

REPORT ON 2-DAY TRAINING FOR JOURNALISTS ON BUDGET TRACKING AND DATA-DRIVEN JOURNALISM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF) went into a partnership with Premium Times Services Limited to conduct a training for reporters covering the activities of the Forum and select journalists from across 36 states of the federation. The training focus was on budget tracking and data-driven journalism, as well as introducing participants to activities and achievements of the NGF as a policy hub.

Aside capacity building for the journalists to report more competently on governance and development, a key objective of the workshop was to improve relationship between the media and the Forum.

The training took place on November 7th and 8th, 2019 at the Forum's secretariat. A total of 40 participants attended the workshop, out of a total of 51 invited.

The training was declared opened by the Director General of the NGF, Mr Asishana Okauru. Thirteen (13) technical sessions were held facilitated by experts in the field during the course of the two days the training lasted. The training was participatory and the journalists were particularly bemused by the operations of the NGF and areas of policy support the Forum offers to states. Participants made case for extension of the training to their colleagues, especially those reporting in states, in order to bridge knowledge gap and promote excellence.



Participants listening to Idris Akinbajo's presentation on investigative journalism.

Background

Media is an important tool for interface between those in position of leadership and the governed. It is also a barometer which gauges public reaction to policies and perception about issues. It can also be used to feel the pulse and get feedback from the public. This important role of the media as a go-between makes it imperative that those in the media are adequately informed to be able to perform that role creditably.

It is in this light that Premium Times Services Limited proposed to the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) a training workshop for journalists to bring them up to speed on modern ethical ways journalism. The topics were chosen based on relevance to contemporary practice of journalism and global trends. In view of increasing phenomenon of fake news, the training was planned to give emphasis on evidence-based reporting, dealing with fake news and media ethics.

The training was also thought as an opportunity to give the journalists insights into the activities of the NGF, for them to be better informed and report about the forum and the governors from a position of knowledge.

The proposition was made in 2018 but because of some challenges faced by the Secretariat, and elections in the early part of 2019, it could not be held until this month.

Participants

Premium Times team worked with the Media and Publicity unit of the NGF Secretariat in drawing up list of participants. The Secretariat provided a list of 19 journalists covering the NGF activities, while 32 other participants were invited from across states of the federation with special emphasis was given to reporters from state-owned media organisations. A total of 40 participants made it to the training, with very wide representation among state-owned and private media organisations (See attendance list attached).

Modules and Faculty

A total of thirteen (13) technical sessions were slated for the training, aside welcome speeches and keynote address (see programme annexed). The modules were drawn out to introduce participants to the basic principles of modern day journalism driven by data and evidence. It also include sessions on using online tools for research on stories,

and understanding the budgeting process. This is in addition to sessions about NGF's works in the areas of governance and revenue drive as well as the health sector.

The trainers for were among the best in the field, with vast experience in media practice and training. They include experts in journalism like Dapo Olorunyomi and Musikilu Mojeed; a budget and procurement expert, Stanley Achonu; an expert on data journalism and digital tools, Joshua Olufemi; media security professional, Peter Nkanga, among others. The NGF also provided some of its best led by the Executive Director (Administration and Finance), Mr Abubakar Jibia, Senior Economist, Mr David Nabena; and the Health Team.

The Training



NGF DG, Mr AB Okauru (right) giving his opening remarks.

The workshop was opened by the director general of the NGF, Mr AB Okauru, after a welcome address by Head of Operations, Premium Times, Ms Oti Omatson.

The DG gave an explanation of the NGF's sponsorship of the training which, he said, was to help improve capacity of participating journalists. He said with increased capacity journalists can become important part of governance as they can engage the system from informed positions.

“We need to improve on our professionalism, we need credibility. We need to understand the risks journalists take every day, it's as risky as the police officer. But you need to be sure before you send anything out there because of your agenda setting role in the society,” he said.

In his keynote on the interface between accountability journalism and good governance, the editor-in-chief of Premium Times, Musikilu Mojeed tasked journalists to always hold leaders accountable by upholding public interest. He said investigative journalism was not only about reporting bad news, as he charged journalists to use their position to also report positive stories on organisations that have done well.

Speaking on the importance of the training was the E.D NGF, Mr Abubakar Jibra explained that the training would guide journalist to understand budget tracking and data presentation to hold public officials accountable at all levels of governance.

At the end of the training, the head of Media and Publicity of the NGF, Mr Abdulrazaque Barkindo told the participants that the NGF maintains an open-door policy as it seeks to deepen the understanding of activities and roles of state governors within the Nigerian federal structure. He expressed satisfaction with conduct of the workshop, especially with the way participants engaged in robust conversation on journalism practice. He urged the participants to put what they learned to use by being more professional in practice and conduct. He reechoed the words of the DG on the need to professionalise the profession which, he said, is achievable to the extent of the commitment of the practitioners.

At the end, certificate of participation were issued to the participants, and honorarium paid for the participation as provided by the NGF.

Conclusion

From the conversations during the various sessions, and result of the questionnaire administered at the end of the training, it is evident that the workshop has achieved its set objectives. The training has succeeded in fostering understanding of the NGF and its activities among reporters who attended the training (see questionnaire result in Appendix 3). Going by the level of engagement during all the sessions, it was also evident also that the level of knowledge and issues on journalism practice was greatly enhanced, as testified by most of the participants (see Appendix 3 below). The training has also gotten a number of media mentions as the meeting was reported by some of the reporters who attended the training.

