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THE CIVILITY NEWSLETTER

The Civility

- Editorial
- One-day Roundtable Discussion on Strengthening the Implementation of Kano OGP State Action Plan II (SAP II)
- Kano Town Hall Meeting on Youth Voter Mobilisation
- Katsina Townhall Meeting on Youth Voter Mobilization
- Highlights of OCCEN Weekly Radio Program on Civic and Political Education
- Voter Apathy in Nigeria: A Silent Threat to Democracy
- One-Day Civil Society Orientation Seminar on the Concept of Open Government Partnership (OGP) in Kano

Editorial

Josephine Eche Omajari

In an era where trust in public institutions is constantly being tested, initiatives that promote transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement have never been more critical. In this eleventh edition of the Civility, we report OCCEN recent engagements across various platforms—from policy roundtables to grassroots townhall meetings, underscore a growing commitment to deepening democratic values and inclusive governance.

At the forefront of these efforts is the **Roundtable Discussion on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in Kano**, which brought together government representatives, civil society steering committee members and thematic leads. The dialogue highlighted the importance of open data, fiscal transparency, and participatory governance. Stakeholders emphasized that the success of OGP lies not just in policy commitments, but in measurable actions that improve citizens' lives. The roundtable also served as a platform to assess progress, identify gaps, and foster collaboration among key actors.

Complementing this high-level engagement was the **Civil Society Sensitization Seminar on OGP in Kano**, aimed at empowering the larger non-state actors networks with the knowledge and tools needed to actively participate in governance processes. The seminar reinforced the critical role civil society organizations play in holding institutions accountable while also acting as bridges between the government and the people. Participants were encouraged to leverage OGP frameworks to advocate for reforms and ensure that citizens' voices are heard.

Meanwhile, democracy at the grassroots level took center stage during the **Townhall Meeting on Voter Mobilization in Kano**. Community leaders, electoral stakeholders, and citizens gathered to discuss strategies for increasing voter turnout and combating apathy. Discussions focused on the need for continuous civic education, trust-building in electoral systems, and the use of local influencers to drive participation. The meeting underscored that credible elections begin with an informed and motivated electorate.

Equally impactful was the **Townhall Meeting on Youth Participation in Elections in Katsina state**, which spotlighted the pivotal role young people play in shaping the future of governance. With youth forming a significant portion of the population, their engagement is not optional, it is essential. The townhall provided a space for young voices to express concerns, share ideas, and commit to active participation in the electoral process, not just as voters but as advocates, observers, and leaders.

Also in this edition we highlighted the coverage of OCCEN **Civic and Political Education radio program**, and introduction of youth interns for 2026 cohorts. On the opinion article page, the Civility featured a well written piece "**Voter Apathy in Nigeria: A Silent Threat to Democracy**" by Muktar Lawan, OCCEN senior program officer Youth and Democracy. Taken together, these engagements reflect a holistic approach to OCCENs' democratic strengthening work in Nigeria.

ONE-DAY ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON STRENGTHENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KANO OGP STATE ACTION PLAN II (SAP II)

The one-day roundtable discussion on strengthening the implementation of the Kano Open Government Partnership (OGP) State Action Plan II (SAP II) was held on 8th April 2026 at Tahir Guest Palace, Kano. The engagement convened key stakeholders including government actors, civil society organisations (CSOs), and development partners to review progress, assess implementation challenges, and outline practical pathways for strengthening the OGP process in Kano State.

The session commenced at 10:34am with an opening prayer, followed by participant introductions. In her welcome remarks, Josephine of OCCEN highlighted the organisation's role in supporting OGP implementation in Kano and other states, stressing the importance of sustained collaboration. Opening remarks delivered on behalf of the OGP Co-Chair emphasized the need for productive deliberations, while the CSO Co-Chair called for stronger synergy among stakeholders. Participants were encouraged to reflect on both the challenges encountered and the successes recorded in the implementation of the State Action Plan.

