Gender and Social Inclusion: Promoting better health, peace and sustainable growth in Lagos

Women are Nigeria’s hidden resource; investing in women and girls now will increase productivity in this generation and will promote sustainable growth, peace and better health for generations to come. At the 2015 National Women’s conference, His Excellency, Akinwunmi Ambode, the Governor of Lagos State, stated that of the 22 million total population of Lagos State, women comprised approximately 48% (11 million), seven million which represents part of the workforce in the state.

This leaflet builds on results from State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) supported reforms in Lagos as they relate to Gender and Social Inclusion (G&SI), documented in 2013, which included integrating G&SI in the overarching Lagos State Development Plan, sectoral strategies and budgeting. Current results indicate that the Public Service is becoming increasingly gender-balanced and diverse, including more services for women, children and people living with disabilities (PWDs). Tangible results include greater G&SI sensitivity in infrastructural improvements and access to public services.

Lagos- A Gender Sensitive and Socially Inclusive State.

Governor Akinwunmi Ambode’s manifesto mirrors the Lagos State Development Plan (LSDP) which was developed with SPARC’s support and launched in December 2014. The plan provides the overall direction for the development of the state over the next 15 years. G&SI cuts across all four pillars: Economic Development, Infrastructure Development, Social Development and Security and Sustainable Environment. The Social Development and security pillar contains many of the key programmes associated with gender, PWDs, vulnerable groups and people living with HIV/AIDS. Individual Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are responsible for ensuring cross-cutting issues are given prominence in the policies, strategies and programmes.

Gender Empowerment Triggering A Reduction in Unemployment

Lagos State, through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (MOWAPA), empowered and trained young people and women in various skills through short and long-term vocational training programmes, to ensure delivery of the SPARC-supported Medium Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) goals. This has led to a reduction of the unemployment rate in the state.

Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) is further helping the state this by delivering on their Service Charters developed with support from SPARC, by providing women with jobs in a profession normally dominated by men.
cancer (for women in Lagos). In collaboration with the Office of the Public Defender and Citizen Rights Bureau, MOWAPA provided free legal services to women and their children who had been abused. In 2014, 22,541 women were sensitized/trained through the collaborative effort, 41% more when compared to 9,355 trained in 2012.

Increased awareness has led to an increase in the reporting of the number of cases of women and children abuses. The Performance Management Report (PMR) conducted by SPARC showed 168 cases of abuse of women and 127 of children recorded in 2012 but the PMR conducted in 2015 showed an increase of over 100% in reported abuse cases in 2014; with 450 cases of abuse of women and 505 of children reported and recorded.

Lagos State Government (LASG) has been able to provide shelter and support for the victims of domestic abuse.

The government's agenda for 2015 includes social housing schemes, a policy for equality in employment, improved access to health facilities and increased right to education for children with disabilities. SPARC led Corporate Planning reforms is helping the state achieve this agenda. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Civil Service Commissions have started implementing the recommendations from their Corporate Planning tool kit.

**Implementing the Child's Rights Law**

The PMR also revealed that in a bid to effectively implement the 2007 Child’s Rights Law, LASG started a campaign against child abuse through the introduction of “Yellow and Red Cards” as warning to erring parents. A Campaign on Child’s Right Law includes distribution of yellow cards, suggestion boxes and introduction of a Child Rights Brigade in schools.

**Promoting Security**

LASG is tackling domestic violence and other gender related crimes in the state and has intensified awareness campaign on domestic violence through the Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team. Traditional rulers and market leaders have united with this resolve to put the unwholesome practice in check in the state.

Recently, 190 officials of the State Emergency Command and Control Centre were trained on how to receive reports of sexual and gender based violence incidents in the state. Training also focused on the use of the 112 toll free line to report cases of rape, defilement, domestic violence, child abuse, neglect maltreatment and other sexual assaults.