Recommendation

In view of the knowledge gap identified, especially among participants who came from states, which indicates the need for further engagement and capacity building, this training is hereby recommended to be replicated in all states of the federation. This is especially salient because of the role the media plays in perception drive and agenda setting. Without adequate capacity the media may end up misleading the public or unable to perform this important role creditably. Participants themselves pleaded for extension of such opportunity to their colleagues, as a way of making the impact more widespread and institutionalized.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Programme schedule

Appendix 2: Pictures from the training workshop.

Appendix 3: Sample media reports of the activity.

Appendix 4: Analysis from the questionnaire administered at the end of the training.

Appendix 5: List of participants.

Appendix 1:

PROGRAMME FOR 2-DAY TRAINING FOR JOURNALISTS ON BUDGET TRACKING AND DATA-DRIVEN JOURNALISM

Date: November 7 & 8, 2019

Registration	Participants	8:30am - 9:00am
Welcome Address	Oti Omatsona , Head of Operations, Premium Times	9:00am - 9:10am
Opening Remarks	Asishana Bayo Okauru , esq, Director General, NGF	9:10am - 9:30am
The Interface of Accountability, Journalism and Good Governance	Musikilu Mojeed , Editor-in-Chief, Premium Times	9:30am - 10:00am
Group Photographs/Tea break		10:00 am -10:30am
Why this Training?	Abubakar M. Jibia , Executive Director, Nigeria Governors' Forum	10:30am - 10:50am
Understanding Budgeting and Procurement in Nigeria	Stanley Achonu , senior adviser, Open Government Partnership	10:50am-11:40am
Essentials of Data journalism	Joshua Olufemi , Executive Director, Dataphyte	11:40am-12:40pm
Understanding the NGF: Its Mission, its Work	David Nabena , Senior Economist, NGF	12:40pm - 1:30pm
Lunch break		1:30 - 2:00pm
Introduction to Investigative Journalism	Idris Akinbajo , Managing Editor, Premium Times	2:00pm - 3:00pm

How to generate stories and Investigate Budgets	Musikilu Mojeed	3:00pm – 4:00pm
Following the Money in Nigeria: Online Tools	Mojeed Musikilu	4:00pm – 5:00pm

DAY 2

Recap of Day 1	Facilitator	8:30am – 9:30am
NGF and its Works in the Health Sector	Dr Ahmed Abdulwahab , Resident Expert, NGF	9:30am – 10:15am
NGF's Support on Governance and Economy	Alhaji Abdullateef Shittu , Executive Director, Research & Strategy, NGF	10:15am – 11:00am
Tea break		11:00am – 11:30 am
Fact-Checking and Verification	Ebele Oputa , Programme Manager, Dubawa Fact-checking programme	11:30am – 12:30pm
Using Freedom of Information Act for Investigations	Adedeji Adekunle	12:30pm – 1:30pm
Lunch break		1:30pm – 2:00pm
Ethics and Codes for Nigerian Journalists	Dapo Olorunyomi , Publisher, Premium Times	2:00pm – 3:00pm
Security and Safety for Investigative Journalists	Peter Nkanga	3:00pm – 4:00pm
Reporting States: Resources from the NGF	Abdulrazaque Bello-Barkindo , Head of Media, Nigeria Governors' Forum	4:00pm – 5:00pm
Closing/Presentation of certificates to participants		5:00pm – 6:00pm

Appendix 2: Pictures from the training programme



Mr Dapo Olorunyomi taking the participants on Ethics



Mr Stanley Achonu of the OGP Secretariat facilitating a session on budgeting and budget process



Mr David Nabena of the NGF giving a talk on NGF's work on revenue and the economy



Participants listening to presentation on NGF's work in the health sector

APPENDIX 3: Sample media reports from the training

Investigative Journalism not all about naming, shaming corrupt officials – Editor

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/361591-investigative-journalism-not-all-about-naming-shaming-corrupt-officials-editor.html>

NGF charges journalists on fair and balanced reporting

<http://nigerianpilot.com/ngf-charge-journalist-on-fair-and-balanced-reporting/>

Premium Times, NGF charge Nigerian journalists on credible reporting

<https://www.radiokwara.com/2019/11/07/premium-times-ngf-charge-nigerian-journalists-on-credible-reporting/>

We must Professionalize the Profession, DG, NGF to Journalists

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/11/we-must-professionalize-the-profession-dg-ngf-to-journalists/>

NGF backs journalists' role to hold leaders accountable

<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/ngf-backs-journalists-role-to-hold-leaders-accountable.html>

Clearing the Path For Good Journalism, By Godwin Onyecholem

<https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2019/11/14/clearing-the-path-for-good-journalism-by-godwin-onyecholem/>

Appendix 4: Analysis from the questionnaire administered at the end of the training.



4 - Poll

How has your knowledge been affected by attending this training?

-  Significantly improved
-  Improved
-  Somehow improved
-  Not improved

Poll results



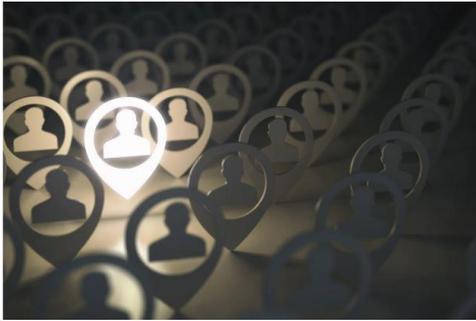
10 - Poll

On a scale of 1 to 4, (1 being excellent and 4 poor) how do you rate overall conduct of this training?

-  1
-  2
-  3
-  4

Poll results





5 - Poll

Has your knowledge about the Nigeria Governors Forum improved as a result of attending this programme?

-  Significantly improved
-  Improved
-  Somehow improved
-  Not improved

Poll results



6 - Poll

How was your perception about the NGF and its activities changed?

-  Very much changed
-  Changed
-  Somehow changed
-  Not changed

Poll results

