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## SSDO NEWSLETTER, VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1.

The first quarter of 2023 has been an eventful one, particularly politically. The country conducted its general elections, tainted with [good, bad, and ugly](#). Compared to past elections, this has been one of the most anticipated elections, and rightfully so. The country's dire economic situation over the past few years, particularly the past few months, has triggered and compelled people to participate in the process.

People now see the polls as the viable way to make their agitations known and their voices heard. Before the elections, the naira redesign and scarcity was another pressing issue Nigerians had to deal with. But with the redistribution of the old notes, the scarcity is fading away. Good governance is always a two-way street, and again the recent happenings in the nation show that the government needs to be more sensitive to the needs of the people.

Over the past quarter, South Saharan Social Development Organization, SSDO, has been playing its part in enriching lives through good governance and education interventions. The organization has focused on sensitization programs, capacity building, women's advocacy and empowerment, WASH infrastructure provision, and needs assessment to improve service delivery in its target areas. Here's a highlight of the quarter's activities.

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## SSDO Launches Zero Election Violence Social Media Campaign



Nigeria's political history is replete with narratives and instances of electoral violence. In less than a year, violence has spiked across the country's six (6) geopolitical zones. As the 2023 election cycle draws near, the prospects of a violent contest loom, especially in the face of a battle for survival between the major political parties. Electoral seasons, more than ever, reveal the fragility and soft underbelly of the Nigerian state.

Understanding that elections are pivotal to the growth and development of the country and how election violence has deprived many people of a fair chance of exercising their franchise, South Saharan Social Development Organization, SSDO, is launching the #ZeroElectionViolence campaign.

The project aims to educate and sensitize the electorate to shun all forms of electoral violence. So far, the campaign has reached over 100,000 people and helped to curb election-related violence in the southeast by 50 percent.

### **SSDO, WaterAid Nigeria Conducts Training for Community-Based Campaign**



To support the efforts of the government to halt the spread of infectious diseases such as Diarrhea, cholera, coronavirus, and other WASH-related diseases; and consolidate on the gains and wins from previous projects in Enugu state, WaterAid Nigeria and South Saharan Social Development Organization (SSDO) conducted a practical training on Hygiene Behavior Change.

The training was designed to prepare facilitators for the community-based campaign under the Hygiene Behavior Change Coalition (HBCC) Phase II project and [Heineken African Foundation \(HAF\) Phase III project](#). It covered behavior change analysis, theory of change, hand washing, food hygiene, safe use of water, and covid-19 vaccine uptake.

A community session manual was used to teach the participants the best approaches for community entry, program implementation, and creative approaches to achieve behavior change. [Continue Reading](#).

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## Infection and Prevention Control Training



Healthcare workers are the backbone of an effective healthcare system. Health officials are often front liners providing essential services at the community level. Based on the sensitivity of their jobs, they are frequently exposed to infections and diseases.

Understanding the constant risk healthcare workers are exposed to, WaterAid Nigeria and South Saharan Social Development Organization saw the need to organize a training workshop to strengthen the capacity of about 100 healthcare workers in Enugu State on infection and prevention control (IPC).

The workshop covered environmental cleaning and disinfection, disease transmission, and precautions. Participants were better equipped on how to protect themselves and avoid being a source of infection to patients.

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## **SSDO, WaterAid Nigeria Organizes Election Campaign Press Conference**



Enugu's topography has posited water scarcity for over two decades. Research shows that half of the state's residents lack basic water services. And in 2020, the state declared a state of emergency in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector. It inaugurated an 18-man committee to revamp the sector, yet the state's WASH challenges persist.

Understanding these challenges, WaterAid Nigeria, in partnership with South Saharan Social Development Organization and The Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN) Enugu, organized an Electoral Campaign press conference to achieve the following:

- Sensitize the public on the importance of WASH prioritization.
- Garner the commitment of gubernatorial aspirants to prioritize access to efficient and equitable WASH services in the state.
- Engage the media as pressure groups to sustain the campaign for WASH in the state.

