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SSDO LAUNCHES PROJECT 100- RURAL ELECTION DRIVE

Since the inception of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, voter apathy has continued to rise, with a dwindling number of voters at the polls. This has led to massive disenfranchisement, especially in rural areas.

Nigeria's rural population makes up 48 percent (99 million) of the nation's size. Still, the rural community is nowhere to be found regarding citizen participation and its effect on governance.

These communities are characterized by high population density, poor infrastructure, high levels of illiteracy, and extreme poverty. These factors have negatively impacted the ability of the rural population to participate in nation-building. If about half of the country's population is shut out from the dividends of democracy and its processes, it is safe to say policies and government implementation will have an urbanized rather than a truly national impact.



However, for any of these pitiful circumstances to change, it starts with citizens' active participation in the electoral process, especially in rural communities. Understanding the challenge, South Saharan Social Development Organization, SSDO, launched Project 100- Rural Election Drive. The project aims to sensitize and educate rural voters in 108 communities in nine LGAs in Enugu state on the need to exercise their franchise.

The goal is to increase PVC collection and voter turnout by engaging town criers to disseminate information to communities across communities in Enugu state. Their proximity and constant access to the people make them an excellent information dissemination channel to reach rural communities.

On the 11th of November, SSDO organized an engagement meeting with stakeholders to commence the project. SSDO's Executive Director, Dr. Stanley Ilechukwu, explained, "Nigeria's socio-economic situation has served a toxic mix of unemployment and a loss of livelihood, impacting harder on those living in impoverished communities. These inadequacies have led them to turn a blind eye to the electoral process, which is the best way they can advocate for a better future."



"We understand that change starts by voting, hence the project's need. To reawaken the consciousness that the economic situation has stifled in the people."

The overall objective of the project is to:

- To educate and sensitize the rural populace on the need to vote.
- To improve the expression and participation of the rural populace in the electoral process.
- To increase PVC collection throughout the month in sensitized communities.
- To increase voter turnout in the sensitized communities.
- To provide technical support to rural communities through radio jingles and IEC materials.

TOWN CRIERS ENGAGEMENT MEETING



The Project's LGA coordinators across the nine LGAs have engaged the town criers and duly briefed them on the scope of their assignment. The goal is to sensitize and



The selected town criers would engage their communities over a ten-day period, consistently sensitizing the people to pick up their PVCs, where to pick them up, and vote.



The project would leverage IEC materials (flyers) in strategic places in the community and radio jingles to increase the message's reach. The message is simple:

- Get Your PVC
- Vote
- Protect Your Vote

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Sincerely,
South Saharan Social Development Organization Team.

South Saharan Social Development Organization is a nonprofit based in Enugu State, Nigeria.



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