Deepening our Engagement, Expanding our Scope
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WACSI implemented its maiden interventions in Sierra Leone and Guinea;

In 2011, 351 civil society practitioners from CSOs across West Africa benefitted from WACSI’s trainings in Senegal, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Togo.

WACSI organized its first training in Corporate Governance for Francophone West African countries.

WACSI in collaboration with the Embassy of France, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the e-directory website for CSOs in Ghana.

WACSI extends its hearty congratulations to Ms. Leymah Gboweh, Executive Director of WIPSEN-A for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011. The Institute commends the unwavering efforts of Ms Leymah to foster peaceful coexistence in West Africa. CONGRATS Leymah!

WACSI, a steering committee member of the ICRtoP delivered a key message at the United Nations General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect in New York.

Hosting OSIWA in Ghana

Exploring a Security Sector Capacity Building Network for civil society in Africa
Board Chair’s message (One page)

How is WACSI contributing to build a robust civil society in West Africa?
How has WACSI expanded the scope of Women’s visibility and inclusion in decision making in West Africa?
How is WACSI Addressing topical issues pertinent to contemporary challenges in West Africa?
What milestone achievement has WACSI registered in creating sustainable networks among CSOs in West Africa?
For me, 2011 whizzed past. It was an activity-packed year with new experiences, new partnerships and the birth of new initiatives. WACSI experienced growth through an expansion of programmes and outreach, but also one of depth where the Institute looked within to strengthen itself and its partnerships.

Talking about partnerships, 2011 was one of great pride and joy for WACSI, as the Executive Director of one of our long-term partners organisations WIPSEN Africa, Leymah Gbowee was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2011 together with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Tawakkol Karman. We share in Leymah’s success, and basked in the pride of the moment not only as an Institution that had worked with Leymah for several years, but also as an African Institution; one that stood with and for African women. The glassy-eyed feeling hasn’t worn off yet…

One of our goals for 2011 was to increase and develop our women-focused programming because we had identified in 2010, that we had a low percentage of women civil society actors and women-led organisations in the sub-region benefiting from WACSI’s services. Our goal was achieved with the support of a new partner, the International Women’s Program of the Open Society Institute. We implemented a first phase of policy advocacy training for women in Liberia. It is also in 2011 that the all-women’s election observation team for West Africa was established. WAWEO (West Africa Women’s Election Observation) team had its baptism with the observation of the Liberia elections. This is an initiative that birthed by the West Africa Women’s Policy Forum, an annual forum organized by WACSI and WIPSEN.

WACSI promised to reach out and embrace West Africa and we did. The institute organized twenty training courses in 2011, and launched out into other parts of the sub-region. Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Liberia, Nigeria all welcomed WACSI and its programmes to its shores, some of the countries, for the first time. In Guinea, WACSI had very productive discussions with the transitional parliament, the UNDP Country Director, international NGOs and national NGOs including Centre du Commerce International pour le Développement (CECIDE), a leading civil society organisation in Guinea; leaders of CNOCC, the civil society umbrella body; the President of COGNAC, a credible women’s network; the National Transitional Council (CNT); and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), a well informed and credible non-governmental organisation in Guinea that has had close collaboration with civil society. At a regional level, WACSI worked with ECOWAS’ civil society directorate to enhance knowledge and skill in resource mobilisation and proposal writing for non-state actors.

It was exciting to finally launch the Ghana CSO Directory, a collaborative effort between WACSI, the French Embassy, the Ministry of Social Welfare in Ghana, and the UNDP. Equally invigorating, was the launch of the report on the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crises, a research coordinated by WACSI with the support
of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), as part of its Africa Security and Governance Programme. WACSI’s partnership with SIPRI and five other organisations in Africa, on this project, has led to discussions on the establishment of a capacity building network on the security sector for civil society in Africa. Further conversations on this will continue in the coming year.

As a capacity development Institute that is keen on achieving its mandate, and delivering quality, WACSI also focused on building its own capacity, and hence a number of staff underwent training to hone their skills in specific areas. This has already started yielding the desired result.

This report endeavours to give you a feel of the activity-packed, productive and fast-paced nature of 2011 for WACSI. I trust that it will achieve that purpose.

*United Nations Steering Committee on International Coalition on the Responsibility to Protect. (Photo: Evan Schneider PGA and UN SG 1)*
Training and Capacity Building

PROVIDING REQUISITE SKILLS FOR CSOS’ EFFICIENCY IN WEST AFRICA

Strengthening the capacities of civil society practitioners and organisations in West Africa is core to WACSI’s mission. WACSI prides itself in empowering civil society with identified skills that organisations and practitioners within the sector in West Africa need. This remains the uncompromised goal of the Institute’s Training and Capacity Building Unit. Through the focused programmes of the Unit, WACSI implemented a robust capacity development program in 2011 that benefitted 240 civil society practitioners from 180 civil society organisations (CSOs) from Guinea, Niger, Mali, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Benin and Nigeria across a range of disciplines. These practitioners, imbued with new knowledge and skills, are the new ambassadors of change who are making strides in promoting good governance, policy reforms and open societies in West African countries.

NGO Management and M&E trainings in Guinea and Sierra Leone

Weak institutional and programmatic capacities are some of the biggest constraints to civil society’s effectiveness in West African countries notably Guinea and Sierra Leone. WACSI’s creation in 2005 was in response to these challenges. The Institute, for the first time, organised trainings in NGO management, and monitoring and evaluation for CSOs in Guinea and Sierra Leone. These trainings sought to strengthen the capacity of OSIWA grantees and civil society networks and platforms within these countries.

Sylvester Amara, a representative of the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), Sierra Leone expressed his satisfaction with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training in Sierra Leone, stating that his skills and knowledge of M&E had been enhanced and intended employing his newly acquired knowledge and skill to strengthen his organisation’s monitoring, evaluation and learning processes and systems.

WACSI’s interventions in Guinea were timely and opportune as the country’s democratic space became receptive to opinions from civil society actors. This view was echoed by Cisse Kabinet, a participant at the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training in Guinea who pointed out that “civil society in Guinea have weak governance and programmatic competencies, and there is a need for a systematic long-term capacity development programme to tackle these challenges”.

Cisse emphasized on the need for WACSI to design more training programmes that will enable their organisations to operate effectively, efficiently and ensure their sustainability. Other participants who attended the M&E training in Guinea also remarked that the platform promoted information exchange, experience sharing and learning. The resource persons provided participants with practical illustrations on how to strengthen their managerial and evaluation mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability.
Michel Douti, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of OSIWA who facilitated the training in Guinea commended the commitment demonstrated by participants through their interaction and contributions, and emphasized the ‘need for CSOs to design robust M&E systems and ensure that they are institutionalised’.

**Corporate Governance training in Senegal**

The continuous support provided by OSIWA enabled WACSI to organise its maiden Corporate Governance training for francophone countries in West Africa. The training was organised in Dakar, Senegal. The four day course attracted CSOs and networks from Senegal, Niger, Mali, Cote d’Ivoire, Benin and Guinea. The overall objective of the course was to enhance CSO’s accountability and transparency systems, improve organisational management frameworks and financial management systems.

