

TARGETING LOCAL-LEVEL POLITICS
TREMENDOUSLY IMPACTS ON THE
NUMBER OF **GRASSROOTS WOMEN**
IN POLITICAL PARTY STRUCTURES



CLP IMPACT SERIES



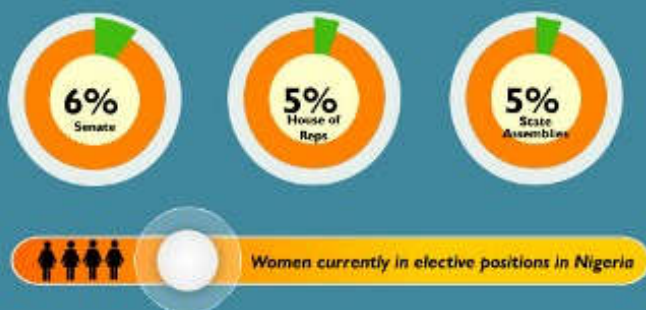
Community Life Project (CLP)



No We Got Am!

Introduction

The number of women currently in elective positions in Nigeria is abysmally low (6% in the Senate, 5% in the House of Representatives and 5% in State Houses of Assembly). In most cases, only women who are privileged by birth or by marriage manage to get into those few positions. Many efforts to increase women's participation tend to focus on the State and National levels, to the disadvantage of grassroots women in poor and rural communities. If women are to meaningfully participate in politics and governance, they must be enabled to be part of the political party decision-making structures at the local level.



This 2-year project, supported by UN Women, was very successful and resulted in a very significant increase in the number of women in leadership positions in political parties.

In this publication, we share with colleagues, development partners, state actors and other stakeholders, the impact of the project, some of the lessons learnt and the success factors.

Overall Objective

- To empower Grassroots Women Leaders in Ekiti and Osun States to play an active role in party politics and increase their participation in the political process.

Specific Objectives

- To equip Female Political Leaders with knowledge and skills on how to vie for and win elections.
- To equip Female Political Leaders with the requisite knowledge to harness the resources of Grassroots Women Leaders
- To equip Female Political Leaders with knowledge and skills for effective campaigning during elections.

Strategy Used

- Our strategy was to engage Female Politicians across party lines
Target local-level politics and political structures

Target

- *Iyalodes / Iyalojas*- Women Community Opinion Leaders
- State Level Women Leaders of Political Parties
- Female Political Aspirants
- Female Party Leaders and Members at the Local level
- Top Political Office Holders, Party Leaders,
- Gatekeepers and Duty Bearers
- Community Development Officers
- Leaders of Community and Faith-Based Networks
- Media workers

We carried out **54 weeks** of a popular phone-in radio programme in the local language addressing cultural barriers, stigma and mindset issues and increasing the visibility of female politicians.

We carried out a baseline survey, involving **2,295 respondents**, to capture the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices on women's participation in politics and governance. We used the outcome of the survey to fine-tune the project and to enrich the content of the capacity building programme and the community sensitisation messaging.

We built the capacity of **64 Active Women Politicians** from the **3 major political parties** to work together on increasing women's participation in politics and representation in political party structures at the local level.

We then built the capacity of **201 influential Women Community Leaders** to serve as community advocates for women's participation in politics.

What We Did



In addition, we organised a Summit of **738 Political Party Duty Bearers, Gatekeepers, Female Politicians and Women Community Leaders** at which male allies in support of women's participation were identified.

An affirmative action petition signed by **2,149 Grassroots Community Leaders** was presented to each of the **3 major political parties** by a team of women politicians from the **3 parties**, influential women community leaders and staff of the **ReclaimNaija platform**.

We organised **23 Town Hall Forums** reaching **2,217 other women**, youth and men Leaders of Grassroots Networks who further served as community advocates and built a groundswell of community support for women's participation in politics.

Direct and Indirect beneficiaries

The programme reached **3,236 direct** beneficiaries and **563,843 indirect** beneficiaries.

