

THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ORIGINAL INHABITANTS



“Culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organization thus distinguishing a people from their neighbors. (The Cultural Policy for Nigeria 1988)”.

INTRODUCTION

“For decades, the Original Inhabitants of the FCT have faced several forms of infringement of their fundamental rights. This has manifested in the form of institutionalized discrimination, disenfranchisement, and outright marginalization within the Nigerian polity.” (CHRICED)2021.

The Original inhabitants (OIs) of the Federal Capital Territory were made stateless following the creation of Abuja as the capital of Nigeria. The implications are that the people lost their livelihood, identity, environment, and voice among others. Due to the influx of people from not only different parts of the country but from all parts of the globe, different norms and values were introduced and seems to subsume the values, cultures, and ways of life of the indigenous people of Abuja. Historical, cultural and art heritage sites are blasted due to extractive mining activities by construction companies or fortune seekers and for urban development. Such activities have not only impacted negatively on the environment but has diminished the cultural values of the people.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007. Although Nigeria abstained from voting on the declaration, it passed with a majority 144 votes at the General Assembly. The declaration makes it clear in Articles 1-4, among others that:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the full enjoyment, as a collective or as individuals, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Human Rights law.
2. Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular, that based on their indigenous origin or identity.
3. Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
4. Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

CTA ON THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS PROJECT

Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) on the Original Inhabitants project is to promote the the **Cultural values and Rights of the Original Inhabitants of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) through drama and Art Forms.** With the support of MacArthur Foundation through The Resource Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRICED), Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is on a move to make that happen through well thought out strategies.

The proposed intervention areas where due to the influx of people from not only different parts of the country but from all parts of the globe. Also, areas where extractive activities have affected and destroyed the cultural rights and heritage of the people.

To fully understand the community perception, Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) conducted a baseline survey to help understand the level of knowledge, attitude and practices in identifying relevant Federal government institutions that are responsible for addressing the cultural and mining issues of the Original Inhabitants, identify policy put in place to protect the cultural rights of the indigenous people of FCT and how it benefits them and lastly to understand the level of participation and accountability structure put in place as regards environmental sustainability and the preservation of the Original Inhabitants cultural sites.

The report brought to the fore a number of evidences of the level of knowledge, involvement of institutions, and policies put in place to protect the cultural values and environmental rights of the Original Inhabitants of The Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The report includes information that was collected from a survey of 52 respondents of both indigenes and non-indigenes from different age range, sex and tribe resident in FCT from three Area Councils namely; AMAC, Bwari and Kwali.

Evidence gathered from our survey showed that 88.5% of the respondents are not aware of institutions that addresses culture of the Original Inhabitants of FCT. Only 11.5% indicated that they are aware of such institutions but identified

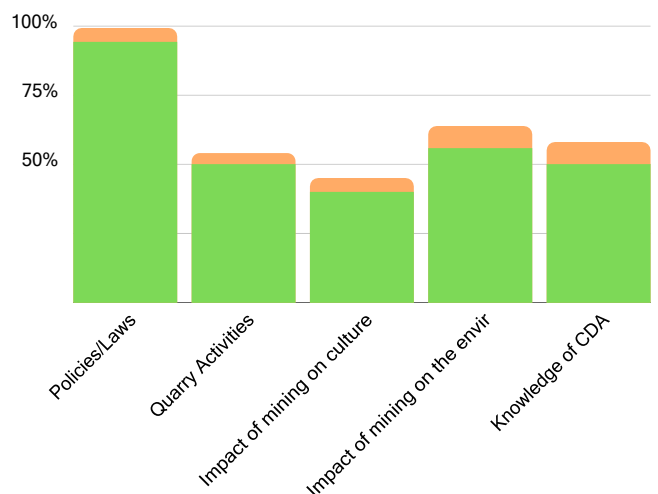
The overall goal of the Original Inhabitant project is to support, and strengthen the advocacy, voice and organizational development of the Original Inhabitant communities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

From the survey, Centre for Transparency Advocacy gathered that most of the people (the Original Inhabitants and non-indigenes) had no knowledge of laws protecting their cultural values and environmental rights in FCT.