Participants recommended that WACSI should consider initiating a corporate governance certification process for CSOs. “It is very important for WACSI to consider implementing a sub-regional intervention aimed at providing certification to CSOs that conform to internationally acceptable non-profit governance standards. The certification would ensure an organisation’s commitment to the values of sound leadership and transparent corporate governance” remarked Idrissa Amadou, member of Association Nigérienne pour le Traitement de la Délinquance et le Crime, at the training.

**ECOWAS supported training for Non-State Actors**

WACSI strengthened its relationship with the civil society directorate of the ECOWAS Commission, culminating in the implementation of a training course for ECOWAS Non-State Actors (NSAs) within the sub-region. The programme took place in Accra, Ghana. This course sought to develop the grants management capacities, resource mobilization and proposal writing skills of selected NSAs.

This training was organised in response to the low success rate of applications from NSAs to ECOWAS, for the 2008 European Development Fund (EDF) facility.

**WACSI/SIPRI African Security and Governance (ASG) Project**

Discussions on creating a Pan African CSO Capacity Building Network on security issues developed as an embryo of the African Security Governance Project. The completion of the latter immediately gave birth to reflections on the need for a civil society led capacity building initiative on security issues. The Institute hosted a consultative meeting as part of the second phase of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Open Society Institute (OSI) supported Africa Security and Governance (ASG) project. ASG civil society members, advisory group members and representatives from the African Security Sector Network (ASSN), African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR), West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), West Africa Network on Small Arms (WANSA), and other CSOs brainstormed on the conditions necessitating the creation of this network, and the way forward for its active and sustainable implementation.
Next Generation Internship

The year 2011 was equally a successful one for the Next Generation Internship Programme. WACSI’s ambassadors in the diaspora increased with the graduation of four interns who are taking leading roles within civil society in the sub-region. Harrison Owusu-Boakye who continues to serve as the Institute’s focal person on the Ghanaian civil society e-directory project was specially recruited alongside Paul Aloboma Ayambila as the data collection and entry officers for the e-directory project for civil society in Ghana.

Aissatou Diallo and Aicha Etrew (See page 30) were recruited as Programmes Assistants in WACSI and Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) respectively after completing a 12-month internship at the Institute.

WACSI’s Expert Resource

2011 experienced a significant upsurge in the Institute’s interventions, visibility and outreach. The strength, significance, quality and content delivery can be highly attributed to the visionary lenses of WACSI’s expert trainers who embrace the Institute’s values of quality and excellence. WACSI and its capacity building unit made significant strides through the focus and dedication demonstrated by its resource persons. Gilbert Atta-Boakye, Louis Kuukpen and Daniel Kofi Andoh from Ghana, Faustin Djaenga and Berthe Codja from Benin, and Michel Douti from Togo provided their expertise and enriched the trainings and facilitation processes of some of WACSI’s trainings.
2013 Scheduled Courses
(Advert highlighting first page of 2012 scheduled courses brochure)
WACSI made significant gains within its policy advocacy programmatic strategy in 2011. The Institute intensified its effort to bridge the policy influencing and advocacy skills gap within civil society in West Africa. This was achieved through strategically tailored capacity development initiatives developed by the unit, as well as, the convening of policy forums which created a much needed space for civil society to reflect on key issues and strategise for greater impact.

Enhancing the Policy Influencing Capacities of IWP-OSI Partners in Liberia
Liberian women have been highly commended for their peace-building efforts in post-conflict Liberia. Over the years, they have left no stone unturned to ensure that the governance machinery of their country is alive and delivering satisfactory results. Together with their men, they have constituted a part of a thriving and visionary civil society that works to complement the efforts of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

In 2011, WACSI joined hands with the International Women’s Programme of the Open Society Institute (IWP-OSI), to strengthen the policy analysis and influencing skills of the latter’s partners in Liberia. Through a four-day training from February 1 – 4, 2012, twenty IWP-OSI and OSIWA partners were convened in Monrovia to take part in a Policy Advocacy and Engagement Training. The learning and experience-sharing platform provided by the training, deepened participants’ knowledge and strengthened their technical skills in planning and conducting effective policy engagement, influencing and advocacy at the local, national and regional levels.

This targeted training, supported by IWP-OSI, exposed the group of women to the dynamics of Liberia’s policy and political environment beyond their initial experience. Participants affirmed that the training exercises enabled them to clearly map out possible entry points for various groups of women to penetrate the policy/decision making stratum of the country.

The training deepened participant’s understanding and insight into the process of planning effective policy advocacy campaigns within the policy and political context in Liberia. It created a strategic platform for the establishment of a women’s-only national policy network focused at pushing for the inclusion of women in major policymaking processes in the country, and to address women-related issues.

Empowering CSAs to Quicken Policy Processes across West Africa
WACSI reached out to a wider audience in 2011 and created avenues for more than a hundred civil society actors ... to acquire robust policy influencing skills through its policy advocacy trainings.
The Institute streamlined its focus and empowered 22 CSAs through a regional training on Policy Advocacy and Engagement. Based on the demonstrated need for these skills and the existing policy gaps in their respective countries, the 22 participants were carefully selected from Anglophone West African Countries – The Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana.

WACSI delivered three in-country policy advocacy and engagement trainings in Togo, Senegal and Sierra Leone. These trainings were driven by OSIWA’s verve to enhance the policy influencing knowledge, skills and techniques of its partners in these countries. Overall, the trainings brought on board mid-career professionals and managerial staff. It created a productive platform for the replication of ideas, experience sharing and in-depth discussion and analysis of some cross-national policy issues in the sub-region. Issues addressed during the training include the Freedom of Information bill in Liberia, Nigeria and Ghana; policy around the Rights of the Media and Journalists in the Gambia, Extractive and mining industries bills in Sierra Leone, and Fifty percent women representation in parliaments.

These OSIWA initiated trainings were particularly tailored to strategically respond to specific policy influencing needs and challenges of CSAs in a given context. The training empowered participants with skills that will enable them to effectively influence policy processes.

WACSI trainers, Antoinette Lucky and Constant Gnacadja delivered the Policy Advocacy training course for fifteen (15) partners of the Goree Institute in Senegal. The training, held from December 20 – 23, 2011.

Enhancing Knowledge on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) Norm in West Africa

The unanimous endorsement and adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) concept by world leaders at the 2005 UN world summit does not represent the level of implementation of the norm across the globe. Despite being a potent tool to protect innocent citizens from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity, the RtoP norm does not benefit from a holistic welcome by some States. Notwithstanding the resistance, regional mechanisms such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have endorsed the norm within their normative frameworks.

WACSI finalised its draft toolkit on RtoP. The production of this toolkit followed a recommendation on devising tools to fill the knowledge gaps on RtoP within West Africa. This recommendation was made at a forum organised by WACSI in 2008, with the support of the International Coalition on the Responsibility to protect (ICRtoP) and the World Federalist Movement (WFM), on the RtoP, for civil society and other key peace and security stakeholders in West Africa.

