking and editing still photographs to be used on public platforms. As I joined the Institute, I set a personal goal to improve upon my English language skills. I was given the unique opportunity by the Institute to speak English without fear and make public presentations through leadership development sessions, which were part of the six-month programme.

All these skills gained, make my current work as Communications Officer of Social Watch Benin easy. I am confident working as an experienced Communications Officer.

IMPARTING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS THAT SHAPED MY CAREER

By Yussuf Sane

In February 2014, I joined WACSI as part of the Next Generation Internship Programme. WACSI was the ideal organisation for me to gain professional work experience, network with key civil society leaders in West Africa, and strengthen my ability to contribute to development in the sub-region. While working with WACSI, I observed and learnt from the foremost civil society organisation and practitioners in West Africa.

During my 6-month internship with WACSI I had the opportunity to work primarily with the Research and Documentation Unit. My core duties with the Research and Documentation Unit involved assisting with WACSI’s 2014 regional research learning needs assessment for CSOs, developing a database of resources on laws and regulation of civil society in Africa, management of the weekly West Africa Civil Society Situation Report and conducting desktop research on civil society’s engagement with security related issues in West Africa. Among these ongoing duties, I also assisted with research in preparation for executive meetings and sensitisation workshops, and assisting with review of the learning needs assessment for the Civil Society Leadership Institute. Working with this unit broadened my understanding of the role of information management within an organisation and monitoring major trends and developments in the civil society sector.

I am grateful that WACSI provided me with capacity-building sessions, which included presentations and guidance on the elements of good leadership, professional development, and report writing skills. After each session, I was able to observe not only my role as a WACSI intern, but also how the skills that I acquired will be of benefit for other organisations.
Thanks to the knowledge and skills that I gained from WACSI, I was employed in my country [Guinea-Bissau] soon after I completed my internship to work as the assistant to the National Coordinator in the human rights NGO, Tostan. Since returning to my country, I have been able to apply my knowledge and skills to advance development in my country.

Groomed to be an Effective Development Professional

By Dragana Marinkovic

My internship at WACSI was a learning experience in a number of very valuable ways. I had a chance to be immersed in a multicultural organisation and work with people from different countries across West Africa and broader. I was able to draw on the knowledge of professionals with a lot of experience in the civil society sector and learn how civil society contributes to development in Ghana and broader. Additionally, I understood first hand, some of the challenges that civil society organisations face and how they are working to solve them. WACSI gave me the space to do an independent research project on the theme ‘Beyond Core Funding: Many Faces of Civil Society Sustainability’, to understand the challenges of civil society sustainability, while guiding me and giving me the necessary support to make the research meaningful and valuable for CSOs. Currently, as a student of public policy, I can draw on my experience with WACSI to better understand the gaps in various theories about the work of civil society. I also better understand the importance of structures and systems that make for an effective civil society organisation. In the future, I am confident that the knowledge and experience I gained at WACSI will help me be a more effective development professional.

Dragana was an intern at WACSI as part of the Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance (OSIRG) programme of Open the Society Foundations (OSF).

An Experience Worth Sharing

By Lilly Oseyda Mensah

My national service period offered me a longer stay at WACSI and with a different unit, the Administration and Finance Department. I was looking forward to it because of the exposure I will get in relation to office procedures, communication at the workplace among others.

Unlike other organisations where the superiors are extremely unfriendly and unapproachable, supervision for me at WACSI was relaxing and open. I was given room to ask questions and seek clarification when the need arose. Most importantly, unit heads gave advice on how to improve in areas of my work where there seemed to be weakness regardless of whether or not they were supervising me.

I received enough training through the general smart sessions (internal knowledge sharing sessions for staff) and from units such as the Administration and Finance unit, Facilitation skills from the Policy Advocacy unit and introduction to excel and budgeting from the Capacity Building unit. The support from staff and colleague interns alike was amazing.

The working environment at WACSI for me was professional and formal when it had to be and informal when it had to be. When people are given a task with little or no supervision, they end up putting their best foot forward and that’s what I love about WACSI. Interns and volunteers are given responsibilities by supervisors who believe that they can achieve the task. There was no intimidation in teaching and correction and there was room for feedback from colleague interns and from the entire management of WACSI.

