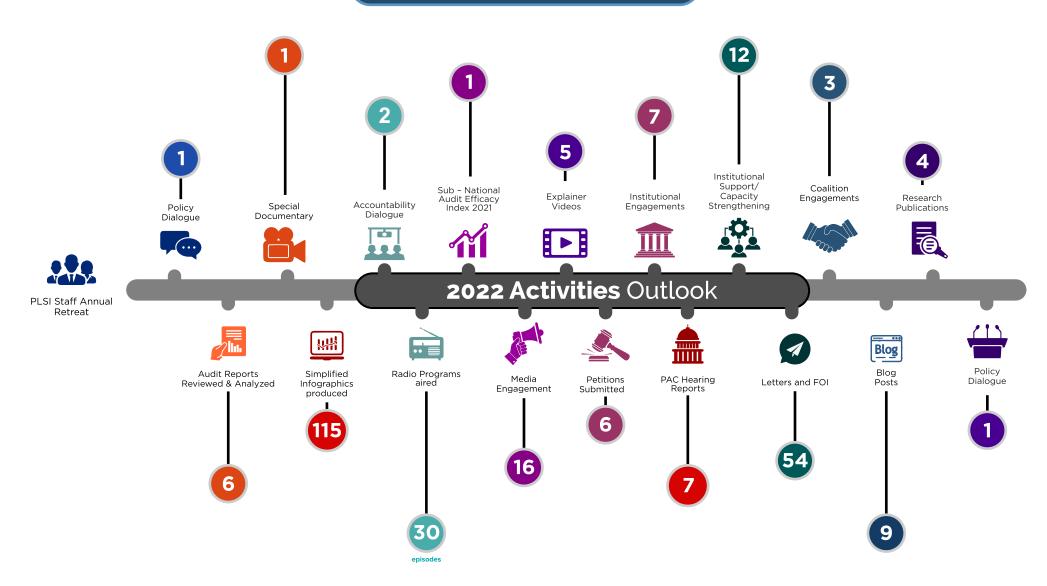




2022 in Summary



Foreward

Transparent Corruption & the Quest for Accountability

Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), in the last decades, countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay have designed and created electronic platforms that make information about procurement and government officials' personal assets public. These electronic platforms have guaranteed an effective and transparent flow of public information, thereby empowering citizens to identify and demand action against corruption and allowing oversight agencies to detect and sanction public officials engaging in corruption¹.

Similarly, in its commitment to more openness, the Nigerian government on December 9, 2019, launched a new financial transparency policy² and web portal³ to provide the public with greater insight into government expenditures. The policy sets minimum financial reporting requirements⁴ and regular deadlines for over 800 government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). All MDAs are also required to promptly respond to additional information requests beyond what is published. Many anti-corruption actors and development partners including the World Bank⁵ thought the policy and portal combination could be instrumental in allowing auditors, government watchdogs, NGOs, and ordinary citizens to promptly assess how government invests and spends public resources. There was also assumption that these initiatives might prove to be a game changer in Nigeria's quest to improve government transparency and an important milestone in the region's long-standing struggle against corruption.

"The spread of transparency as a norm has meant that governments generally make much more information available about their activities and their finances, while the media and civil society demand far greater access to such information. The 'right' to information about public spending and public policy is increasingly enshrined in Freedom of Information Acts, for example, while the Open Government Partnership has seen 64 countries making a commitment to more transparent and accountable government. Grigorescu suggests that political elites thus realize that they no longer have a monopoly over information and that their societies will receive information about them directly from other sources (Grigorescu, 2003). They might calculate that they have less to lose from making a commitment to transparency, or at least that transparency is inevitable.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a6ce5274a31e00005c2/120319_GOV_TraAccInf_BRIEF4_0.pdf ²https://opentreasury.gov.ng/images/DocumentGuidelines/TRANSPARENCYPOLICYIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDELINES.pdf ³https://opentreasury.gov.ng/

⁴https://opentreasury.gov.ng/index.php/about-open-treasury/the-mission-vision

⁵https://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/nigeria-takes-significant-step-toward-greater-accountability-new-financial -transparency

However, for high-corruption countries, this puzzle is acute, since EITI implementation increases the risk that their corruption will be exposed and that they will subsequently have to give up a highly lucrative stream of private gain. This raises the question, why do so many (high corruption) countries seek to join EITI? Yet join they do. Of the 23 countries that have achieved compliance, 20 have a CPI score of 40 or less, on a scale where 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt and 100 means that a country is perceived as very clean 6".

The idea that governments can be transparently corrupt is no longer far-fetched and many public officials even go as far as increasing public debt to achieve their corruption goals. In a study to analyze the relationship between corruption and public debts, Luigi Benfratello, Alfredo Del Monte, and Luca Pennacchio of University of Naples "Federico II" and CSEF used a large sample of countries over the 1995-2013 period, and they found empirical evidence that public corruption contributes to increase sovereign debts. The estimates point out that such effect is highly heterogeneous across income related groups of countries, being stronger for high income countries. In turn, different levels of corruption can explain crossnational disparities in the extent of public debt⁷.