A presentation by Abdulrahman Abdu provided an overview of the Open Government Partnership, highlighting its foundational principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusiveness. He noted that OGP, launched in 2011 as a multilateral initiative, seeks to promote responsive governance through citizen engagement and adherence to the rule of law. The presentation also outlined the processes of commitment, action plan development, and implementation expectations under the OGP framework.

The key thematic focus areas guiding OGP implementation in Kano State include:

- Citizen engagement
- Anti-corruption
- Fiscal transparency
- Access to justice
- Service delivery
- Climate change
- Access to information

The role of civil society organisations and local communities was identified as central to the success of the initiative. These actors are expected to monitor implementation processes, provide solutions to governance challenges, protect social interests, and ensure that citizens are adequately informed and engaged.

Subsequent presentations and stakeholder contributions provided insights into both progress made and persisting gaps. A presentation on the evolution of OGP since inception highlighted its achievements over time, while discussions underscored the need for greater inclusivity, particularly the integration of women, youth, and persons with disabilities into key thematic areas. Concerns were also raised regarding coordination and accountability mechanisms within implementing institutions.

Key challenges identified during the discussions include:

- Lack of a functional OGP secretariat in Kano State
- Limited capacity of the Technical Working Group (TWG)
- Weak communication and coordination structures among stakeholders
- Need for clearer reporting frameworks, including

designated desk officers within MDAs

The presentation by the OCCEN Executive Director Abdulrazaq Alkali, provided an overview of the OGP journey over the past eight years, noting significant progress in strengthening citizen engagement, improving fiscal discipline, advancing justice sector reforms, enhancing service delivery, and responding to climate change concerns. These efforts have been largely supported through structured public engagement mechanisms such as town hall meetings, public hearings, and policy dialogues between citizens and MDAs.

Notable achievements recorded include:

- Strengthened citizen participation in public policy decision-making
- Increased use of town hall meetings and public hearings as engagement platforms
- Improved policy dialogue between citizens and government institutions

Institutional developments recorded include the establishment of an open contracting forum, the creation of a public procurement bureau, the introduction of a central bidding system, and the establishment of the Kano State Bureau of Statistics. These structures are expected to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public sector governance.

Abba Danguguwa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and Mussadiq Kabir, Special Adviser to the Governor on OGP, presented the State Action Plan II work plan. The work plan prioritizes strengthening transparency in procurement processes, improving institutional capacity, and enhancing stakeholder engagement across sectors.

Planned priority activities include:

- Capacity building on the understanding and implementation of open contracting systems
- Improved disclosure of procurement-related information across MDAs, the private sector, and CSOs
- Advocacy for strengthening open contracting practices and frameworks

The roundtable concluded with a strong call for sustained commitment and collaboration among stakeholders. Participants emphasized the need to work diligently and collectively to ensure that all outlined activities and commitments under the State Action Plan II are effectively implemented. Continuous engagement, strengthened coordination, and accountability were highlighted as critical to achieving the objectives of the Kano OGP initiative.

KANO TOWN HALL MEETING ON YOUTH VOTER MOBILISATION

The Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) convened a town hall meeting in Kano State as part of its ongoing efforts to promote democratic participation and address the persistent challenge of voter apathy, particularly among young people. The programme was situated within the broader context of declining voter turnout in Nigeria, with a specific focus on mobilising youth participation ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The key objectives of the programme were to enhance political awareness among youths, examine both structural and behavioural causes of voter apathy, promote civic responsibility, and provide a platform for dialogue among critical stakeholders, including civil society organisations, political actors, community leaders, youth representatives, and the media.

The programme commenced with welcome remarks delivered by Josephine Omajari (OCCEN), who highlighted the urgency of reversing declining voter turnout trends, particularly among young people. She emphasised the need for sustained civic education and proactive engagement to strengthen democratic participation.

This was followed by an opening address from Abdulrazak Alkali (Executive Director, OCCEN), who provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges affecting voter participation in Nigeria. He identified key issues such as low voter turnout, governance-related concerns, and broader systemic challenges affecting electoral participation across different regions of the country. He also underscored the importance of civic education, particularly among children and youths, as a long-term strategy for strengthening democratic engagement before he began his presentation.