The survey also covered the aspect of responsible mining and the development of the community development agreement and responses showed that half of the respondents are not aware if their community have any community development agreement drafted out.

However, it is sad to say that most communities are still not aware of the importance of this agreement between the commercial developers and the local communities knowing the fact that the environmental and social costs are often borne by communities while project benefits accrue in national capitals and global financial centres, leading to conflict between local people and miners.

Knowledge of respondents on policies and the impact of mining on culture and environment



FROM THE SURVEY; SOME OF THE THINGS THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS WANT

- Symbol that reflects the culture of the OI at the city gate.
- OI language to be added to School curriculum.
- Responsible mining and adherence to the CDA contract
- Protection of the Political, Economic and Cultural rights.
- Recognition and integration of the indigenous people of Abuja.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on generating information on the Original Inhabitants cultural values and rights. It sought to assess the level of awareness/knowledge among the stakeholders and beneficiaries on the culture and environmental sustainability of their cultural sites and heritage.

Findings from the study indicate a low level of awareness as regards Institutions guiding and protecting the Original Inhabitants among respondents. Awareness of the policy was relatively lower. However, the willingness to support the sensitization and implementation of this project within AMAC and Bwari Area Council was quite high, with participants suggesting that measures need to be carried out to ensure that everyone come to know about the cultural and history of the Original Inhabitants in the FCT most especially among the younger generations.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to work closely with the media in the push to promote the cultural values of the Original inhabitants in amplifying their concerns and challenges. This need is imperative as print, electronic and social media so as to reach a larger scope of people both in Abuja and nationwide.
2. Traditional and community platforms, need to be leveraged upon to create awareness and gain support in amplifying the voices of the Original Inhabitants of the FCT. Again, leaders of such platforms need to be strategically and visibly involved in processes involved to achieve the objectives of the project. Full participation of indigenous leaders, scholars and every indigenous community in FCT.
3. The role, and benefits, of cooperates and Government agencies cannot be overemphasized therefore needs to be highlighted. This would not only ensure material support for the Advocacy but also support the implementation of the project by their collaboration / partnership.

BRIEF HISTORY AND PROFILE OF CENTRE FOR TRANSPARENCY ADVOCACY (CTA)

The Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) formerly known as the Independent Service Delivery Monitoring group (ISDMG) was founded in 2005 but registered as a Non-Profit, Non-Governmental and Non-Religious organization under the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in Nigeria in 2012.

OUR VISION: A society where public institutions render quality and efficient services for common good

OUR MISSION: to promote the benefits of transparency and accountability in public service and to cause a reawakening in the society to imbibe the tenets of transparency and accountability in Nigeria.

OUR CORE VALUES: Justice, equity and fair play, patriotism, empathy, respect for the view of others, integrity and excellence

Policy Brief

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One of Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) key roles is advocating for transparency in the value chain of the extractive sector as well as to monitor service delivery as rendered by government and agencies to conform to global standards and best practices. Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is privileged to work with a large repertoire of media partners.

Importantly, the covenant of Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is premised on advocating openness in running government business, assessing, and verifying on-going and completed physical projects and ascertaining the quality-of-Service Delivery by Federal, State, Local Governments and Ministries/Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) works towards achieving reforms in the extractive industry and community interventions that support contract transparency, Zero Gas Flare, and beneficial ownership reforms as well as working to mitigate unintended consequences arising from the extractive industry resources.

Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) equally operates as a critical watch dog in the electoral value chain and is involved in election observation in Nigeria. We enjoy strategic partnership with other organizations notably, Women in Extractives, Koyenum Immalah Foundation, Network on Good Governance, Contract Transparency Network, the Media, and other Civil Society Organizations.

ISSUED BY:



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