I can proudly say that I was able to achieve a number of things during my stay at WACSI. For instance I gained added knowledge from the smart sessions, I assisted with the coordination of the Communication Skills Training and I assisted with the development of the organisations procedures manual. WACSI has equipped me to be time conscious and to be able to work under pressure in my current workplace where I serve as the Communications Officer.
Feedback from our Associate

Constant Gnacadja

Constant Gnacadja, has worked with WACSI to deliver training programmes in the area of policy advocacy since 2010. He was part of the coaching team that provided hands-on support to six organisations in Niger and seven in Cote d’Ivoire, under a long term capacity development programme for OSIWA’s partners in Guinea, Benin, Niger and Cote d’Ivoire. He commended the Institute for this initiative.

“As a civil society activist, I appreciate the opportunity to be part of the WACSI team for the capacity building of CSOs in Niger and contribute to the rich experience of civil society strengthening in West Africa. This was a self-development opportunity which would not only benefit target organisations, as each and every one of us will tap into it and ensure it also benefit our various networks.”

It was a pleasant surprise to be voted by colleagues as the best staff of the Institute in 2014. And being the first female overall staff of the year since we started honoring our best staff three years ago, I was very humbled to know that my colleagues appreciated my personality and my work at WACSI.

I dedicate this prize to all my special and hardworking colleagues, especially the courageous ladies in the house.

In fact, WACSI presents a unique environment where you come with your experience but you learn much more when you are open to new ideas. I knew I have learnt a lot but there was so much more I learnt from WACSI, which I only realised recently in my new job.

I now have some advocacy skills and a more pronounced and result oriented communication skills. I don’t only see problems, I look for ways to solve them looking within and around for how to make use of what is available, the ABCD approach.

At WACSI, I got to discover the uniqueness of each one: from our director to our janitor, from our board members to our partners and sisters of the West Africa women election observers.

It was great learning to relate to all despite our differences and diversity of cultures. To quote or sing Luke Dube’s “different colors, one people”, I would say “different skills and units but one WACSI with one goal: coming together to strengthen civil society in West Africa”.

Today, I am a proud alumnus of WACSI. Thanks to all of you, colleagues and partners and also our board members both current and former who contributed to my successful work experience at WACSI.

[Pearl moved on with her career. She left WACSI at the end of 2014 to join her family in Togo. She took up a new job at the American Embassy in Togo.]

“I am a Proud Alumnus of WACSI”

Staff of the Year 2014 – Pearl Atsou-Dzini

PEARL ATSOU-DZINI

Staff of the Year 2014

ANNUAL REPORT 2014
Support Services

Affordable and Conducive Conference Facilities
WACSI has conducive, comfortable and modern state of the art facilities at its office premises in East Legon, Accra, Ghana, that it avails to civil society organisations to organise conferences, trainings or meetings.

Our facilities include:

- **A spacious Boardroom with;**
  - A maximum sitting capacity of 20;
  - High speed internet;
  - A teleconferencing facility that can host up to 20 discussants per call;
  - A laptop (on request)
  - A projector and projector screen; and
  - A flip chart stand.

- **A Training and/or Conference room with;**
  - A maximum sitting capacity of 30;
  - High speed internet;
  - A teleconferencing facility that can host up to 20 discussants per call;
  - A projector and projector screen;
  - Pin boards;
  - White boards;
  - High quality sound system with cordless and lapel microphones;
  - A water dispenser;
  - Air conditioner and fans for a refreshing atmosphere; and
  - A standby generator.

- **Simultaneous Interpretation Equipment and Translation Services;**
  - Interpretation equipment (head sets and microphones) for up to 50 users;
  - Multilingual interpretation equipment that can facilitate the simultaneous interpretation of six languages; and
  - Text translations (English to French and vice versa) for civil society organisations.

- **A Resource Centre equipped with;**
  - Over 5,000 print and online learning resources;
  - Desktop computers with access to internet for desktop and online research;
  - High speed wireless Internet;
  - Reading space suitable for individuals and study groups; and
  - Quiet and conducive environment.

We also have sufficient space for break out sessions.

These facilities are spacious and comfortable. They are equipped with air conditioners and fans to give you a refreshing atmosphere during your stay.

Our welcoming staff are readily available to provide you with the needed assistance during your time on our premise.

We can arrange for local and continental lunch and healthy break time snacks for your invitees and participants during your programmes. We can arrange for hotel and shuttle services as needed.

**To use our facilities and for further information, please contact admin@wacsi.org or call 00233 (0) 302 550222**

Find us on:

For more information, visit www.wacsi.org
WACSI has signed a joint partnership agreement with WACSOF and the Commonwealth Foundation to strengthen the capacity of WACSOF and its platforms to effectively engage ECOWAS on the regional development agenda.