The event recorded participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, political party representatives, National Orientation Agency (NOA), community leaders, youth groups, and media practitioners.

In his presentation, Abdulrazaq Alkali emphasised the importance of continuous civic education and sustainable

community engagement. He outlined a comprehensive set of strategies aimed at improving voter mobilisation and participation, including:

- Community engagement through grassroots structures,
- The use of digital platforms such as social media and sms campaigns,
- Structured get-out-the-vote (gotv) initiatives,
- Incentivisation of participation,
- Peer-to-peer mobilisation,
- Youth activism,
- Amplification of marginalised voices,
- Storytelling, media engagement,
- Voter education campaigns,
- Multi-channel communication strategies and partnerships with stakeholders.

The program continued with stakeholder engagement and a panel session. The panel session featured Prof. Habu Muhammad of the Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano as the moderator, Mussadiq Kabir (SSA to the Executive Governor of Kano State on OGP), Grace Musa of National Orientation Agency (NOA), Umar Isah Dandago (Media Specialist), Muhammad Shuaibu, (Community Leadership Specialist) Captain Mansur Kurugu of the ADC, Adnan Mukhtar Tudun Wada of the ADC, and Maryam Sani of the APC.

In his introductory remarks, Prof. Habu Muhammad identified both remote and immediate causes of voter apathy. He described remote causes as long-term issues such as poor governance and lack of public trust, while immediate causes include inadequate voter education and weak mobilisation efforts.

During the panel discussion, the moderator directed specific questions to panelists based on their areas of expertise. A question on governance and voter participation addressed to Grace Musa (NOA) elicited a response highlighting how governance failures have eroded public trust and contributed significantly to low voter turnout. She emphasised the need for sustained civic awareness initiatives.

A question on community access to information and mobilisation strategies was directed to Umar Isah Dandago, who stressed the importance of combining grassroots engagement with digital outreach. He noted that traditional media, particularly radio, remains highly effective in reaching rural populations.

Addressing the causes of voter apathy, Adnan Mukhtar Tudun Wada identified economic instability, illiteracy, and lack of trust in leadership as critical factors. He recommended the integration of civic education into early learning systems as a long-term solution.

In response to a question on leadership and mobilisation, Muhammad Shuaibu emphasised the importance of neutrality and credibility among political and community leaders. He argued that leaders must prioritise non-partisan civic education, particularly in rural communities, and highlighted the need to address divisions within leadership structures to rebuild public trust.

Similarly, Mussadiq Kabir (SSA on OGP), responding to a question on government-citizen partnerships, pointed to existing institutional frameworks such as state action plans that prioritise voter education. He noted that the Open Government Partnership is collaborating with multiple civil society organisations to implement these initiatives, stressing the importance of sustained partnerships for long-term impact.

On the role of civil society, Captain Mansur Kurugu described CSOs as a critical bridge between government and citizens, facilitating advocacy, engagement, and policy communication.

Further discussions addressed inclusivity, particularly regarding women and marginalised groups. Maryam Sani highlighted structural barriers that limit women's political participation and called for stronger inclusive policies.

Panelists also collectively emphasized challenges such as:

- High cost of political participation
- Weak internal party democracy
- Lack of credible leadership as major deterrents to youth involvement.

The session concluded with a shared consensus that addressing voter apathy requires coordinated efforts centred on civic education, inclusive participation, trust-building, and sustained engagement across all levels of society.

The session also provided an opportunity for audience participation. Umar Hamisu Kofar Naisa emphasized the need for increased social media engagement in voter mobilisation; Abubakar Tudunwada, highlighted the issue of political godfatherism and its effects; Micheal Nworisa pointed to the lack of internal democracy within political parties; Jamila Musa, stressed the barriers faced by women and persons with disabilities in accessing polling units; and Hakibu, who emphasised the importance of elite participation in encouraging wider voter turnout.

The programme proceeded with an open discussion session, where participants shared additional recommendations and posed questions, which were addressed by the panelists.

