Radio has been found to be a very effective medium for reaching the public and state institutions with anti-corruption messaging, mainly because of its wide reach. In the course of implementing the Strengthening Citizens Resistance against the Prevalence of Corruption (SCRAP-C), there were two radio components, namely, the Allokay radio drama series, which hit the airwaves in the third quarter of 2019 and the Office of the Citizen radio discussion show, which was aired from October 2019 to July 2020.

A third radio show, #UprightForNigeria, though not initially part of Policy Alert’s SCRAP-C workplan, was produced in Akwa Ibom State by Centre for Communication and Social Impact (CCSI) with local support from Policy Alert. These programmes have been used to inform and educate the public on the causes, consequences, and manifestations and approaches for combating corruption, as well as to influence social actors to take action against corruption and increase the transparency and accountability of public institutions.

**Allokay**

This radio drama sketch was aired on Atlantic FM / Radio Nigeria. The drama simplified discussions around the use of the budget and Freedom of Information Act as tools by citizens at the grassroots to fight corruption. One of the callers during the last episode, which was reserved for audience feedback, said:

“This drama has brought to life the reality of how corruption happens in government and how I am affected. Before now, it was all so far-fetched, especially when they start calling all those billions in the budget. Now I understand that when those billions are wrongly managed, it could mean less opportunities for my children to get a good education, it could cost the lives of pregnant women and unborn children, and it could mean more accidents due to bad roads. I am now more involved in anything government because I understand how it touches me and the difference my voice can make.”
Upright for Nigeria Radio Show

Centre for Communication and Social Impact (CCSI) is a consortium partner with Actionaid Nigeria on the SCRAP-C project. CCSI designs and implements communications strategies and content for the #UprightForNigeria campaign, the campaign theme for SCRAP-C. These include radio jingles, radio shows, publications etc. In January 2019, the #UprightForNigeria radio show started airing in five of the states where SCRAP-C is being implemented, including Akwa Ibom. However, this important radio programme was on air for almost a year before Policy Alert was aware of it or even got involved. This was a huge gap in terms of lost opportunities for both organisations to leverage each other’s strengths for the good of the show and the SCRAP-C project as a whole.

During a partners’ review meeting in December 2019, both organisations realised this gap and committed to closing it. It was agreed that Policy Alert would co-produce the #UprightForNigeria radio show for Akwa Ibom State, given the latter’s unique knowledge of corruption issues in the state and access to key actors. This partnership kicked off in January 2020, and since then, programme content has improved in terms of local relevance while the programme has also garnered broader appeal and wider listenership. Policy Alert’s role has involved identifying and inviting resource persons who understand the local context of corruption. Number of citizens calling into the programme has increased. Often, during the programme, callers bring up specific corruption red flags which Policy Alert would then follow-up through other components of the SCRAP-C project.

Office of the Citizen

Office of the Citizen (OOTC) radio show is promoted by Enough-Is-Enough (EiE Nigeria) across 21 radio stations in Nigeria. Policy Alert has been partnering with EiE Nigeria to produce the programme in Akwa Ibom State since 2018, first on Planet 101.1Fm, and later on XL 106.9Fm. Recognising the power of radio in reaching audiences with anti-corruption messaging, we were able to creatively use occasional episodes of the OOTC towards disseminating SCRAP-C messages. But not only did our SCRAP-C budget not provide for its own radio talk show, we also could not sustain the approach of piggybacking on OOTC. Eventually, at some point in 2019, the OOTC radio show in Akwa Ibom State was threatened by lack of funding, and that was when the power of partnership came to the rescue. Instead of beginning a stand-alone radio show for the SCRAP-C project, we reached out to Actionaid Nigeria to co-sponsor OOTC with EiE Nigeria, since the objective of the latter aligned with SCRAP-C, and they (both EiE and Actionaid) agreed. Because of the existing partnership with the station, costs of production and airtime were substantially reduced as the station was also interested in keeping the programme on air. This was a win-win for all the partners. In the last ten months, the programme has been jointly produced by Policy Alert and EiE Nigeria with funding from Actionaid Nigeria (through the SCRAP-C) project, an arrangement that has created value for money for the project.
Radio drama remains an effective tool for mobilizing public support and action for anti-corruption efforts.

The power of leverage can move anti-corruption projects in unimaginable ways. Better results and value for money happen when the right partnerships are in place. We do not always have to do it ourselves, or need to wait until all the resources are available. Sometimes, as we learned, big things begin to happen only when we start with the little that we have.

Organizations working on similar themes, whether funded by the same donor or not, should not underestimate the power of partnership for better results. Therefore, they should create good communication links, network, share information and leverage on partners’ expertise and skills to achieve more.

LESSONS LEARNT
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