Co-organised and supported the organisation of the 2014 West Africa Civil Society Conference.

WACSI and the Nordic Africa Institute held a continent-wide conference for researchers and practitioners on regionalising civil society in Africa.

WACSI was supported by the Nexus Fund to run two programmes on policy advocacy and mass atrocity prevention for civil society in Anglophone and Francophone countries. These were postponed to the first quarter of 2015 due to the Ebola outbreak.

Nexus Fund also supported one WACSI staff, Omolara Balogun to undertake an exchange learning programme with Search for Common Grounds in Brussels, Belgium.

WACSI collaborated with Akina mama Wa Africa, to run a young women leadership training programme in West Africa, with a focus on gender and on the oil and gas industry.

WACSI has signed a joint partnership agreement with WACSOF and the Commonwealth Foundation to strengthen the capacity of WACSOF and its platforms to effectively engage ECOWAS on the regional development agenda.

Co-organised and supported the organisation of the 2014 West Africa Civil Society Conference.

Provided funding for the research work for WACSI's civil society sustainability project with the pilot in Ghana.
Provided core support.
Supported the coaching of 25 of its partners in four francophone West African countries.
OSIWA Liberia country office supported the training of 11 staff of NAYMOTE on Communication Skills and Strategies as well as the development of the organisation’s communication strategy.

Supported a project to conduct a needs assessment on the eLearning readiness of civil society in West Africa.
Supported a training on how to set up and manage an eLearning platform for WACSI staff.

WACSI is collaborating with WACD, with support from OSIWA, as the coordinating institution to support sensitisation and capacity building activities for CSOs on drugs and drug policy.

Supported the training of 25 civil society practitioners and media personnel from 12 West African countries on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) norm.

Supported a training for members of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia on Networking and Alliance Building and Facilitation Skills.

Supported WACSI to train 25 civil society practitioners and media personnel from 12 West African countries on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) norm.
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS EMPLOYED</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property, Plant and equipment</td>
<td>374,920</td>
<td>182,554</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
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<td>3,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
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<td>664,583</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,139,855</td>
<td>668,263</td>
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<tr>
<th>Current Liabilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses and other accounts payable</td>
<td>124,731</td>
<td>39,511</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net current assets</td>
<td>1,015,124</td>
<td>628,752</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>1,390,044</td>
<td>811,306</td>
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<tr>
<th>FUNDS EMPLOYED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accumulated fund</td>
<td>1,390,044</td>
<td>811,306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funds received</td>
<td>2,639,697</td>
<td>1,963,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>704,812</td>
<td>479,096</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,344,509</td>
<td>2,443,048</td>
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### Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training and research expenses</td>
<td>1,712,208</td>
<td>1,450,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and administrative expenses</td>
<td>1,053,563</td>
<td>810,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>2,765,771</td>
<td>2,260,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess of income over expenditure</strong></td>
<td>578,738</td>
<td>182,143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of income over expenditure</td>
<td>578,738</td>
<td>182,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>131,426</td>
<td>63,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating results before working capital changes</td>
<td>710,164</td>
<td>245,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(increase)/Reduce in accounts receivable and prepayments</td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td>3,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase in accounts payable</td>
<td>85,220</td>
<td>8,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cash generated from operating activities</td>
<td>798,264</td>
<td>257,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **INVESTING ACTIVITIES**    |           |           |
| Purchase of property, plant and equipment | (323,792) | (69,010) |
| Net cash used in investing activities | (323,792) | (69,010) |

| **INCREASE IN CASH AND EQUIVALENTS** | 474,472 | 188,446 |
| **Cash and cash equivalents as at 1 January** | 664,583 | 476,137 |
| **CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AS AT 31 DECEMBER** | 1,139,055 | 664,583 |

Signed on behalf of the Board

Director
Date: 15/10/15

Full details of our audited accounts can be found on our website (www.wacsi.org)
Report on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of West Africa Civil Society Institute set out on pages 5 to 13, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2014, the statement of income and expenditure and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and the notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Directors’ responsibility for the financial statements

The directors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Ghana Accounting Standards and in a manner required by the Companies Act, 1963 (Act 179) and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors’ responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors’ judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity’s preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity’s internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS’ REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE

A member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited
OPINION

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of West Africa Civil Society Institute as of 31 December 2014, its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Ghana Accounting Standards and in a manner required by the Companies Act, 1963 (Act 179).