Key Takeaways and Closing Remarks

Muktar Lawal (Programme Officer, OCCEN) presented a summary of the key takeaways, emphasising the need for practical implementation of the strategies discussed. He urged stakeholders to actively disseminate and apply the insights generated from the programme.

In his closing remarks, Abdulrazak Alkali reiterated the major themes of the discussion, emphasising the importance of sustained civic engagement, inclusive participation, and collaborative efforts in addressing voter apathy and strengthening democratic processes ahead of the 2027 elections.

Katsina Townhall Meeting on Youth Voter Mobilization

The Youth Voter Mobilization Townhall was successfully held in Katsina State on Saturday, April 24th, 2026. The strategic engagement was hosted by DDN Network with support from OCCEN and National Endowment for Democracy. The event served as a timely platform to mobilize young voters, encourage women's political participation, and strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration ahead of the 2027 general elections.

The townhall attracted a broad spectrum of participants and stakeholders from across the state, including representatives of the media, traditional institutions, religious bodies, the Independent National Electoral Commission, Inter-Party Advisory Council, civil society organizations, youth groups, women groups, aspiring political candidates, community leaders, and members of academia. The large turnout and active participation reflected the growing interest of citizens in the future of democratic governance and electoral accountability in Katsina State and beyond.

Opening Session

The programme commenced with an opening remark by the Katsina State Chapter Coordinator of DDN Network, Ismail Bello, who warmly welcomed participants and appreciated all institutions and individuals who honored the invitation.

In his remarks, he stated that the townhall was organized to create awareness on the importance of youth voter mobilization, political participation, and inclusive governance. He emphasized that young people constitute a significant percentage of the population and must therefore not remain passive observers during elections. According to him, youths must move from the margins to the center of democratic participation by registering to vote, collecting their Permanent Voter Cards, participating peacefully in campaigns, and contesting for elective offices where qualified.

He further noted that women also remain critical stakeholders in governance and should be given equal opportunities to participate as voters, campaigners, party officials, and candidates. He called on political parties and leaders to create enabling environments for women and youths to thrive politically. He also appreciated the support of OCCEN and the National Endowment for Democracy for their commitment to strengthening democratic values at the grassroots level.

Goodwill Messages from Stakeholders

Following the opening remarks, goodwill messages were delivered by representatives of key institutions and stakeholder groups.

INEC Representative

The representative of Independent National Electoral Commission commended the organizers for convening such an important engagement ahead of the 2027 elections. He described voter education and mobilization as essential pillars of credible elections. He urged young people to ensure they register during the next voter registration exercise, safeguard their voter cards, and verify their polling units in good time.

He also reminded participants that elections are not won by social media presence alone but by lawful participation through the ballot box. He encouraged citizens to reject violence, vote-buying, and misinformation, while supporting peaceful and transparent electoral processes.

IPAC Representative

The representative of Inter-Party Advisory Council stressed the importance of internal democracy within political parties and the need for parties to open their structures to more youths and women. He noted that many qualified young people are willing to serve but often face barriers such as inadequate mentorship, lack of funding, and limited access to party leadership spaces.

He assured participants that political parties are increasingly recognizing the value of youth energy, innovation, and women leadership, adding that inclusive politics is necessary for sustainable democracy.

Academia Representative

The representative from academia emphasized the importance of political literacy, issue-based campaigns, and informed voting. He stated that citizens should assess candidates based on competence, integrity, vision, and capacity to deliver rather than sentiments or divisive narratives.

He further encouraged young people to engage in debates, policy conversations, and constructive criticism, noting that democracy grows stronger when citizens participate

intelligently and responsibly.

Religious Leaders

Religious leaders who spoke at the event called for peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and responsible conduct before, during, and after elections. They reminded participants that leadership is a trust and that voters should support individuals with proven character and commitment to justice.

They also urged politicians to avoid inflammatory rhetoric capable of causing division or conflict. According to them, peace remains the foundation upon which credible elections and national development can be built.

Panel Session: 2027 Elections and Inclusive Participation

A major highlight of the townhall was the panel discussion featuring youth and women aspirants alongside leaders of civil society organizations. The session focused on the forthcoming 2027 general elections and the strategic role of youths and women in determining electoral outcomes and shaping governance.