The toolkit has been developed to facilitate the education of civil society practitioners on the norm and enable them to understand its relevance within the sub-regional context. This will foster ownership of the norm by West African civilian actors and stimulate their strategic conscious efforts to promote the implementation of the norm when necessary within the sub-region.
Women’s Participation in Electoral Governance – Opening up the space in West Africa

Enhancing the participation of women in electoral governance processes was the principal driver for the creation of the West African Women’s Elections Observation Team (WAWEO), established in 2010. This initiative emanated as a key recommendation from the 2nd Annual West African Women’s Policy Forum themed: “Our Politics is Now: Moving Beyond the Rhetoric of Women’s Political Participation” held in Cote D’Ivoire in November 2009. WAWEO seeks to promote the active participation and representation of West African women in politics, specifically in electoral governance.

WAWEO specifically seeks to enhance women’s capacities and increase their involvement in monitoring and reporting on electoral processes across West Africa. It is a strategic platform through which the West African woman can play active roles in contributing to the democratic decisions that determine the governance processes of West African countries. WAWEO increases the numbers of women engaged in elections observation at national and regional levels in West Africa and also ensures that elections observation and monitoring is done with a gender lens. The findings from these observations are expected to feed into advocacy processes to reform policy where necessary to make political governance more gender sensitive and open up space for more women to participate effectively.

The group was inaugurated at the 4th Annual West African Women’s Policy Forum held in Monrovia, Liberia in September 2011. Some of the members were, with the support of IBIS in Liberia, trained for immediate deployment, to observe both rounds of the Liberia 2011 general elections. The training, which was organised in Monrovia, Liberia from 8 – 9 October, 2011 introduced WAWEO members to contemporary elections observation skills, techniques and procedures aimed at conscientiously representing, promoting and protecting women’s interests and enhancing their participation in electoral governance processes in West Africa.

On the whole, WAWEO strives to compliment the efforts of the ECOWAS commission and other elections observation bodies in ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections across the sub-region. Members of WAWEO have subsequently been invited by ECOWAS to join its elections observation teams for the election observation of the Senegal and Guinea-Bissau elections.
WACSI's partnership with the Women in Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-A) jointly organized the West Africa Women’s Policy Forum for the fourth consecutive year. The forum creates an opportunity for women in the sub region to reflect, deliberate and engage in policy discourses related to issues that affect the advancement of women’s rights and development in West Africa, and the African continent as a whole. The Fourth forum, organised under the theme “Win With Women: Best Practices in Promoting Women’s Quantitative and Qualitative Representation in Decision Making”, was held in Monrovia, Liberia from 7 - 8 September, 2011. Present were, a cross-section of West African women including women’s rights activists and advocates, women in politics and in business.

The forum brought together over sixty women (60) delegates from nine (9) West African countries including the two African winners of the 2011 Nobel peace prize: President of the Republic of Liberia, H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the Executive Director of WIPSEN-A, Ms. Leymah Roberta Gbowee.

Women from other parts of the continent shared their experiences and the strategies they had adopted in amplifying women’s qualitative and quantitative representation in decision making. This forum witnessed the inauguration of the West African Women Elections Observation Team (WAWEO), an offspring of a similar forum in 2009.

The forum culminated with a set of recommendations that aimed at moving forward the agenda to foster women’s recognition as a vital entity in decision making arenas. The recommendations were directed to the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS-Commission), National Governments, Political Parties, Electoral Commissions, Women’s Networks, Civil Society and the Conveners of the Forum. They included the following:

1. Government should create a threshold for political parties candidature fee to enable women compete with their male counterparts in party primary elections, thus increasing women’s chances of emerging as party candidates to via for political positions;

2. The ECOWAS commission should consider the inclusion and active participation of women in the ongoing review process of the “ECOWAS Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy”;

3. National electoral commissions should collaborate with civil society and other stakeholders to examine and review existing electoral systems and laws vis-à-vis its suitability for women’s political advancement and or limitation;

4. National electoral commissions should reserve the right to sanction political parties who lacks and or violate party laws or constitutions that seek to promote equal representation of women in both primaries and general elections;

5. Political parties should put in a place a more transparent system open and receptive to women demands and projects women’s candidature in party primaries.

6. Women’s movements should institute national “girls club” to serve as a resourceful platform to educate young girls on their rights to equal participation in political activities and ascension to leadership positions;

7. Women activists should cease the opportunity of the ongoing constitutional review process in Nigeria and Ghana to push for a minimum inclusion of 30% of women’s representation at all levels of governance and decision structures;

8. International and local funding agencies should design Special Grant Scheme to support women’s candidature and political campaigns;

9. Forum convener should commission a research to examine “the Challenges of Women’s Political Financing in West Africa; and

10. All stakeholders should collaborate the women’s movement to intensify effort at implementing the injunctions of the Beijing Platform for Action after 15 years and CEDAW after 30- years.
As part of its programmatic strategy for 2011, WACSI’s Research and Documentation Unit conducted and coordinated research on topical issues relating to civil society across the sub-region. The Institute promotes an indigenous knowledge management system through research, experience sharing and documentation for CSOs in West Africa. It utilizes the expertise of experienced researchers and experts across West Africa to conduct fact-based research on topical issues in the sub-region.

Research outcomes published by the Institute are archived in the Institute’s resource centre. WACSI’s resource centre serves as a library with a collection of research reports, edited volumes, monographs and journals from and for civil society. These publications are made available to civil society practitioners and organisations.

Regional Research Review: Civil Society and Development in West Africa

The need to develop knowledge on current trends relating to the work of civil society within the sub-region led WACSI to commission a Regional Research project related to the state of civil society in West Africa, their role and contribution to the development of the sub-region.

“The contribution of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to development (...) is immense. While studies are yet to be conducted to quantify or even to determine the impact of NGO interventions, indicators show that the extent of NGO contributions have been far-reaching”, stated Mr. Madi Jorbateh, the contributor from Gambia.

This regional research project examines the diverse contributions of civil society, progress made and challenges they face as they strive to promote development in the sub-region. Fifteen contributors from the respective ECOWAS member states were tasked to explore context-specific analyses of case studies to illustrate these challenges and successes realized by CSOs. The research will provide a holistic overview of civil society’s development, success stories as well as challenges related to the sector. It will provide profound quantitative and qualitative findings that will inform the identification of areas that require increased strategic interventions from civil society.

The volume brings out various definitions and composition of civil society. In certain contexts civil society is seen as a key actor in providing community services and supplementing government’s service delivery role. Nevertheless, it is also perceived to be an opposition to the state, political and military actors and is regarded as an autonomous entity devoted to watching over the rule of law and promoting democracy and good governance. Given these varying opinions about civil society, Prof. Obadare Ebenezer explains that “pronouncements about civil society have to be located in historical time and place, for the social composition of civil society is invariably a function of local
history, culture and socio-economic dynamics. To that extent, all civil society is, for want of a better word, local”.

On the whole, the contributions from authors are substantial, exhaustive, and provide a springboard for the advancement of further research pertaining to civil society. This research will invaluably broaden the understanding of civil society and development in West Africa and serve as an indispensable tool to promote exploratory research on civil society within the sub-region.