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

The Companies Act, 1963 (Act 179) requires that in carrying out our audit we consider and report on the following matters. We confirm that:

I. We have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit;

II. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company, so far as appears from our examination of those books; and

III. The balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure of the Institute are in agreement with the books of account.

Signed by Kwadwo Mpeani Brantuo (ICAG\P\1152)
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young (ICAG\F\2015\126)
Chartered Accountants
Accra, Ghana.

Date: 15 October 2015
Board Members

Professor John O. Igue, Board Chair

Professor Igue, a Beninese citizen, is Professor of Geography at the University of Abomey Calavi (former National University of Benin) and former Director-General of the West Africa Institute in Cape Verde. He is currently the Scientific Director of the Laboratoire d’Analyse Régionale et d’Expertise Sociale and was an Adviser of the Sahel and West African Club of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Previously, he was Benin’s Minister of Industry and Small Scale and Medium Enterprises and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences of the National University of Benin (1978-1981). He has published extensively and worked with diverse regional bodies in West Africa.

Ms. Taaka Awori, Member

Ms. Awori, Ugandan/Liberian, is a consultant with social, organisational and leadership development expertise. She has significant experience working with donor agencies and funding mechanisms for civil society. She previously worked as Assistant Social Development Adviser of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and has undertaken consultancies for many institutions such as the African Women’s Development Fund, DFID, Comic Relief, the World Bank Institute, the African Development Bank, CARE International, the United Nations Development Programme, the Danish Institute of Human Rights, the Carter Center (US) and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Sweden.

Dr. Khadidiatou Diallo, Member

Dr. Diallo is a Guinean and currently the Secretary General of a Masters programme at the University of General Lansana Conte, Sonfonia (Conakry) where she oversees the thesis of researchers. She is a Consultant on gender issues and also heads the UNESCO chair on gender issues. She is member of an NGO “AGUIFEL” in peace and security and for women’s participation in elections. She is also the director of a school on women leadership, which provides support to women in advocacy and coaching to women organizations. She is one of the women mentors out of a group of ten appointed to support women in Universities and mentor them in politics. Dr Diallo has worked in several ministries in Guinea, the latest of which is the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research as a professor seconded to the Centre for Environmental Studies and Research (CEER). She has several publications to her name and participated in drafting the initial report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997.

Mrs. Traore Nathalie, Member

Mrs. Traore Nathalie is from Cote d’Ivoire and a jurist, Consultant and a Trainer. She is the president of CEFCI (the Gender Centre for Democracy and Human Rights in Cote d’Ivoire). She is the Coordinator of four operational area offices of CEFCI. Her organisation has an observer status on the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. She is currently the Board chairperson of the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF). She is the Director of publication of the journal “TRIBUNE FEMME” (a journal for the promotion of women’s rights). Since 2008, she has been a member of ECOWAS observer mission and the ECOWAS early warning team. She provides leadership training for women in the other regions of Cote d’Ivoire and has extensive experience in Elections observation, monitoring of human rights, NGO and women’s group management and the elimination of violence against women.
‘…Work Smarter’
By Yao Ayessan

Spending twelve months at WACSI enabled me to acquire robust skills that are helping me to perform my current duties as Operations and Customer Relation Assistant in one of the branches of Orabank Togo with much ease.

For someone like me that had never had a work experience, working as a National Youth Service Personnel at WACSI was eye opening and a great experience in all aspects.

My main role at the Institute was to assist with translation but WACSI’s internship programme is training-oriented and a valuable platform to build the capacity of interns. My supervisors quickly assigned me to take up many other duties among which were programme coordination tasks and research. I was therefore initiated to areas that were up until then unknown to me, yet, highly necessary in grooming my professional skills.

I am a Francophone and generally we are better at writing English than speaking it and personally, I was better at translating from English to French. Given the high level of exposure and the demanding tasks at WACSI, today I am able to speak the English language easily with much fluency and I feel very comfortable translating to English. Even though my background is in translation I can easily stand for a position of project coordinator manager in an organisation with all the knowledge and experience acquired at WACSI.

Setting objectives (short or long term objectives) is very critical for us to be productive. This is something I learnt at WACSI and this is very much helping me in my current position. I even set objectives for my weekends and holidays.

