

Nigeria Country Assessment

Executive summary

Nigeria, the most populous African nation with a population of 201 million (World Bank 2019)¹, is a federal state with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). There are 521 languages with over 250 ethnic groups. The official language of Nigeria, English, was chosen to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country. Nigeria is a religiously diverse society, with Christianity and Islam being the most professed religions, with a minority of people still practising traditional African religions (Wikipedia)². Human rights records and poverty indices of the oil-rich country remain poor. According to the US Department of State,³ the most significant human rights problems are use of excessive force by security forces, impunity of abuses, rape, torture etc.

The country is a federal system and pluralist in terms of ethnicity, region and laws. Some key legal documents that support prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) include the Constitution, the Violence against Persons Prohibition Act, the Child Rights Act and the Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Institutions Bill. Nigeria, with a highly patriarchal system, requires deep rooted behaviour change for a cultural shift and change in power dynamics.

The country assessments are designed to provide an evidence base that can inform the design of the national hubs for the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (RSH). Different approaches were deployed for data gathering in the conduct of the country assessment. These include Key Informant Interviews (KII), Online survey and Desk Review.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Key stakeholders to engage

The Nigeria PSEA network is the main coordinator in SEAH issues in Nigeria, this thus will be fundamental as an ally with whom to share resources, and as the (only) existing network in Nigeria dedicated to the issue of SEA. Within this network are all the relevant humanitarian stakeholders with whom RSH would want to develop a Community of Practice (CoP), although we would want to expand the RSH CoP to go well beyond the profile of the current members, mainly international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and the UN.

INGO Forum is a forum of International NGOs working in Nigeria. This group would also serve as a group to interphase with, especially in sharing of resources and getting them to link their civil society organisation (CSO) partners to the Nigerian Online Hub. However, it is worthy of note that those CSOs already partnering with INGOs might be less at risk and might not fit into the

¹ World Bank 2019

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria>

³ US Department of State



RESOURCE
& SUPPORT
HUB



category of less resourced CSOs as described by RSH since the INGOs would normally support them in safeguarding.

The National Expert Board also constitutes an excellent networking resource, offering RSH access to different organisations, structures and groups, and information about relevant opportunities where RSH could make an impact. We will want to carefully maintain this important advisory group.

Some other networks/stakeholders with a large CSO base to engage include NiNGONET (Non International NGO Network), Women in Humanitarian Network, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA).

We will work closely with FCDO Nigeria in order to ensure that we can access and influence not only FCDO programme partners, but also the donor working groups and their partners, for maximum outreach.

Focus on capacity-strengthening efforts by the national hub

Thematic gaps

Trainings on safeguarding are hardly prioritised consistently by organisations. There is less capacity on applying international standards, assessing against these standards and managing risks. The Nigerian Hub would aim to increase knowledge and skills on international SEAH standards and how to apply them in local context. This may be in terms of developing tools to help CSOs assess themselves against these standards as well as capacity-strengthening on SEAH risk management.

The assessment revealed gaps in working with partners to strengthen their SEAH policies and procedures, setting up whistle-blowing systems, community-based reporting mechanisms, knowledge of the role of human resources as relates to SEAH, survivor support and conduct of SEAH investigations. RSH in Nigeria need to support organisations in strengthening their HR systems using the PSEA lens as well other support functions such as Information and communications technology (ICT), media and communications. The use of volunteers is a common practice in NGO/CSOs. RSH can support CSOs in sensitizing their volunteers and develop materials that would target volunteers and lower cadre staff on their role in safeguarding.

Given the identified gap of PSEA/Safeguarding in development programs and other parts of Nigeria but rather concentrating in the north-east because of the humanitarian conflict, RSH would aim to support in addressing this need. Supporting the PSEA network and identifying ways to build a community of practice that reaches a much wider range of organisations (local, primarily).

Capacity-strengthening methodologies

The assessment revealed preference of various capacity-strengthening approaches namely in-person training, mentoring, peer learning, platform for asking questions and learning, list of identified service providers with expertise in safeguarding, a real time person clarifications and access to online resources. In line with this, RSH will identify a crop of CSO partners to benefit from more targeted traditional capacity-strengthening support. This will be piloted starting with mentoring (where identified mentors will provide one-to-one support to assigned CSO mentees) and subsequently include in-person training (with risk assessment and adhering to COVID-19 protocols). The use of WhatsApp as a community of practice platform for sharing and learning will be explored with this crop of CSOs. This would provide an opportunity for participating CSOs to share lessons amongst themselves for peer learning. The community of practice would provide a platform for asking questions and learning from others. A list of identified service providers will



RESOURCE
& SUPPORT
HUB



be put up in the Nigerian Hub after due diligence and quality assurance. E-learning modules, webinars/podcasts, Ask an Expert service and online resources would also be facilitated and made available in the online Hub to benefit as many CSOs as interested at no cost, this will thus allow the services of RSH to meet the needs of those that prefer those methodologies.

However, it is important to note that change with capacity-strengthening initiatives does not happen automatically as there need to be change not only in knowledge but also in behaviour which are usually shaped by moral, religious and social values.

Suggested target groups

Given the result of the assessment that indicated local NGOs/CSOs have very limited or zero capacity in terms of safeguarding, the services of the hub will focus primarily on NGOs and CSOs registered in Nigeria without international affiliations. This will range from those with national mandate across the 36 states of Nigeria and FCT to those with more zone or state-specific focus reaching grassroots and targeting harder to reach areas. Given the gap identified in other regions/states in Nigeria, especially those implementing development programs, the hub will aim to specifically reach out to the CSOs in the other regions outside the north-east, which has the focus for humanitarian response and thus more aware with access to more resources on safeguarding/PSEA. Networks and consortia will be an important way of reaching the CSOs and should also form a key target group for RSH given their ability to cascade materials to members.

RSH will not directly work to strengthen the safeguarding systems of government ministries, agencies or departments (MDAs), the key focus is on CSOs. However, government through the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD) will be part of the National Expert Board providing guidance and oversight for activities of RSH in Nigeria. CSOs that would benefit from RSH services through joining the Community of Practice and other available resources might see a need to advocate for different practices or review of policy in a particular sector such as education, health, private sector etc. RSH itself does not have the legitimacy to actually lead an advocacy campaign as it is not a CSO.

Provision of tools/resources and service providers and research/evidence

The tools, resources and service providers list will be continually updated as it will be a live document. The results will be shared on the national online hub. Given that there is no available, documented evidence on SEAH and the aid sector, RSH may collaborate with the PSEA network for a survey on this area.

The assessment revealed a gap in the number of independent service providers in different aspects of safeguarding namely investigation, conducting safeguarding audits/risk assessments, safeguarding in communications and ICT. RSH would want to consider a strategy for building local cohort of specialist service providers so that the Nigerian aid sector is not dependent on international consultants who may not be well-placed to provide contextualised support in the area.

There is a huge evidence gap on the scale of SEAH incidence within aid organisations and how organisations are responding. Our inability to identify virtually any research in publicly accessible formats points to a major need to collect data and build evidence. The RSH team will need to consult with the NEB and with other key stakeholders (see below) to help us define the focus, given the many ways in which this work could go (e.g. whether and how international standards are being applied locally, and relevance/value). Equally, it will be critical to explore how we might do this – in collaboration with research institutions in Nigeria and internationally; with other thought leaders in the sector; or with FCDO implementing partners in country.



RESOURCE
& SUPPORT
HUB