**Comprehensive Compilation of Information on Experts and CSOs in West Africa**

WACSI recognizes and valourises reliable and credible human resources and competencies in West Africa. As a strategic pattern of promoting excellence in West Africa, the Institute works with West African experts from diverse professional backgrounds to support and enhance the work of civil society. To ascertain the achievement of such an initiative that has been applauded, the Institute has commenced with the process of developing a pool of experts within the sub-region who are undoubtedly knowledgeable on issues regarding CSOs’ expectations and demand.

In view of this, the Institute committed its resources to develop a Database of Civil Society Experts who are competent and willing to respond to the growing needs of capacity building and knowledge generation for CSOs and civil society practitioners in West Africa. Currently, the database comprises of 117 civil society experts who are exceptionally knowledgeable on the different aspects that relate to the work of civil society. The Database comprises Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone, as well as a significant number of female experts.

The Institute makes available its Database of Experts through an online version accessible on WACSI’s website – www.wacsi.org.

**Regional Civil Society Directory**

WACSI initiated the process of revising and updating its online Regional Directory of CSOs. The current directory titled “Civil Society Directory for West Africa 2010-2012” was the outcome of a data collection exercise that culminated with information related to all CSOs within the sub-region. Given the tremendous increase in the number of CSOs, the directory is currently being revised to reflect contemporary realities of information on CSOs in the sub-region. The review process will take into consideration any changes of organisations’ names, email addresses, phone numbers, geographical location and contact person. It will also collect this information for newly created CSOs.

The new directory makes provision for information on contact persons including their personal and professional email addresses. The update process is ongoing with the assistance of the Institute’s networks and partners in West African Countries, who furnish a credible list of CSOs from the respective countries. An online version of the directory is situated on WACSI’s website.

**Ghana Civil Society e-directory Project**

In 2011, the Institute conducted an intensive and extensive data collection of information on CSOs in Ghana. This project was supported by the Office for Cooperation and Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of France in Ghana, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ghana and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. Information collected was used to develop a dedicated Ghanaian civil society web portal (www.civilsociety.org.gh). The web portal maps out legally registered CSOs including NGOs/INGOs/CBOs/Networks working at different levels and addressing different development challenges in Ghana. The site provides information on CSOs based on their regional location and areas of programmatic focus.

On the 20th of September 2011, the web portal was launched in Accra, Ghana in the presence of civil society practitioners, project partners, international development partners and officials from the social welfare department. The expectation is that this innovation would engender greater collaboration and enhance partnership among CSOs in Ghana.

**WACSI’s Periodic Monographs**

WACSI continued to publish its quarterly electronic journal, the “WACSeries”. Its objective is to emphasize the contribution of CSOs to the promotion of democracy, good governance and the socio-economic development of West Africa, and, to create in-depth debates on issues of interest to civil society. The series covers all the areas of intervention of CSOs in the sub-region. In 2011, the Institute commissioned three (3) monographs:

» “Reviewing the 50+ Years of Women’s Participation in Politics in Nigeria”, by Obi Nwankwo;


“Communities must be guaranteed an active role in conflict resolution with the help of civil society organizations and their professional expertise.”

This was a statement made by Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director of WACSI during a seminar organised to disseminate the outcome of a research undertaken by WACSI in collaboration with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Open Society Institute. The publication titled “Governance and Security: THE DAGBON CHIEFTANCY CRISIS” was officially launched in March 2011.

The launch gave an opportunity for CSOs represented, government of Ghana, researchers and conflict experts to explore the potential of non-state actors in mitigating communal conflicts. The meeting brought various stakeholders together to brainstorm on the role of state/civil society co-operation in establishing a more democratic, transparent and all-inclusive national peace and security architecture in Ghana.

The Dagbon crisis revolves around two family lines to the kingship, the Abudu and Andani families, “which have pitted children from the same royal ancestry against each other in an internecine conflict for the past 200 years” explains Dr. Ken Ahorsu and Dr. Boni Yao Gebe, authors of the book. Despite the interventions of government, international and civil society bodies to address the king’s murder and the continuous royal succession struggles, the violent quest for royal supremacy has been perpetuated over the years through atrocious violence, animosities and destructive family feuds.

The research came up with the following key findings:

- Political maneuvering and implicit actions by influential individuals linked to the two gates and supported by ruling political elites who have held sensitive positions in the immediate past might have contributed to the death of Ya Na Yakubu Andani II;
- The incessant intrusions into the disputes by successive Ghanaian governments along ideological lines have also contributed to the complexity of the crisis;
- There is a lack of a systematic structural and operational strategy that can transform the socio-economic conditions of the citizens of Northern Ghana towards peaceful co-existence and development;
- The Dagbon crisis is unlikely to be resolved amicably through normal judicial processes.

The successful management of the Dagbon crisis calls for innovative openings and unbiased co-operation between the government and non-state actors. This report portrays non-state actors as integral contributors to peace-making through their significant contributions geared towards the resolution of communal conflicts. However, the potential suspicion between governmental and non-state actors does not help the cause.

Professionalism and transparency is required from both CSOs and government in order to ensure effective co-operation and a fruitful collaboration among stakeholders striving to resolve conflicts. This is one of the key points of consensus at the dissemination Seminar.

The need to break the trend that most conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa are analyzed by foreign academics underpins SIPRI’s decision to collaborate with WACSI. The collaboration gave birth to new facts and concrete suggestions geared towards bringing lasting peace to some of these conflicts, particularly communal conflicts.

2011 was in all respects instructive considering the volume of research initiatives that contributed to civil society enrichment. It is hoped that the outcomes of these initiatives would contribute to civil society’s development and effectiveness in West Africa.
Contributing towards an Effective, Efficient and Influential civil society in West Africa

The Executive Director (ED) of WACSI, Nana Afadzinu Asantewa has led the Institute since October 2012. Dynamic, vibrant and focused, the ED has steered the dynamic team working at the Institute to continue in its efforts to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of CSOs in West Africa. In her word to civil society practitioners and organisations, she urges them to “think of WACSI when it comes to institutional and operational strengthening of CSOs in West Africa”. In an interview with the Communications and Information Assistant (CIA) of WACSI, the ED expatiates on the milestone achievements of the Institute in 2011 and firmly affirms her optimism towards the Institute’s goal of achieving higher heights in 2012 and beyond.

CIA: How can you describe WACSI’s position within the civil society sector within West Africa?

ED: WACSI is a crucial and credible partner of civil society within the sub-region. Civil society can rely on WACSI to build their institutional and operational capacities. I think that over the years, WACSI has continued to provide that kind of partnership and that is how WACSI is seen.

CIA: For the time that you have been at the helm of the Institute, how do you perceive the level of appreciation accorded to WACSI?

ED: So far, I must state that CSOs that have interacted with WACSI have a lot of respect for the Institution. WACSI continues to enhance its visibility as a regional organization, and feedback from organisations that have interacted with WACSI show that they have a lot of respect for the Institute. They have appreciated WACSI’s level of professionalism and the quality of its services.