[Here's the ask from the conference.](#)

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## **Igbo-Eze North LGA Stakeholder Engagement and Community Triggering**



Over 47 million Nigerians still practice open defecation (OD), and Enugu state is not exempted as about 47 percent of the populace still practice open defecation. This is a pointer to the lack of proper toilet infrastructure and water facilities, especially in rural communities.

Understanding this challenge and looking to ensure its eradication, South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria, organized a Community Stakeholder Engagement on Ending Open Defecation in Igbo Eze North LGA. The engagement aimed to gather stakeholders' commitment to enacting and domesticating a bye-law against open defecation in the LGA. As well as to develop action plans and roles of the community leaders in achieving open defecation.

At the end of the engagement, the traditional rulers, legislative council representatives, and the council secretary representative agreed to develop a bye-law to eradicate open defecation in Igbo-Eze North LGA. As well as intensify efforts to improve sanitation and hygiene awareness in the LGA.

## Capacity Building for Women at the Community Level



One of the reasons why the rate of gender-based violence is higher in communities is that most rural communities in Nigeria do not have structures to support women facing domestic violence. The little support that exists – pro bono legal services and safe houses, can only be accessed in the state capitals.

Understanding these concerns and needs, South Saharan Social Development Organization, SSDO, is implementing the [Sister Guardian Initiative](#) to reduce violence at the community level. Over the past quarter, SSDO's Gender and Jacob's Well Project Officer visited some of the project communities. These visits helped monitor the initiative's progress, build the capacity of the Sister Guardians, and conduct a need assessment evaluation to strengthen the initiative in the target communities.

The women were also sensitized on pressing societal issues and how best to tackle them to reduce challenges. They were enlightened on the coming elections and how to cast their vote correctly, avoid vote selling, how to stand for elections subsequently, and the need to embrace the cashless policies and better run their businesses. The team also helped resolve an ongoing dispute among a couple in Orokoro community.

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## SSDO, ActionAid Nigeria Organizes Election Observer Training in Enugu



South Saharan Social Development Organization, SSDO, participated in the 2-day training of election observers organized by ActionAid Nigeria in Enugu to build the team's capacity and empower them with the needed skill and knowledge to observe the upcoming general elections effectively.

The aim of the training is to empower election observers to take democratic actions in the general elections and improve citizens' election observation capacity towards promoting good governance.

After the training, SSDO organized a 2-day step-down training for election observers in the three communities where the Local Rights Programme, LRP, is being implemented in Enugu state. Udochukwu Egwim, Head of Programs, Priye West, LRP Officer, and Perpetual Njoku, Child Sponsorship Officer, facilitated the training.

## **SSDO, WaterAid Nigeria Organizes Environmental Health Club Training**



South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria, organized a 6-day environmental health club training to strengthen the capacity of sixty teachers from thirty schools on the Hygiene Behavioral Change campaign intervention package under the [Hygiene Behavioral Change Coalition Phase II project](#) in Enugu State.

The training covered topics such as hygiene promotion for children, disease transmission routes, food hygiene, menstrual hygiene management, safe water chain, sanitation and waste management, and establishment of environmental health clubs, amongst other topics.

This training equipped the teachers to form environmental health clubs in their schools to promote good hygiene among students and teachers. Participants were better equipped to manage their hygiene, learn new behavioral habits, and be change agents.

## Drug Adherence and Counseling: The Key to Recovery



Research shows that Nigeria ranks high among the high-burden countries for Tuberculosis and has a low detection rate. It is estimated that 460,000 new cases and around 245,000 deaths occur annually. Nigeria is one of the eight countries that accounts for 86 percent of all TB cases globally.

Understanding this crisis, South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with Association for Reproductive & Family Health-ARFH and the Enugu State Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Unit, is playing its part through The Global Fund [Community Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis \(DR-TB\) project](#) in reducing this epidemic in Enugu state.