Socially, I met and worked with people from across Africa and Europe, which represent a good network for me. I learnt a lot from them and this developed my perspectives. To me there is nothing like discovering new cultures.

Often, as young graduates, we are of the view that internship is only about making photocopies and reading newspapers all day long. This stems from the experiences shared by our predecessors. Well, the case is different at WACSI. WACSI gives you responsibilities right from the first day and you might even be overwhelmed just for the sake of the development of your capacities. But I will share with you something one of my trainers used to tell us and that I have been applying: “do not work a lot. Work smartly”!

Continued from Page 24

Ms. Abiana Nelson, Member

Miss Abiana Nelson is a Ghanaian. She is a Chartered Accountant and a Certified Internal Auditor with nineteen years of experience in the provision of auditing, accountancy and business solutions. She has sixteen years of experience with Pricewaterhouse Coopers in the Assurance and the Advisory line of service responsible for providing financial and risk management services to clients. She was the West Africa Regional Audit Manager for World Vision International, a global non-governmental organisation. She has strong leadership and project management skills and has gained tremendous experience in external and forensic audits, accountancy services and financial systems reviews. She is a member of professional associations such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA), Institute of Internal Auditors, and an associate member of the Institute of Certified Fraud Examiners. Her work experience has spanned across a number of countries including Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, United States of America and Bangladesh.

Ms. Nana Asantewa Afadzinu

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu is the Executive Director of WACSI and an ex-officio member of the Board. Nana obtained an LLB and BL, from the University of Ghana and the Ghana School of Law in 1994 and 1996 respectively.

She was a visiting scholar at Columbia University’s Human Rights Advocate Training Programme, completed her Masters in Law at New York University and has worked with Media Foundation for West Africa and the Center for the Study of Human Rights, Columbia University, in initiating a West and Central Africa Human Rights Institute. Nana worked as Legal Officer with the Secretariat of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in Banjul, the Gambia; and the African Society of International and Comparative Law in Accra.

She spearheaded the establishment of a legal division for the Women’s Initiative for Self Empowerment (WISE) and volunteered as WISE legal counsel. She was the Coordinator of the National Coalition on Domestic Violence Legislation in Ghana. She joined the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) as Governance Program Officer in 2005 and was OSIWA’s Country Coordinator in Nigeria from 2006 to 2008. From September 2008 to 2009, Nana was the Regional Policy Advisor for IBIS West Africa. She has served and continues to serve on a number of boards and advisory committees for organisations in the private, public and civil society sectors including the Ghana Legal Services Board, Graphic Corporations Group Limited, Ghana News Agency, Nexus Fund and Water Aid Ghana.
### Our Staff

#### A. Permanent Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nana Afadzinu</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Katherine Adarkwa</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Administrative Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kwabena Kroduah</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Finance Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Omolara Balogun</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Policy Advocacy Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Charles K. Vandyck</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Training and Capacity Building Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Titilope Ajayi-Mamattah</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Research and Documentation Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pearl Atsou-Dzini</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Franck Arthur Sombo</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Programme Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Jimm C. Fomunjong</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Communications and Information Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Boris Some</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Policy Advocacy Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Grace A. Ziggah-Quaye</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Bilingual Secretary/Receptionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Bethel K. Boateng</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Ibrahim Mohamed</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Office Assistant/Cleaner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Maxwell Aperenteng</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Harrison Boakye Owusu</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Project Officer (YALI Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Trixie Akpedonu</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Research/Policy Advocacy Assistant</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### B. Interns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Yussuf Sane</td>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>Intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Dahmata Tene Yabre</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Intern/Project Assistant (YALI Project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Banon Yao Leandre</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Samassy Souare</td>
<td>Guinea Conakry</td>
<td>Intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Rosine Kededji</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Intern</td>
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#### C. National Service Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Lilly Mensah</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Finance and Administration (old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Yao Dago Ayessan Yannick</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Translator (old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Lydie Kessie</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Finance and Administration Assistant (new)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Collins Agyare</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Translator (new)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### D. Volunteers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Osutaro Kili</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Sciences Po University, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Ethel Tebid</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Dragana Marinkovic</td>
<td>Bosnia Herzegovina</td>
<td>Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Dalli Donald Serge</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Ghana Institute of Languages (Translation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As an organisation whose main interest is in strengthening civil society to be effective, efficient, sustainable and an influential development partner to government and the private sector, it behooves WACSI to find the answers to civil society sustainability in West Africa and not only WACSI’s.

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, Executive Director, WACSI