CIA: In 2010, WACSI encountered some challenges. Despite these, WACSI continued to deliver courses, mentorship to organisations and policy advocacy programmes across the sub-region. What accounts for this productive accomplishment?

ED: It is often said that trials makes us stronger. So I think that what 2010 did for WACSI. Though the Institute faced a couple of challenges, it emerged stronger. The team at WACSI, without an ED, and led by the resident board member, Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy, took up the responsibility to ensure that WACSI continued to deliver on its programmes. They worked very hard and delivered beyond expectation. The challenges encountered in 2010 brought out the creativity and innovativeness of the staff. It built team spirit and forged togetherness. During this year, the Institute initiated its highly appreciated and demanded fee-paying courses. I must commend the WACSI board also for their support which contributed immensely to the progress made at the time. The gains of 2010 were built on in 2011.

CIA: WACSI realised a significant number of achievements in 2011, a few months after you took office. The Institute organised an outstanding number of eighteen (18) training courses across the sub-region and commissioned a regional research. What accounts for this productive accomplishment?

ED: 2010 served as a great beginning for WACSI on which 2011 was built. I joined WACSI with a lot of vibrancy, verve and new ideas to push WACSI to where it needed to go. There are a number of things I identified. One of them being that the Institute had implemented several programmes in Accra. It had conducted few training programmes in other West African countries. So there was need for us to reach out. WACSI targeted specific countries and constituencies such as post-conflict countries in which CSOs have a need for the kind of services we offer. We also worked with women’s organisations in Liberia. WACSI also collaborated with government and sub-regional institutions, ECOWAS being one of them. Prior to 2011, WACSI ran a fundraising and proposal writing course; but in 2011, WACSI streamlined the focus of the course to proposal writing aimed at specific grants such as European Union, World Bank and USAID. The Institute also published a programmed calendar of its courses so that CSOs could plan accordingly, to benefit from the courses. The number of trainings organized only portrayed the capacity of WACSI to deliver this number of high quality trainings and have a good response.
ED: I believe that the more you are known to deliver services that your target beneficiaries need, the more relevant you are, and the more people who need what you offer, reach out. A fundamental reason that accounts for this is that we have a young, eager to learn and enterprising youth in West Africa who are ready to make use of opportunities like the Next Generation Internship program offered by WACSI. This is a programme that aims to build the professional capacity and leadership capabilities of young West Africans and develop their civic consciousness. WACSI receives many applications but only has space for two to four each year. In 2011 the Institute’s partnership with the French Embassy in Ghana to develop an e-directory for civil society organisations in Ghana enabled WACSI to host two additional interns to collect this data across the national territory and upload the information onto the website. WACSI also encourages volunteerism and in 2011, it hosted a volunteer from Finland, Anna-Rikka Kauppinen who made an invaluable contribution to the Research and Documentation unit.

CIA: Normally WACSI attracts 2-3 interns a year but last year WACSI had 5 interns and a volunteer. What accounts for this significant increase?

ED: We are coming to an end of the current strategy (2008-2012) so we have to review our strategy. In terms of structure, from my experience here so far, the programmes we have run and the feedback we have gotten from CSOs, indicates the need to run more long-term training programmes. So the new strategy will look at long-term capacity development programmes for civil society in West Africa. Among other things, the Institute will also focus on enhancing its own capacity in order to respond to the huge demand of capacity strengthening programmes for civil society practitioners that the Institute is engaged in within the sub-region.

CIA: The Institute is in the process of developing and institutionalizing its new strategy for 2013 – 2017. How has your 15 months in this position informed this process?

CIA: In 2011, WACSI trained civil society practitioners from Sierra Leone and Guinea which were relatively new countries that the Institute conducted programmes in. How did you identify the need to tailor programmes that would address the capacity needs of civil society within these countries?
ED: Before developing the current strategy, a needs assessment for civil society in the sub-region was conducted. Many of the programmes run by the Institute since it commenced operations in 2007 are based on the needs that were identified. In some countries there is greater need than others, for example, in post-conflict countries. I must emphasise here that there exists a huge need for operational and institutional capacity development for civil society actors across West Africa. This underscores the relevance of WACSI and informs its decision to target specific countries to carryout unique interventions.

CIA: How does WACSI plan to reach out with its capacity development programmes to civil society practitioners and organisations in West African countries where the Institute has not organised trainings in?

ED: We will constantly organize regional trainings that will benefit civil society actors from all West African Countries. The Institute will also organize capacity building programmes in targeted countries where there is greater need and where particular demands have been made by civil society or partners in those countries for WACSI’s services and support. The Institute also continues to reach out to all practitioners across the sub-region through our website and e-newsletter.

CIA: It has been four years since WACSI began operations, how well has the Institute achieved its mandate?

ED: In terms of our mandate which guides us to focus on institutional strengthening, we have made an impact but I believe we can do a lot more. I am sure that the long-term capacity development projects; going through the training process, mentoring and coaching processes, will enable the Institute to better measure its impact over a period of time. So far we have trained over 1162 civil society actors from CSOs who have made use of the skills within their organisations. I am sure that if you ask me the same question in the next five years I will emphatically point out how better we have performed as an Institute.

CIA: It is a very rare opportunity for civil society actors to read from the ED. What message would you share with organisations that are looking forward to work with WACSI in the future?

ED: I would like organized CSOs, particularly in West Africa to think of WACSI first and foremost as their key partner for development. CSOs should know that WACSI is their resource and is available and willing to work with them to strengthen their institutional and operational capacities. So, if they are thinking of where to go to get the resources needed to strengthen their institutions, deliver on their mandate and become effective, efficient, influential and also sustainable in the long term, they should think of WACSI.
Reinforcing our Strength

The Institute has been operating with a lean secretariat since its inception in 2006. However, its institutional growth calls for additional staff capacity which will represent the linguistic and cultural diversity of West Africa. In 2011, in line with the objectives of the Institute, staff strength was upgraded to ensure a full complement of staff. The internal capacity of staff was built through a more structured staff development regimen. The Institute provided the requisite operational needs to enable staff perform their duties with efficiency and effectiveness. The next generation internship programme was also strengthened and expanded to cover volunteers and national service personnel.

Staffing

In pursuance of the Institute’s objective to strengthen its internal capacity and also to increase its regional presence, WACSI has grown from a modest beginning in 2007 with five (5) staff members to a total number of twenty one (21) by the end of 2011. The number was made up of twelve (12) permanent staff, five (5) interns, two (2) volunteers and two (2) National service personnel. The staff is made up of nationals from West African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Cote d’Ivoire and Guinea.

New Recruitments

In line with the objective of upgrading the staff strength to ensure a full complement of staff, the following two (2) vacant positions of Programme Assistant, and Executive Assistant were filled after a rigorous selection process. WACSI thrives on a staff capacity that reflects the cultural diversity of West Africa. The Institute’s staff are carefully recruited from across the sub-region to build an Institute that reflects the language diversity in West Africa.

