

## **Project Overview: Promoting Quality Civic Education in the Country**

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2005, the National Council on Education (NCE) approved the structure that made civic education compulsory in primary and secondary schools. However, the implementation of the new structure started in 2011 after the curriculum was developed in 2007/2008. At basic education level, civic education is taught under 'Religion & National Values' which also includes the following sub-themes and meant to be taught separately: Christian Religious Studies (CRS), Islamic Religious Studies (IRS), social studies and security studies. At senior secondary, it is civic education and taught as a stand-alone examinable subject. For student teachers, Citizenship Education (GSE 223) is a compulsory course taught to all 2nd year NCE students over a semester. Currently, there is no teaching qualification available for those who may want to specialize in civic education.

Civic education is designed to prepare young people to be citizens in a democracy and to develop democratic, civic and moral values. This appears not to be the case in contemporary Nigeria. Those in primary and secondary schools are not adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to exercise their democratic and civic rights and the moral values to function in an adult society. This yawning gap exists in our society despite the fact that civic education remains an important means of teaching young people about individual rights and duties, taking responsibility for their lives and communities. The teachers are not well informed to pass this knowledge; the synergy between the schools and the relevant government agencies in bridging this gap seems not to be yielding adequate result.

The outcome of this terrible situation includes the culture of corruption in the society, no regard for rule of law, disrespect for constituted authority, involvement in unlawful activities, and disregard for national symbols and monuments, among others. It is therefore the lack of civic education that has made most of the young people not to see anything wrong with the above outcomes.

Despite being made a compulsory and examinable subject, the delivery of civic education curriculum in primary and secondary schools remains a huge challenge. Young people end up growing up without realizing the danger and threats their not having quality civic education poses to the society.

The project strongly suggests that addressing this situation will create a more desirable civil and civilized society where the rule of law will drive governance process, and participation in governance will result to sustainable human development.

## **PROJECT CONTEXT**

Since 1999, building a sustainable leadership for future generation in a democratic setting as practiced in Nigeria, the expectation is that democratic culture should be deepened among the citizenry. In particular, vulnerable groups like the youth so that there is significant level of participation of the average Nigerian in the governance process. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case - citizens' engagement and participation in governance is still very poor especially in exercising their civic responsibilities.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 2007/2008 was given the mandate to develop the structure and curriculum for the inclusion of civic education in schools as a separate subject - de-articulating it from social studies. The rationale being that the lack of teaching civic education as a separate subject has purportedly led to inactive/passive citizens who are indifferent to rising trends of corruption, indiscipline, disrespect for the rule of law, loss of sense of nationhood and a common cultural identity. As Tovmasyan & Thoma (2008) rightly observed, an in-depth quality civic education curriculum in primary and secondary schools will prepare generations for the essential principles and values of democracy embodied with a high sense of responsibility and active engagement in issues regarding society, community or state in their everyday life. Further, civic education encourages young people to identify moral bankruptcy and ethical vacuums but equips them to do something about them. The project is targeted to examine the current situation of civic education especially among the young people in primary and secondary schools.

## **PROMOTING QUALITY CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY**

Riplington & Associates (RandA) is an informative training, advocacy, research and policy organization that aims to use qualitative and quantitative data to aid their educative work in Nigeria and Africa. The organization with support from Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) is implementing a project titled **“Promoting quality civic education in the country”**. The project will be implemented in three pilot states – Borno, Enugu and Kano over a period of one year.

The broad objective of this project is to conduct a holistic and comprehensive review of civic education strategy and its implementation in primary and secondary schools.

The project has three key objectives including the following:

- I. To examine the current state of civic education implementation in primary and secondary schools
- II. To assess the overall quality of civic education curriculum and the teachers responsible for teaching civic education
- III. To produce a policy paper and report on the importance of civic education for schools, general public and national development.