



NEXT GENERATION EXTERNSHIP REPORT



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SUBMITTED TO:
WEST AFRICA CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I want to thank the Almighty God for his guidance and protection throughout my six (6) months internship period at the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI). The Next Generation Internship programme offered me a great opportunity to acquire new skills, develop professionally and exposed me to civil society operations and contributions in West Africa. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with knowledgeable colleagues and professionals who guided and coached me through this internship period.

I want to express my deepest and profound thanks to:

- Mrs. Nana Asantewa Afadzinu (Executive Director of WACSI) for leading an organisation that is committed to building the capacity and skills of young West Africans so they are well equipped to chart their professional career paths in the development sector.
- Mrs. Katherine Adarkwa, (Head of Administration, WACSI) for being accommodating and providing the necessary advice and guidance.
- Mr. Jimm Chick Fomunjong, (Head of Knowledge Management Unit) who despite being busy with his duties, took time out to guide, coach and keep me on the correct path and allowed me to carry out my projects in the unit. He offered all the necessary feedback and constructive criticism in the performance of my tasks. I appreciate your push and encouragement, Sir.
- Mr. Christian Elongue (Programme Officer, Knowledge Management Unit) for guiding and giving necessary advice in the performance of my duties.
- Miss Perpetual Tindana (Programme Assistant, Knowledge Management Unit) for her careful and precious guidance, patience, supervision and follow-up on my daily activities. Thank you for being a great support.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) is a non-governmental organisation that works to bridge the gaps in the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) towards effective engagement with State, its policy processes, the private sector and key development stakeholders in West Africa. The institute envisions a peaceful and prosperous West Africa where its people drives its own development. It seeks to achieve its vision by strengthening civil society to be more responsive, collaborative, representative, resilient and influential through knowledge sharing, learning, connecting and influencing. The institute's theory of change focuses on a three-dimensional strategy of capacity development, knowledge management and policy influencing. The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) in 2005 established WACSI but it became operational in July 2007. Since its inception, the institute has empowered and built the capacity of over 2303 development practitioners from 1837 organisations across Africa.

WACSI instituted the "Next Generation Leadership Internship Programme" to offer young West Africans a six (6) months professional career experience to gain skills and build capacity through experiential learning. The internship programme aims at building interns' capacity in the following areas; leadership, proposal writing, report writing, training and facilitation skills and to expose interns' key socio-economic development issues in West Africa. The Programme offers a one-month externship opportunity where interns work in other organisations within the development sector to enhance their knowledge, skills and build capacity so they become responsible civil society actors.

I was selected as one of the interns to join the "Next Generation Internship Programme" from July to December 2018. As an intern in the Knowledge Management Unit (KMU), these were my key responsibilities:

- Report Writing
- Proposal development;
- Concept note development;
- Inviting civil society to register on and use the E-directory Platform;
- Writing of civic space reports on Nigeria and Ghana for publication on the CIVICUS Monitor website;
- Writing of Situational Reports of civil society in Ghana, Niger, Senegal and The Gambia for publication on the WACSI Website.

This report seeks to share my work experiences during the six (6) month internship period at WACSI. It outlines projects undertaken, contributions, challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations.

2.0 WORKING EXPERIENCE AT WACSI

As a team member of the Knowledge Management Unit, I worked under the supervision of the Head of the unit, Mr. Jimm Chick Fomunjong. I also received support and coaching from Mr. Christian Elongue (Programme Officer) and Miss Perpetual Tindana. However, I also had the opportunity to assist other two units on some of their projects.

I took part in Capacity Development Trainings, wrote Concept Notes and Proposals, Report Writing and offered other support. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.1 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

At the beginning of the internship programme, all interns received trainings from heads of units. These trainings introduced interns to the various units, their roles and built the capacity of interns so they can easily integrate in the work environment. There was a general orientation and training on specific topics.

- General Orientation:

The Administration and Finance Unit took us through a general orientation where they introduced and told us about WACSI, its programmes and units. At the orientation, we received jotters, pens and reading materials on WACSI. Mrs. Katherine Adarkwa also took us to each unit and introduced us to the staff and head of each unit.