Capacity Development for staff

In a bid to strengthen the internal capacity of WACSI’s staff, the following staff were sponsored to undergo various short courses relevant to their work. They tell us in the next paragraphs how this has had a positive impact in their work and personal development.

Kwabena Kroduah - Finance Officer, participated in the WACSI Regional training in Financial Management and Budgetary Control for CSOs held in Ghana from 22 – 24 June, 2011 to refresh and upgrade his operational skills. Kwabena explains that,

“The training enhanced my understanding of the need to sensitize staff on the relevance of cost consciousness, thereby helping project staff to stay within budgets limits. I gained a deeper understanding of how to strategically cost all aspects incorporated within activities pertaining to programme implementation.”
Grace A. Ziggah-Quaye - Bilingual Secretary/Receptionist, took part in a two day course in July, 2011 in Effective Front Desk Management. The course was organised by the University of Ghana Business School. The course enabled her to upgrade and enhance her front desk skills. Grace confirmed that:

“As the first eye of any organization, frontline staff plays a key role in marketing a company and establishing goodwill. It is in this view that WACSI Management offered me an opportunity to attend the Effective Front Desk Management training organized by the University of Ghana Business and Administration School in order to improve upon my knowledge to receive and handle visitors or their calls. The training added more quality to my behavior, dressing and comportment, the way to talk in my daily official duties and even how to be efficient in multitasking between the programmes and administration units. I now consider myself as one of the institute’s important communication tools”.

Mohamed Abdulai Ibrahim - Office Assistant/Cleaner, was sponsored to take professional driving lessons for seven weeks from August to September, 2011. The skills acquired will help the Institute fill the gap when the permanent driver is off duty.

Katherine Adarkwa - Administrative Officer, participated in a 3-day regional training in Results-Based Management for CSOs organised by WACSI in Ghana from 24 - 26 August, 2011. The course helped her acquire new knowledge in the area of results based-management.

She also attended a four (4) weeks course in Human Resource Management (HRM) organized by Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) Business School from 21 November to 16 December, 2011. Katherine points out that:

“In line with WACSI’s strategic objectives and in view of the steady growth of the organization, the training received in Results-Based Management has broadened my understanding and involvement in programme planning, monitoring and evaluation and equipped me to be more involved in programme activities. The training acquired in Human Resource Management has equipped me with the tools to better manage the human resource (the most important asset) of the organization strategically to support the Institute to achieve its mission, goals and objectives in the coming years. After the training, I have, among others, and in consultation with the Executive Director, been able to review the Staff Conditions of Service and make some input. I have also revised the staff performance appraisal forms to better serve its purpose as not only an appraisal but a performance management system which will inform training needs, reward and if possible promotion”.

Omolara Balogun - Policy Advocacy Officer, attended a six (6) weeks Professional Development course from 26 September, 2011 to 11th November, 2011 (Certification Program in Facilitation and Training Approaches for Community Change and a Certificate Program in Advocacy and Citizen Engagement) at the Coady International Institute, University of St. Francis Xavier. This was made possible through a partial scholarship from the Institute Omolara remarked that:

“The skills and knowledge I acquired from the training has facilitated the internalisation of some of the training programmes in the Policy Advocacy Unit. These skills include my ability to among others:

» design context-specific trainings (indigenous courses) in Policy Advocacy for CSOs;
» develop learning designs and training toolkits for various courses in the Policy Advocacy Unit.

After the training, I have been able to, in collaboration with the Executive Director; develop two on Introduction to Policy Advocacy and Engagement and Networking and Alliance Building. The manuals will also add to the knowledge base (generation and sharing), and particularly serve as additional learning resource for the Institute and its partners.

The training has greatly enhanced my facilitation skills. Upon my return in November 2011; I co-facilitated 1 training on Advanced Policy Advocacy and Engagement in Sierra Leone.

Charles Vandyck – Capacity Building Officer, was sponsored to undertake a 3-day course in Knowledge Management from 24-27th October, in Nairobi, Kenya. The course was organised by IMA International. Charles points out that:

“After the training I formulated a draft Knowledge sharing and learning strategy for WACSI. Certain aspects of this strategy has been already been institutionalized and is contributing to increasing awareness and understanding of Knowledge sharing in WACSI, improving WACSI’s operational and programmatic efficiency and effectiveness, enabling WACSI to be innovative and implement new activities, transforming WACSI into a versatile learning organisation and increasing awareness and visibility of WACSI globally”.

WACSI 2011 Annual Report
Grants Management System (GMS) Training

The Programmes, Administration and Finance Unit staff undertook a 4-day GMS training from 27 to 30 June, 2011. This was facilitated by Youssoupha Pouye, the Finance Associate of OSIWA, WACSI’s main donor. The training has enabled the Institute to improve its programmes and finance reporting processes to OSIWA.

Promoting Bilingualism in WACSI

In a drive to boost the bilingual capacity of staff, bridge the language divide and enable staff communicate fluently in both English and French languages, the Institute received funds from the Embassy of France in Ghana to partially finance 100 hours of French lessons for some staff members. This is to improve the language skills of the staff to be able to fulfil the mandate of increasing the Institute’s regional presence in the sub-region.

Representation of the bilingual aptitude of staff 2011 was characterised by successes and achievements depicted in the projects realised by the Institute. Augmenting staff capacity, enhancing the language and knowledge capacities of staff were some of the measures put in place to enable the Institute to achieve its annual agenda as it strives to fulfill its mandate.
Luvenia C. Cole, Executive Director, Forum for the Rights of Women Liberia

“I attended the Policy Advocacy and Engagement training for CSOs in Liberia which was organized by WACSI. This training enhanced my knowledge on Policy Engagement and Advocacy especially with regards to lobbying on issues affecting women. The training from WACSI has empowered me with the requisite skills I require for my position. I shared the knowledge acquired with members of my organisation and other organisations that I network with. Moreover, the training has prepared me to develop more methodologies/strategies in policy advocacy programs which have helped in promoting and protecting the rights of women in Liberia. Finally, it mostly increased my pursuit of democratic governance, responsiveness and accountability in running my institution.”

Patrick Adebayo, Justice Development and Peace Centre (JDPC), Nigeria

“It was a privilege for me to attend the training on NGO Management organised by WACSI in Lagos, Nigeria. I learnt a lot on project design, monitoring and evaluation, understanding what indicators are and their relevance, and a lot more which has since then, enabled me to make more strategic and significant inputs to my organisation’s managerial procedures and project design and implementation approach. Prior to this training, I have had my capacity built in proposal writing but I must confess that the experience I acquired in this WACSI training has been a bench mark for other proposal documents I have been in contact with afterwards. It was a good training. I hope to come back to WACSI for other training. THANK YOU WACSI!”

Anthony S. Kolaco, Program Officer, Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), Liberia

“I attended two training programs organised by WACSI in Monrovia, Liberia; Policy Engagement and Advocacy and Corporate Governance Trainings. Both trainings provided a breathtaking journey of self-discovery, learning, inspiration, motivation and interaction. I am a different person now, and my path forward has been greatly influenced by what those courses endowed in me on how NGOs can be better managed and how we can influence policy makers at all levels.