The youth aspirants at the session shared their experiences and aspirations, noting that many young people possess the competence, education, and innovation needed to contribute meaningfully to governance. They, however, identified financial constraints, political godfatherism, and limited opportunities within party systems as major challenges facing young aspirants. They called for stronger support systems, mentorship, and reforms that reduce the cost of seeking elective office.

Women aspirants also spoke passionately on the need to increase women's representation in politics. They noted that women remain underrepresented despite their strong contributions to community development, peacebuilding, and economic growth. They called on stakeholders to support female candidates, promote affirmative opportunities, and challenge stereotypes that discourage women from political participation.

Leaders of civil society organizations emphasized continuous civic engagement, accountability, and citizen participation beyond election day. They encouraged youths and women not only to vote but to monitor governance, demand transparency, and remain active in policy conversations after elections.

Key Discussions and Outcomes

Throughout the townhall, participants agreed that the 2027 elections present an important opportunity to deepen democracy and improve representation. Stakeholders emphasized that if properly mobilized, youths and women can become a decisive force for positive change.

They further observed that voter apathy remains a serious concern and that deliberate efforts must be made to educate citizens on the power of their votes. Participants also noted that community-based sensitization remains one of the most effective tools for increasing participation, especially in rural areas.

Resolutions and Endorsements

At the end of the engagement, stakeholders unanimously endorsed the following resolutions:

1. Continuation of voter turnout sensitization through radio programmes across local communities and major languages spoken in the state.
2. Sustained grassroots awareness campaigns in towns, villages, schools, markets, and places of worship.
3. Increased support for youth and women participation in party politics and elective contests.
4. Organization of public debates for youth and women candidates to provide visibility and allow citizens to assess their ideas and competence.
5. Promotion of peaceful elections through continuous engagement with traditional rulers, religious leaders, and community influencers.
6. Strengthened collaboration among electoral institutions, civil society groups, media organizations, and political stakeholders.

Conclusion

The Youth Voter Mobilization Townhall in Katsina State was widely regarded as successful, timely, and impactful. It created a valuable platform for dialogue among institutions, aspirants, and citizens while reinforcing the urgent need for broader inclusion in the democratic process.

The event demonstrated that when youths, women, institutions, and community leaders work together, the prospects for credible elections and responsive governance become stronger. With the resolutions adopted, stakeholders expressed optimism that Katsina State can serve as a model for voter mobilization, peaceful participation, and inclusive leadership ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Highlights of OCCEN Weekly Radio Program on Civic and Political Education

WEEK 1: The radio program, aired on Arewa Radio 93.1 and organized by the Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), featured **Muktar Lawal Muazu**, Program Officer at OCCEN Nigeria, Muktar discussed on the topic ***"Voter Apathy and Its Implications for Democratic Survival."*** He provided in-depth insights into the causes of voter apathy, its consequences for democratic consolidation, and the urgent need to promote active citizen participation in the electoral process.

The program also included an interactive call-in segment, during which listeners participated by calling to ask questions, share perspectives, and seek clarification on the issues discussed. Some questions asked include; i. What are the legal implications of not coming out to vote? ii. How can voter apathy be addressed in Nigeria? The guest addressed these contributions thoughtfully, enriching the conversation and enhancing public understanding of the subject matter.

WEEK 2: The second week featured **Abdurrahman Abdu**, a civil society and development professional, as the guest speaker. The discussion centered on the role of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in strengthening governance, enhancing citizens' participation, and improving public service delivery. Key issues highlighted included transparency, accountability, and the need for inclusive governance processes.

The program also incorporated an interactive call-in segment, during which listeners actively engaged by calling to ask questions, offer comments, and share their perspectives on the subject matter. Some of the questions asked include; How can citizens demand for accountability and access to justice? What are some of the channels through which citizens can engage the government on project monitoring? etc. The session provided a platform for public input, enriched the discourse, and reinforced the importance of civic engagement in democratic processes.