Direct beneficiary description	# total reached over the programme (cumulative)		
	Women	Men	Total
Iyalodes/Iyalojas	49		49
Female Community Opinion Leaders	108		108
State Level Women Leaders	15		15
Community Development Officers	34	37	71
Female Political Aspirants	28		28
Female Party Leaders and Members	23.3		23.3
Leaders of Community and Faith-Based Networks	1,678	662	2,340
Media Workers	11	16	27
Top Office Holders, Party Leaders, Gatekeepers and Duty Bearers		176	176
CSOs working on Gender & Governance	13	12	25
Independent Electoral Commission	1	4	5
National Orientation Agency	12	29	41
National Council of Women Society	18		18
Local Government Officials	23	77	100
Total	2,233	1,013	3,236



Female Politicians preparing their individual Campaign Budgets for the Election

Indirect beneficiary description	# total reached over the programme (cumulative)		
	Women	Men	Total
Family Members of Direct Beneficiaries	8,945	4,108	13,052
Men and Women in Lower Socio-Economic Groups	416,771	121,374	538,145
Political Party Members / Potential Female Aspirants	11,096	1,549	12,645
Total	436,812	127,031	563,843

IMPACT

Tremendous Increase in the Number of Women Party Leaders:

A key impact was a tremendous increase in the number of women in leadership positions in party structures at the local level - **317% increase in Ekiti State** and **183% in Osun State**.



FIGURES OF WOMEN IN PARTY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: BEFORE AND AFTER

EKITI STATE

	Before the Pilot Project (Sept. 1, 2013)	After the Pilot Project (Sept. 1, 2015)
Ward Level	247	726
LGA	128	144
Senatorial Level	9	76

Figures of Women in Party Leadership Positions: Before and After

OSUN STATE

	Before the Pilot Project (Sept. 1, 2013)	After the Pilot Project (Sept. 1, 2015)
Ward Level	382	1,872
LGA	129	286
Senatorial Level	11	15

Figures of Women in Party Leadership Positions: Before and After

As for the number of women delegates to Party Congresses, although, previous data for women delegates (for the 2011 Party Congresses) was not available, data sourced from the Women Political Leaders showed that 1,244 women delegates (in both States) attended party congresses for the 2015 Elections.

Change in Mind-Set: Another key impact was the change in mind-set of both the Women Politicians, Aspirants and Women Community Leaders regarding:

- Cultural Barriers to women's participation
- Violence and intimidation
- Stigma and prejudice against women in politics

More Inclusive Leadership Style: Women beneficiaries that have gotten into office are adopting a more inclusive leadership style.



Grassroots Women Community Leaders strategising on how to support Women Politicians in Ekiti



Grassroots Women Community Leaders being empowered to support Women Politicians in Osun

Targeting Local-level Politics tremendously impacts on the number of *Grassroots Women* in Political Party Structures

Voices Of The Women Beneficiaries



MRS. MARY ANJORIN
STATE PDP WOMEN LEADER, OSUN STATE

"You know we always talk about finance, that finance is the problem of women when we are participating or contesting. They taught us so many things on how to get resources for elections out, and to the Glory of God, these two women who contested cannot say they didn't have adequate financing for their elections / campaign activities."



HON. CECILIA OGUNDARE
MEMBER, PDP, EKITI STATE

"Few of us female politicians were feeling oppressed by male politicians. So, we always believed that violence can sometimes go a long way in advancing our interests; but being involved in the ReclaimNaija programme, I've been able to see that you can go a long way in politics without using violence Most people who used to see me as a threat, now started to see me as being part of an organization that is highly recognised nationwide. Now we are seeing that you can be in a different party and still work for your fellow women in another party without playing an anti-party game and you will still get to where you are going; you will still achieve your objective. ReclaimNaija has gone a long way. Even if we are not there yet, 50-50 representation, but we are somewhere."