The project supports DR-TB patients on their road to recovery. As well as ensure beneficiaries adhere to treatment and don't miss the Out of Patient Department (OPD) clinic. SSDO's health officer periodically provides adherence counselling and conducts household visits to ensure beneficiaries are on track to recovery. There are currently 33 beneficiaries on the project, and six beneficiaries have completed treatment.

### **SSDO, WaterAid, and ActionAid Conducts Media Tour to Commemorate International Women's Day**



International Women's Day is a global day to celebrate women's socioeconomic, cultural, and political achievements. It is also a unique opportunity for women to rally and advocate for equal treatment and representation. South Saharan Social Development Organization in partnership with ActionAid and WaterAid Nigeria, conducted a media tour in Enugu state to raise awareness on the rights and needs of women.

The first stop was a radio show to sensitize women and girls on leveraging digital technology to gather and preserve evidence in gender abuse cases. As well as educating women on using digital tools and the internet to improve their socioeconomic status in line with the theme, DigitAll: Innovation and technology for gender equality.

The second stop was a radio show to discuss women's role in managing Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) Facilities at the community level. This radio sensitization served as an avenue to enlighten the public on the need for the government to build the capacity of more women in the construction and technical aspect of the water sector. As well as how poor access to WASH facilities affects women and the girl child.

The third stop was a tv program where SSDO's Gender officer talked about the need for equity across sectors to fast-track change for women. As well as the impact of the Sister Guardian Initiative in reducing violence in the southeast.

## **SSDO, WaterAid Nigeria Commemorates World Water Day 2023**



Enugu's topography posits a perennial water scarcity challenge. This scarcity results in inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene practices. People hence result to open defecation and recycling dirty water. Using this contaminated water increases the risks of cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, and typhoid.

Understanding this challenge, South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria, commemorated World Water Day in Igbo-Eze North LGA through a community stakeholder engagement.

The event aimed to trigger schools and community members on the effects of Open Defecation and raise awareness on hygiene through the Hygiene Behavioral Change exercises. Dignitaries present include commissioners from different ministries, council chairs, traditional rulers, president generals, and community and women leaders. Going forward, community leaders committed to continuously sensitize their communities and improve hygiene and sanitation.

## Empowering the Child Through Child Sponsorship Mechanisms



Research shows that over 90 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. A good percentage live in rural and marginalized communities. These communities are characterized by poor access to healthcare and education, lack of infrastructure, and low-income level. This affects their standard of living and quality of life, of which kids are the biggest victims.

Understanding this reality, South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with ActionAid Nigeria through the [Local Rights Programme](#), is doing its part to improve education in marginalized communities. The program aims to reduce poverty by increasing its engagement with the poor and marginalized in selected communities through its Child Sponsorship mechanisms.

The child sponsorship initiative identifies vulnerable children aged 3 to 8 years and attaches them to sponsors. Over the past collection period, the team collected 403 child messages across eight communities. Our motivation is to see the children and the communities at large be all that they can be.

## **SSDO, WaterAid Nigeria Unveils WASH Harmonization Plan**

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The success of any project is hinged on the ability of the stakeholders to liaise effectively to deliver cross-cutting solutions that will ultimately improve the lives of beneficiaries.

Understanding the importance of partnership to the growth of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector in Enugu state, South Saharan Social Development Organization, in partnership with WaterAid Nigeria, organized a WASH sector stakeholder engagement in collaboration with the Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN) Enugu State chapter, and Small Town Unit (STU) –Ministry of Water Resources.

The meeting's objective was to remove sectional barriers in WASH-related interventions across the state and to harmonize and improve the dissemination of WASH activities across partners. Going forward, the group hopes to conduct advocacy visits to the incoming government and improve its joint efforts to consolidate progress in the WASH sector. Ultimately improving access to water and sanitation facilities in the state.



For more real-time updates on our projects and activities, visit our website, [southsaharan.org](https://southsaharan.org).

Our projects are specifically tailored to aid growth at the community level. Help us achieve more.

Sincerely,

South Saharan Social Development Organization Team.

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