**A Socially Inclusive Education Sector**

SPARC is working with sectors through their MTSS to ensure that they plan better and G&SI issues are specifically addressed. The 2015 – 2017 MTSS budget showed a 17% budget increase in G&SI related issues.

In a bid to improve the quality of Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) in the state, special education teachers were recruited and exposed to various ECCDE trainings. A total of 100 ECCDE teachers selected from various Primary Schools in the 20 Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) in the state benefited from this training. The training included culturally-responsive teaching and strategies for children who do not speak English at home.

In addition, a total of N15,226,600 was spent on the midday meal for a total of 1,838 special pupils in the 31 inclusive units across the state in 2014.

**Inclusive Health**

The realignment of MDAs conducted with SPARC’s support is saving the government almost N3 Billion monthly. This has provided LASG with more funds to inject into capital projects and the initial funds to establish the Employment Trust Fund. As a result of the saved funds, the abandoned Ayinke House Project, known as the refuge for pregnant women, has been re-awarded and the contractor is on site, expected to finish and deliver this project by the second quarter of 2016. LASG medical mission programmes are also being sustained and producing results.
The Lagos State Office for Disability Affairs (LASODA) set up by the Lagos State Special People’s Law (LSSPL) in 2012, seeks to uphold the rights of PWDs in Lagos, safeguarding them against all forms of discrimination, giving them equal rights and opportunities and access to public services. LASODA commenced registration of PWDs residing within the state in 2015 to enable the state adequately provide for their needs. According to data collected with SPARC’s support, MDAs in the state are now more accessible to PWDs.

The data showed that in 2012 only 5% of MDAs were accessible to PWDs. However, as a result of the Service Charter initiative led by the Office of Transformation, Creativity and Innovation and supported by SPARC, chartered agencies were able to obtain funds from the Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget to renovate their offices and build ramps and rails to make the offices more accessible to PWDs as stated in their charter. Today, spaces in parking lots for PWDs have been allocated in all MDAs, and over 70% of MDAs now have ramps and are accessible to PWDs. There have also been series of stakeholders meetings, leading to improved implementation of the LSSPL.

A Socially Inclusive Public Service

Even though there has been an embargo on recruitment in Lagos State, there is a window of opportunity to allow for recruitment of people with disabilities to meet the 1% of the entire workforce stated in the LSSPL for recruitment. LASODA is working with relevant agencies to ensure this is achieved; data collated to date shows that the PWD make less than 0.3% of the workforce.

LASG has now approved and launched the Public Service rules which were revised with support from SPARC to include the new G&SI sections. Maternity and paternity leave and all other new rules have started being implemented across the state by the newly approved Administration and Human Resources (A&HR) departments in Lagos State Civil Service. As a result of the transition to SPARC supported Human Resources Management reforms in the state, Human Resources Management Information System is being implemented by the A&HR departments across the civil service, data on diversity, gender and disability are now being collated and updated regularly to enable effective management and decision making.

Narrowing gender disparity across the civil service

The workforce audit conducted in 2013 showed that 54% of the Lagos State civil service is female, and 36% of top management level staff with consolidated pay were women. The recent appointment of permanent secretaries across the civil service shows that the reforms are starting to produce positive results in relation to G&SI in the state. 51% of the newly appointed permanent secretaries are women. The total percentage of women in the body of Permanent Secretaries is 46%. This is an increase of 10 percentage points (or nearly a third more) at the topmost management level on consolidated pay. It is worthy to note that the present and recent past Heads of Service are both female.

Work to be done

LASG and SPARC recognize that there is much more to be done to strengthen partnerships to promote G&SI. G&SI issues now need to be effectively budgeted for in the MTSSs. Agencies need to ensure that data is disaggregated to capture the trends in equalities issues to allow monitoring of both improvements,
as well as areas that are lagging behind. There is much more to be done by LASG to continue in the enforcement of the LSSPL and providing alternative resolution in cases of gender violence by creating awareness to improve and sustain the laws implemented.

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