During both trainings, I learned more than I could ever have been taught by any group of lecturers within a short period of time. The facilitators who provided the oxygen to keep up rolling were excellent and deserved a ‘PAR-CHA’ (ice breaker used during training sessions to appreciate the facilitator or trainee).

It made me realise that my leadership and contributions to my organisation are valueless and annulled if it doesn’t affect the lives of people around me and give them a dignified livelihood as a civil society actor working for social justice and community empowerment in Liberia and the world at large.

I say again, keep up the zest and all the best to WACSI.”
The WACSI training on Policy Advocacy and Engagement Training which was organised in Sierra Leone from December 12 to 15, 2011 opened up brand new vistas for my advocacy work. It was my first formal introduction to government policy processes which for the most part remain an obscure domain. With the constantly vibrant dynamics between the demand and supply sides of governance, civil society needs to know enough about the processes in order to do advocacy from a position of strength.

A very useful aspect of the training is the opportunity to support the state policy process if asked to do so. This way, it is not just the civil society activist waiting to blow the whistle, but can actually help correct certain systemic challenges that impair better performance on the part of state actors. The participatory and interactive methods used by the facilitators helped a lot to demystify the subject matter.

The training equipped me with the necessary guidance and right approach to policy advocacy which helps to bring out the desired outcomes in our interface with state actors. Of particular relevance and benefit is the planning of advocacy campaign. The handbook given at the end of the training remains one of my closest companions.

My organisation has realised the following as a result of my participation in this training:

- Our advocacy strategy as an organisation was reviewed to strengthen what we have been doing in the field. I had a three days training of my programme staff to ensure that they also benefit from such training and that even our beneficiaries are able to see themselves with much confidence in advocacy work and engagement with local and central authorities.
- Immediately after the training, some key strategies were highlighted as supplement to our existing strategies which we intend to incorporate when our review committee meets.
- Over this period, we have opened up networks and relates with other institutions in a more professional manner thereby creating a stronger partnership.
- A strong advocacy campaign was launched sometime back and we have been able to create centre with notice boards that could serve as information sharing points especially for young people who have now been included in local council committees in various communities.

I am delighted to have formed a part of the NGO Management training held in Monrovia in 2011 under the auspices of WASCI and Trust Africa. I learnt a great deal about varying aspects of NGO management including budgeting, project design and implementation as well as image management.

Additional knowledge acquired on budgeting from the training has helped me to independently begin formulating project and activity budgets. I had the opportunity to transfer some of the knowledge to others while facilitating a Budget Literacy and Monitoring Training for the Young Men Christian Association of Liberia (YMCA), a local non-governmental organization involved with youth development and governance works.

As Coordinator and focal person of my institution on a project we are implementing jointly along with two other institutions, I am particularly utilizing knowledge obtained during the training to manage the project properly.

Admittedly, my participation in the Monrovia-NGO Management Training has been rewarding given that I am utilising the knowledge acquired to enhance my work as aforementioned. I pray for more of such opportunities to be available to others in Liberia and elsewhere to allow them meaningfully contribute to the growth and development of their respective institutions and societies.

Thank you WACSI.
The Next Generation Internship: Platform for Human Resource Development

WACSI Interns “...find a way out or make one” ...

By Aicha Araba Etrew.

Aicha was an intern at WACSI. Upon completion of her internship, she was recruited as the Programmes Assistant at IDEG. Aicha Araba Etrew recounts her days at WACSI.

I joined WACSI as a young and ambitious post graduate student of International Affairs with no working knowledge on civil society organisations (CSOs), and, graduated as a fully groomed civil society practitioner endowed with the ability to contribute in building a stronger civil society in Ghana and beyond. Personally, I was ready to explore the practical aspects related to the international non-governmental organisation (INGO) and non-governmental organisation (NGO) job market, learn and acquire the requisite skills for personal development. It was this readiness, willingness and mindset that enabled me to go through the enriching first and second phases of the Next Generation Internship Programme at WACSI.

I worked directly with the programme officers specifically in the areas of training and capacity building and policy advocacy. This exposed me to first-hand information on the techniques required to succeed in this field. It was strictly a ‘learning-by-doing’ process, one I very much enjoyed and benefited from. My task ranged from organizing and coordinating programmes/workshops to rapporteuring, preparing budgets for programmes and assisting in other official assignments. This broadened my scope of experience, and further sharpened my skills in research, analysis, and report writing. It also deepened my knowledge in topical issues relating to democracy and development across the West Africa.

The programme offered me with the platform to enhance my leadership and organizational skills by working as part of a team or independently on special projects. The team spirit at WACSI is unrivaled. The pinnacle of this programme is that it gave me practical ‘real life’ experience in the not-for-profit sector; one which money cannot buy. My quest to learn and succeed built in me an inner confidence which psychologically motivated me to surmount work related challenges.

I must admit that I enjoyed the workshops most, not because I had the opportunity to travel across West Africa, but, because it gave me an opportunity to meet and interact with other prominent practitioners in the civil society sector in West Africa. In effect, I widened my network base and enhanced my human relations and communication skills.

Professionally, I have developed a robust ability to compare and analyse theoretical knowledge acquired in the lecture room with the world of work regarding international organizational experiences. My first working experience after WACSI...
A Rewarding Research Experience at WACSI

By Anna-Riikka Kauppinen

My time at WACSI in spring and summer 2011 gave me skills, experiences and memories that I still vividly recall. After graduating as a cultural anthropologist, I decided to move to Ghana to work based on my positive experience in the country in 2010, when I had lived in Accra doing research for my master’s thesis. When I obtained a grant from my native country, Finland, to support a work experience abroad, I chose to return to Accra. I was determined to find an organization where I could work for a clear cause and accomplish concrete results.

Immediately upon arriving to WACSI’s head office in East Legon, I knew I had come to the right place! The organization and its staff were buzzing good energy, enthusiasm and motivation. I had previously worked as a street campaigner for Amnesty International in Finland, so I was excited to learn about civil society capacity building and advocacy in the West African setting.

WACSI was in need of assistance in research and documentation activities. My most challenging, and rewarding task was to design and search contributors to WACSI’s edited volume, “Civil Society and Development in West Africa.” This project gave me a lot of responsibility and experience of handling a project with many “moving parts”. Contacting and corresponding with 16 contributors throughout the spring and summer 2011 was a peculiar example of such a task. Through this correspondence, I learned a great deal about the state of civil society in ECOWAS countries, and the integral manner in which civil society contributes to democratic and economic development. I also became aware of the heterogeneous nature of the civil society sector in different nations, which adds up to WACSI’s challenge to act as an umbrella organization that addresses the varying capacity needs of CSOs across the sub-region. In addition to the research project, I provided editorial support, guided the Institute’s interns in their writing tasks, helped in restructuring the Resource Center and doing background research for other projects at WACSI.

After leaving Ghana, I have been following WACSI’s impressive track record in civil society capacity building, documentation activities and policy advocacy. WACSI is a model example of a non-governmental organization that can truly make a difference. This capacity derives from the Institute’s rigorous work ethic that does not compromise its quality standards of operations and dedication. Besides the high quality of WACSI’s trainings and publications, this rigorousness reflects in the seriousness with which interns are supervised. Each intern is given a lot of individual attention and opportunities to grow both professionally and personally.