- Internship Training:

As part of the internship programme, interns received training on various training modules to improve our knowledge and skills in the performance of our duties. We received training on report writing, situational report writing, leadership, proposal writing, training and facilitation skills, career development, research methodology and how to use Excel for project management.

- YALI West Africa Training:

During the YALI West Africa training, the Knowledge Management Unit facilitated the Communication Impact session under the Civic Leadership Track. I assisted the unit by printing out training materials for the session and supported the facilitation of the session.

- E-directory Web Portal Application Training:

HatuaTech facilitated a one-week training on the E-directory web portal application for the Knowledge Management Unit. The team was taking through the various sections of the online directory. At the end of the training, the team identified some functional issues with the platform. The team can effectively use the online platform and assist CSOs who may be facing challenges registering on the platform.

2.2 PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

I developed a concept note and a proposal to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative and the World Bank Group for funding to implement a capacity-strengthening project for civil society organisations working on early and forced marriage in Chad and Mali. I worked closely with Mr. Harrison Owusu on the proposal. The proposal was sent to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative and the World Bank Group for review and the institute will be notified if the proposal application is accepted by February 2019.

I also took part in a comparative study on NGO legal landscape in United Kingdom, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and lessons Ghana can learn from these countries. I also researched and compiled a list of Civil Society Organisations working in energy and water sector in the G5 Sahel region (Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger) for the African Development Bank.

2.3 Report Writing

It was the responsibility of interns to write reports. Some of the reports I wrote included

- Staff Meeting Minutes:

All interns took turns to write staff meeting minutes weekly. During my internship period, I wrote the minutes on several occasions.

- Situation Reports (SITREP):

The Knowledge Management Unit (KMU) trained all interns to write the situation reports. These reports conveyed details of civil society activities in all West African countries. I reported and monitored civil society activities in The Gambia, Senegal, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria.

I worked on the compiling of the monthly SITREP narrative report for the KMU and analysed report for publication. I also updated the situational report on the publisher. Mr. Christian Elongue and Ms. Perpetual Tindana reviewed these reports before publishing on the WACSI website.

- Civic Space Monitor:

I worked on writing up-to-date reports on the state of civil society freedoms in Nigeria and Ghana for publication on the CIVICUS Monitor. Nigeria is rated as an obstructed state since civic space is heavily contested by power holders, who impose a combination of legal and practical constraints on the full enjoyment of fundamental rights. Ghana, on the other hand is regarded as a narrowed state because the state allows individuals and CSOs to exercise their rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression; yet there are incidence of violations of these rights.

- Evaluation Reports:

I assisted the Policy Influencing and Advocacy unit in writing and analysing two post-training evaluation report after the Justice, Peace and Development Commission (JDPC) Training. The reports help the team assess the impact of the training programmes and receive feedback from participants on ways of improving the training programmes.

- Meeting Reports:

I had the opportunity to participate in the launch of the Multi-Stakeholder Business Integrity Forum organised by Ghana Integrity Initiative. Ms. Onyinda Adeboye and I represented the institute. The forum sought to facilitate engagement amongst business/private sector, state actors and civil society to identify, project and advocate for a corruption free business environment in Ghana. A three-pager report was presented to the Policy Influencing and Advocacy unit.

I also wrote the report after the introduction of the new WACSI website by the developer and the communication unit. After the meeting, a report was sent to Mr. Jimm Chick Fomunjong.

The KMU and the Communication unit held a meeting to strategize on ways of promoting the CSOs E-directory platform. Before the meeting, the KMU developed a social media content plan and an E-directory infographic, which guided the conversation. At the end of the meeting, the team decided that a social media calendar would be developed and handed over to the Communication unit. A report was sent to the head of the Knowledge Management Unit.

I participated in an Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) Webinar for Anglophone West African Countries to open a Call for Application for Election into the Third ECOSOCC Permanent General Assembly. Eligibility criteria required for Civil Society Organisations to be

elected into the 3rd General Assembly of the Council was discussed. A debriefing report was submitted.

2.4 Other Support

- Capacity Development Unit

I supported the Capacity Development Unit to prepare for YALI Regional Training Cohort 12. I helped with coordinating activities and sessions. I also organised all training materials and logistics needed for the session. I assisted the team at training centre from 7-13 November 2018.