WEEK 3: In week three, the guest speaker, **Dr. Najibullahi Abdallah Nuhu** from the department of Public Administration, Bayero University, Kano, examined the issue of "***Vote trading and its implications for democratic governance in Nigeria"***. He provided a comprehensive analysis of how the monetization of votes undermines electoral credibility, erodes public trust in democratic institutions, and fosters unaccountable leadership.

He noted that vote trading is driven by factors such as economic hardship, limited political awareness, and inadequate enforcement of electoral regulations. The discussion emphasized that the practice compromises the integrity of elections and ultimately affects the quality of governance and service delivery.

In addition, interactive call-in segment formed a key part of the program, during which listeners actively participated by calling in to ask questions, share perspectives, and seek clarification on issues related to vote trading and democratic accountability. Key question asked: Are there punishments under the law for people engaging on either vote buying or selling? The guest speaker responded to these contributions, providing further insights and practical recommendations.

Voter Apathy in Nigeria: A Silent Threat to Democracy

Muktar Lawan
Senior Program Officer Youth and Democracy

In every democracy, elections are meant to reflect the will of the people. They are the moment when citizens speak, decide, choose, and shape the future of their country. Yet in Nigeria, a troubling pattern continues to weaken this ideal, voter apathy.

Since the return to civilian rule in Fourth Republic Nigeria, voter participation has followed a clear but troubling trajectory. In 1999, after years of military rule, public enthusiasm was relatively high. Out of about 57.9 million registered voters, approximately 30.3 million cast their votes, representing about 52% turnout. This reflected a nation eager to embrace democratic governance after long military dictatorship.

However, this early momentum was not sustained as the initial euphoria gradually diminished with each successive national election. In 2003, turnout reportedly rose to about 69%, with roughly 42 million votes cast out of about 60.8 million registered voters. But this figure has been widely questioned due to concerns about electoral irregularities, such as double or multiple registrations. By 2007, participation dropped to around 57% (about 35.4 million votes from 61.6 million registered voters), and in 2011, turnout declined slightly further to approximately 54%, with about 39.4 million votes cast out of 73.5 million registered voters.

A more pronounced decline began after this period. In 2015, despite the historic nature of the election and the first peaceful transfer of power between parties, turnout fell to about 44%, with 29.4 million votes cast from 68.8 million registered voters. By 2019, participation dropped even further to roughly 35%, with about 29.3 million votes cast out of 84 million registered voters.

The most dramatic decline occurred in 2023. Despite having over 93 million registered voters, only about 25 million people voted, resulting in a turnout of approximately 27%—the lowest since 1999. In practical terms, this means that fewer than three out of every ten registered voters determined the country's leadership. This is not merely low participation; it is a clear warning about the weakening of democratic engagement in Nigeria. Thus, the present administration records the lowest level of voter support in Nigeria's Fourth Republic democratic era.

At the heart of this trend is a deep crisis of trust. Many Nigerians feel that their votes do not count. The controversies surrounding the 2023 presidential election, particularly debates over the performance of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) technology and the transparency of result transmission reinforced public skepticism. When elections are perceived as lacking credibility, citizens begin to disengage from further participation and to accept the outcomes of the electoral process.

Governance challenges have also contributed to this growing apathy. Following the 2015 elections, expectations were high for improvements in security and economic management. Yet, many Nigerians continued to experience rising inflation, unemployment, and insecurity. By 2023, frustration, especially among young people had intensified. For many, participation in elections no longer appears to offer a reliable pathway to meaningful change or better future.

Security concerns further discourage voter turnout. In parts of the North-East and North-West, insurgency and banditry have made it difficult for citizens to safely participate in elections. Similarly, in the South-East during the 2023 elections, fear of violence and separatist tensions, associated with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESN) reduced participation in several areas. When voting becomes associated with personal risk, withdrawal becomes a rational choice.

Another important factor is the growing influence of money in politics. Vote buying was widely reported during the 2019 and 2023 elections, with voters in some areas offered cash or material incentives. Monetisation of politics has reinforced the perception that elections are less about civic choice and more about elite competition for power and it attached privileges. This practice undermines the integrity of elections and discourages citizens who expect fairness, accountability and dividend of democracy.