Targeting Local-level Politics tremendously impacts on the number of **Grassroots Women** in Political Party Structures

Voices Of The Women Beneficiaries



CHIEF MRS FOLASHADE ASAFA
PRESIDENT, NCWS, OSUN STATE

“After we went to the ReclaimNaija programme last year, I had to call my women throughout this State; I went to each president of each Local Government chapter. I taught them that we just have to belong to political parties of our choice. That ReclaimNaija programme - the 1st one I attended - inspired NCWS throughout this State. So, I want to appeal to ReclaimNaija, and some other NGOs that can fund this type of programme, to continue so that our women can raise up their heads.”



HAJIYA MARIAM OGUNLADE
NATIONAL WOMEN LEADER, LABOUR PARTY, EKITI STATE

“Each time our FOMWAN members attend ReclaimNaija programmes, they come back to share what they learnt. Last time, they came back to tell us that ReclaimNaija is interested in getting more women into leadership positions and political office. They want to encourage women to have confidence, to face political challenges in the society, especially at the grassroots.

I never thought of becoming a politician, even after retirement, but what I learnt from these our members, who were beneficiaries of the project, gave me the confidence and courage, when I was called upon to be a deputy governorship candidate.”

Targeting Local-level Politics tremendously impacts on the number of **Grassroots Women** in Political Party Structures

Voices Of The Women Beneficiaries



ROMOKE EDU
DEPUTY STATE CHAIRPERSON, LABOUR PARTY, OSUN STATE

"We've been taught by ReclaimNaija that coming out in politics is even winning on its own – regardless of odds, regardless of intimidation, discrimination, women should come out as free citizens of Nigeria to participate in politics."



MODUPE ESTHER OGUNKOYA IYALODE

"Since they invited us to the project activities and trained us, they made us realise that women who participate in politics are not whores or ill-bred people, or political hooligans; in addition, they taught us about the budget process and how to participate in budget making to towards improving women's quality of life"



RACHEL OLUSANYA ALUKO
YOUTH CORPER

"I learnt how women in politics (are able) to balance the demands of family life and their political role as women in politics"

Targeting Local-level Politics tremendously impacts on the number of **Grassroots Women** in Political Party Structures



ALHAJA KUDIRAT FAKOKUNDE
STATE LEADER, APC, OSUN STATE

"It's about 2 years ago that we started to work on getting women into leadership positions in political parties. And I can see that this initiative is working, from my own experience and that of other women. We women are now many in the party leadership. I give kudos to ReclaimNaija for the job well done. We signed a petition to the leadership of the 3 major political parties – stating that we women want our 35% affirmative action and that we want more women in leadership positions".

Lessons Learnt and Success Factors

- ➔ Non-partisan and credible support platforms are important. For instance, the ReclaimNaija platform gave the women a rallying base to express themselves and also protected them, as the people saw them as part of a nationally recognized organization.
- ➔ Empowering women to look inwards and raise campaign finance increased their independence and amplified their voice in their engagement with male politicians and the political process.
- ➔ Enabling women to work across party lines strengthened their negotiating powers within their own political parties.
- ➔ Engaging local party gatekeepers, collectively and across party lines, increased male politicians' support for women's participation in politics.
- ➔ Equipping women with negotiating, bargaining and horse trading skills was effective in getting them into leadership positions in party structures.
- ➔ Breaking down socio-cultural barriers, addressing stigma and effecting change in community mindset tremendously improved community attitude towards women's participation in politics.
- ➔ The Baseline Knowledge, Attitude, Beliefs and Practices (KABP) survey helped to develop appropriate, context specific, training content.

Targeting Local-level Politics tremendously impacts on the number of **Grassroots Women** in Political Party Structures

Our Vision

A society where there is respect for human dignity, socio-political and economic justice, respect for the environment, equity and fairness for all

Our Mission

To promote Human Development and radically reduce human misery by engaging the people as agents of positive change

Our Core Values

- Integrity
- Respect for diversity, Indigenous Knowledge and Culture
- Committed to Community Ownership
- Authenticity

Our Contact

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Produced by
Community Life Project (CLP)
With the support of the
 Ford Foundation

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