I also supported the team to prepare for the Regional Learning Programme and Study Tour on Social Accountability in Guinea. All documentation needed for the programme was organised for the team.

- Ghana Philanthropy Forum

I represented the institute at the Launch of the Charity Week. The objective of the celebration was to increase visibility for NGOs through strategic engagement and position. It also sought to bring NGOs together to collaboratively support initiatives that impact lives.

- Front Desk Support

I had the opportunity to work at the reception area every Thursday which helped build my customer service relations. I learnt a lot about managing the front desk through feedback I got from colleagues.

3.0 EXTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AT PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES (PDA) LIMITED.

Participatory Development Associates (PDA) is an organisation that aims to support processes of empowerment and self-determination in communities, organisations and individuals. My one-month externship period begun from 8 October and ended on 2 November 2018. I joined the Research, Evaluation and Learning Unit during my externship. I worked on four (4) activities which includes;

1. Reviewed two Chapters on Child Rights Protection in Ghana. The first week, I worked with the Advocacy and Communication unit to review two chapters on Child Rights Protection in Ghana (Leaving No Child Behind in Ghana: Is the Working Child Protected? and Child Marriage and Sexual Exploitation in Ghana). Key facts from these chapters were taken out for social media publication.
2. Participated in data collection workshop organised by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) on the Workforce Strengthening Initiative: intervention with Child Protection. The Research, Evaluation and Learning unit took part in these three days' workshop on data collection tools for the field research.
3. Researcher on Strengthening the Capacity of workforce on the Child and Family Welfare Policy in the Upper Denkyira West District of Ghana. I joined the team to Upper Denkyira West District to interview actors working on Child Rights Protection issues. I worked with Mr. Tom Pellens (OPM) on the field. The field research was to assess the impact of training workshops organised for actors working on Child Rights Protection Issues by the Institute of Local Government. We interviewed the District Coordinating Director of Upper Denkyira West District who gave responses to our questions. Representatives from the

Department of Social Development, World Vision and Ghana Education Service also took part in the interview. I coordinated a workshop organised for the Department of Social Development by Oxford Policy Management. I took notes during the workshop session.

4. Paper write up on Mechanisation and the future of Agricultural jobs in Ghana: Production, Market and Processing. I worked on a paper that focused on mechanisation and its impacts on agricultural jobs in Ghana. From the findings, adapting mechanisation in Agriculture could lead to increase production, reduce manual labour on farmlands and create employment opportunities within the agricultural value chain for people.

4.0 KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUIRED

The internship programme has been a learning experience from the first day to the very last. I have gained a lot of knowledge on civil society activities in the sub-region and the challenges they faced in their operations. I got the opportunity to read and learn about some West African countries like Niger, The Gambia and Senegal.

As an intern at the KMU unit, I sharpened my research and writing skills over the period. My colleagues introduced me to some search engines like ResearchGate and Google books that helped in my work. I was also encouraged by the Head of the unit and Leandre Banon from the Capacity Development Unit to write articles. I have been able to write an article which will be published on the WACSI website.

My networking and communication skills have improved. I have learnt from observation to communicate effectively with colleagues and senior management. I can better receive and accept constructive criticism and feedback from others.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The professional experience gained during the internship programme has brought to bear my strengths and weaknesses in a work environment. With this knowledge, I will work on continually developing and improving so I turn my weaknesses to strengths. The six (6) months experience has been a continual process of building capacity to work in an ever-changing civic space.

5.1 LESSONS LEARNT

- Be confident and believe in yourself.
- Teamwork and coordination help to achieve goals.
- Learning, trying new things and improving oneself is a continuous process.
- Always give your best in any endeavour especially in a new environment.
- Ask for assistance from superiors when in doubt about what to do. I needed clarification in performing a task, so I asked for assistance from my supervisor, this helped me clarify all doubts and complete the task.

5.2 CHALLENGES

- The time schedule for intern's capacity development training was not adhered to, as such some training clashed with assignments interns were working on.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- It should be mandatory that all trainings end in the first month of the internship programme. Interns should engage and remind Head of Units of training time.