Despite these challenges, voter apathy is not irreversible. There are clear indications that Nigerians are willing to participate when they believe in the process. The increased youth engagement observed during the 2023 elections driven by rising political awareness and civic mobilisation demonstrates that trust, once restored, can translate into greater participation.

Reversing this trend requires deliberate and sustained effort. Institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must strengthen transparency, ensure credible elections, and enforce electoral laws consistently. Even incremental improvements in credibility can help rebuild public confidence.

Civic education is equally essential. Democracy thrives on participation, not withdrawal. Agencies like the National Orientation Agency, alongside civil society organisations and mass media, must intensify efforts to promote political awareness and encourage informed engagement, particularly among young and first-time voters.

Ultimately, democracy cannot function effectively when a large portion of the population remains silent. The pattern from 1999 to 2023 reveals a gradual shift—from early enthusiasm to growing disengagement. From 52% turnout in 1999 to just 27% in 2023, the message is clear that Nigeria is not just facing voter apathy; it is facing a gradual withdrawal of its citizens from democracy itself." If left unaddressed, this trend risks weakening the legitimacy and future of Nigeria's democratic system.

The progress of Nigeria depends not only on its leaders, but also on its citizens, their willingness to participate, demand accountability, and make their voices heard. So, the real question is not whether voter apathy can be overcome. **The real question is: Are Nigerians ready to reclaim their voice?**

ONE-DAY CIVIL SOCIETY ORIENTATION SEMINAR ON THE CONCEPT OF OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (OGP) IN KANO

The one-day orientation seminar of the concept of Open Government Partnership (OGP) was held on the 21st of April 2026 at Mambayya House, Kano. The engagement had in attendance more than hundred (100) participants from the civil society organizations (CSOs) space in Kano State.

The session commenced at 10:10am with an opening prayer. In his welcome remarks, Hassan Ibrahim Gama of KPCCF welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of CSOs in promoting accountability and transparency.

The objectives of the gathering were delivered by Mustapha Muhammad Chiroma were he stated that the gathering is aimed at making participants understand the concept and principles of OGP, examine the role of CSOs in promoting open governance, review the progress of OGP implementation in the state and as well to provide a platform for discussion and the future of action planning.

A presentation by Abdulrahman Abdu provided an overview of the Open Government Partnership, highlighting its foundational principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and inclusiveness. He noted that OGP, which was launched in 2011 as a multilateral initiative, seeks to promote responsive governance through citizens engagement and adherence to the rule of law. The presentation also outlined the processes of commitment, action plan development, and implementation expectations under the OGP framework.

The key thematic focus areas guiding OGP implementation as outlined in his presentation are as follows:

- Citizen engagement
- Anti-corruption
- Fiscal transparency
- Access to justice
- Service delivery
- Climate change
- Access to information

Another presentation was delivered on behalf of Abdulrazaq Alkali, the Executive Director of the Organization for Community Civic Engagement (OCCEN) by Muktar Lawal, the Program Officer at OCCEN and his presentation focused on the progress made, challenges encountered, and lessons learned in OGP implementation in Kano state.

Safiyanu Lawal Bichi made a presentation on Climate Action and OGP and he discussed how climate action initiatives can be integrated within the OGP framework.

General discussions, questions and answers session was facilitated by Peter Hassan Tijjani, and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions, and share insights. Next steps session was led by Abdulrahman Abdu and actionable strategies and recommendations for CSOs moving forward were outlined.

Key outcomes of the event include; improved understanding of OGP principles among participants, increased awareness of CSOs role in governance and accountability, identification of actionable steps for strengthening CSO engagement, and enhanced dialogue on integrating climate action into governance frameworks

It was also recommended that continues capacity-building programs for CSOs on governance issues and as well strengthening collaboration between CSOs and government institutions, increased advocacy for transparency and accountability coupled with follow-up engagements to monitor implementation of identified next steps will improve OGP affairs in the state.

Closing remarks was delivered by Peter Hassan Tijjani who appreciated participants and encouraged continued collaboration.

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