I am grateful to WACSI for granting me similar chances to pursue genuinely challenging tasks. The Institute has an exceptional atmosphere that engages every worker in a common cause, which is essential of any productive work environment. I am hoping to maintain close contact with WACSI, and still consider the Institute as one of my “homes” in Accra. I am looking forward to WACSI’s future projects and initiatives, which will enhance civil society practitioners’ capacities to act as catalysts of social change in West Africa.

was to develop a communication strategy for a project proposal for International Planned Parenthood Federation-Africa Regional Office (IPPF-ARO) in Nairobi. I initially doubted my ability to accomplish this task, not because I was incapable, but because I had never developed a communication strategy. I basically had no clue as to how to go about it. However with the determination to succeed wherever I find myself, I took inspiration from what my supervisor at WACSI - Charles Vandyck always says to me; “make use of the resources available to you to find a way out or make one”. At that particularly time what I had at my disposal was my phone and the internet. So I conducted some research and contacted some resource persons including Charles Vandyck for assistance. At the end, I lived up to expectation!

I currently work as programmes assistant with the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), a leading African Think Tank in governance issues based in Ghana. I do my work with ease; I have an excellent working relationship with my colleagues at the office and in partner organizations. My experience at WACSI has transformed me into an individual who adapts easily to new environments and exert control over the conditions to prevent challenges from surpassing my abilities.

To crown it all, I am no novice to CSO events/meetings because, the mention of my name rings a bell either due to my frequent phone calls to their organizations to get them to register for WACSI’s training programmes or, through the consistent email reminders on Call for Applications which I disseminated to civil society practitioners in West Africa. This has made me more comfortable, un-intimidated and confident to air my views and make meaningful contributions where necessary.

Thumbs up WACSI! Thank you for this outstanding lifetime working experience.
WACSI in collaboration with the Embassy of France, Ghana, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, Ghana officially launched the first national civil society e-directory for civil society organisations in Ghana. The URL link to the website is: www.civilsociety.org.gh

The Civil Society directory website is designed to facilitate timely access to a comprehensive range of information on organizations and institutions relevant to the Ghanaian Civil Society community. The expectation is that this innovation would stimulate greater collaboration and enhance partnership among Civil Society Organizations in Ghana.

The web portal based e-directory maps out Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working at different levels in the country and provides information on the regional location and areas of specialization of CSOs.

CSOs represented on the web portal are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith-based Organisations (FBOs), Youth groups, humanitarian organisations and associations.

The Executive Director of WACSI Nana Asantewa Afadzinu explains that ‘it took the support and cooperation of Civil Society groups, institutions, associations and platforms across the entire span of the country to make this take off possible’. ‘Every Civil Society Organisation has ownership interest and a stake in this project and that is a plus because it would ensure the sustainability of this initiative’.

The beneficiaries of the project are CSOs, Development Partners, Government, the media and the general public. Beyond ensuring that CSOs in Ghana get greater visibility in Ghana and globally for their endeavours and for their social action initiatives, this novelty would encourage and enhance communication and collaboration amongst CSOs on the one hand and between CSOs and other partners on the other hand.’

The former Ambassador of France to Ghana, Mr. Pierre Jacquemot remarked that the Ghana CSO e-directory is an initiative that should be seen as a property of Ghanaian CSOs and therefore they should ensure that it becomes interactive and utilised to serve CSOs’ interest in Ghana.

The Country Director of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kamil Kayode Kamaluddeen remarked that the CSO website will help the programme to identify and work with civil society organisations that are credible.

The head of research unit at the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, Mr. Harrison Tetteh-Donkor indicated that the newly launched website will reduce the bureaucratic bottlenecks associated with retrieving information on CSOs from the department’s database.

The website is to serve as a primary source of information to CSOs and their constituents. The portal is regularly updated and serves as a platform for engagement, used to galvanise and strengthen Civil Society in Ghana.
Creating Sustainable Partnerships

SIPRI-OSI AFRICA SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE PROJECT

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) partnered with WACSI under the SIPRI-OSI African Security and Governance project. The purpose of the partnership was to establish a platform for much-needed dialogue on security sector issues in Africa, to support the participation of African CSOs in security debates and to infuse civil-society perspectives into security sectors issues throughout Africa and beyond.

The project was set up to address two principal challenges which include; i.) The lack of effective civil society participation in security sector issues in Africa and (ii.) The lack of experience, knowledge and background in security sector issues among African CSOs.

The project enabled SIPRI to collaborate with WACSI in addressing the identified challenges through the following avenues:

» Providing WACSI with training in how to conduct research on security sector issues – framing topics, gathering and analyzing data, and writing research reports.
» Linking WACSI and other participating African CSOs with experts on African security sector issues.
» Organizing workshops and meetings amongst a select group of African CSOs (including WACSI) to share their experiences, expertise and ideas on security sector issues.
» Providing support to WACSI to conduct a country case study research on Dagbon conflict in Ghana and to publish and disseminate the report to relevant stakeholders.

SIPRI considers the partnership with WACSI to be valuable and a poignant addition to the entire project. The Institute completed its country case study research, on the ‘The Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis’ which it published and publicised.

Given the robust organizational structure of the Institute, it organised and hosted meetings and workshops related to the ASG project. This was on account of WACSI’s reliability, quality staff, planning and organizational abilities and the outstanding strength of its overall institutional capacity.

WACSI contributed enormously to the launching of a Pan-African CSO Capacity Building Network on Security Sector issues alongside the other partner African CSOs. The purpose of the network is to assist African CSOs to develop their knowledge and expertise on security issues. The Institute was unanimously chosen by partner CSOs on the ASG project to serve as the secretariat for the Pan-African network. In this role, WACSI is currently steering the putting in place of a robust framework that will get the network operational and contribute to address the identified security challenges.

Given the robust organizational structure of WACSI, it organised and hosted meetings and workshops related to the ASG project.

This was on account of WACSI’s reliability, quality staff, planning and organizational abilities and the outstanding strength of its overall institutional capacity.
WACSI empowers civil society organisations with institutional and operational skills to enable them become more effective and efficient in their work. To achieve this, the institute collaborates with other development partners who share WACSI's vision.

- WACSI/ IWP-OSI Partnership
- WACSI/ Embassy of France Partnership
- WACSI/ SIPRI Partnership “Striving for a more Secure Africa”
- ICR2P
- IBIS Liberia
- WIPSEN-AFRICA
- ACPPP
- OSIWA
- OSJI
- WADR (contact Peter at WADR)
- ECOWAS
Finance Report Kwabena Kroduah
Statistical and graphical representation of funds (incoming funds and expenses made)
Representation of increase in funding received in 2011 as opposed to 2010
Testimonial to attest to our judicious spending (if any)
List of Donors KWABENA

Donors and amounts received
port Services JIMM (With Pictures)
Civil Society Resource Center
Conference Room Rentals
Teleconferencing Service