A report that every Nigerian will be owing N384,864 each when President Muhammadu Buhari leaves office in May 2023⁸ as the country's debt profile is expected to spiral to N77 trillion – a staggering increase from N12 trillion reported⁹ by the Debt Management Office (DMO) as of 30th June 2015 is extremely worrisome. While the increase in Nigeria's public debt is positively correlated with the improvement witnessed in public infrastructure, it appears there's more to the appetite for increasing public debt than providing or remodeling public infrastructure.

Consequently, it is not surprising that while the Federal Government of Nigeria was about instituting transparency initiatives like the Open Treasury Portal and aggressively increasing public debt as alternative to exploring private investments in sectors requiring interventions, its 2022 Corruption Perception Index score¹⁰ of 24/100 remained as that of 2021 – an indication that the transparency initiatives deployed achieved very little or no result in helping public officials become more accountable. It is also sad to note that the highest score achieved by Nigeria so far between 2012 and 2022 was in 2016¹¹ when the country scored 28/100 moving two points upward from 2015 score.

 $^{^6} https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/attachments/The-Transparency-Paradox.-Why-do-Corrupt-Countries-Join-EITI1.pdf$

⁷https://www.siecon.org/sites/siecon.org/files/oldfiles/uploads/2015/10/Pennacchio.pdf

https://www.icirnigeria.org/n77trn-debt-each-nigerian-to-owe-n384864-by-end-of-buharis-tenure/

⁹https://dmo.gov.ng/debt-profile/total-public-debt/54-total-public-debt-stock-as-at-30th-june-2015

¹⁰https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/nga

¹¹https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2016/index/nga

Lessons from transparency initiatives implemented by countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and Paraguay are that:

- Transparency and access to information in sensitive areas such as the procurement process or to monitor public officials' personal assets can truly reduce corruption.
- Civil society's monitoring of procurement and assets information proved to successfully contribute to identifying corruption.
- Political will and the strengthening of public agencies' technical, institutional, and financial capacities are important for the success of these practices.

It is therefore important for government at all levels in Nigeria to understand that implementing transparency initiatives alone is not sufficient to curbing public sector corruption or fostering accountability and that CORRUPTION can indeed be TRANSPARENTLY perpetrated.

Executive Director, PLSI

Nusegui Demo



Annual Retreat

2022 Annual Retreat

To refresh and re-energize the capacity of our team toward achieving organizational objectives set out in our activity plan for 2022, we held our annual retreat at ILAJI Resort, Ibadan to review successes achieved and challenges encountered in our work in 2021, discuss learnings from our work, review changing context and map priorities for 2022. Another highlight of the retreat was the initiation of the draft strategic plan 2023 – 2027 as the current strategic plan was due to end in December 2022.

The 3-day retreat also focused on leadership coaching sessions with Popoola; A Leadership, Enterprise Development & Peak Performance expert on the Role of individuals and teamwork in advancing the objectives of the organization as well as session on leadership and personal development.





Day 2: PLSI Team at Ilaji Hotels & Resorts.



Media Engagements

Key Media Engagements

PLSI hosted 18 episodes of its "Value for Money" radio show on Inspiration 105.9 FM, Albarka 97.5FM and Sahel 89.5FM in Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States respectively. These radio shows provided opportunities for our team to disseminate audit findings to a wider audience in both southern and northern parts of Nigeria. Also, the broadcast facilitated engagement between citizens and policy makers leveraging audit information. We equally utilized these platforms to publicize key accountability issues highlighted from the 2020 COVID-19 Budget execution report on revenue and expenditures and 2020 Report of Auditors-General for Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States to provide citizens with information needed to hold their policy makers and implementers accountable.



Our team featured on the monthly series of #AwakenTheCitizens radio program on Splash 105.5FM to discuss various civic issues including Subnational Audit Efficacy Index 2021, Citizens' Participation and Voting Habit during Elections, 2023 Campaigns: Key Issues for Citizens, Citizens, Politics and Governance etc. The PLSI team leveraged the medium to recommend policy solutions to countless social and policy issues.



PLSI featured on several media platforms such as TV Continental (TVC), Arise TV, and Nigeria Info FM to discuss public finance and policies issues including the Open Budget Survey 2021, report of the Auditor-General for the Federation of Nigeria 2019 etc. PLSI also highlighted its 2022 activities on other media platforms including, Channels TV, Nigeria Custom Broadcasting Network (NCBN), Premium Times, The Cable Newspaper, Guardian Newspaper, Leadership Newspaper, The Nation Newspaper, etc. where the team discussed numerous public accountability issues.



PLSI's Program Officer; Abdulahi Adebayo at Nigeria Info 95.1FM Abuja to discuss Cross-Cutting Issues in the 2019 Audit Report of the Federation.

Our Executive Director featured on Channels Television to discuss the key findings from the 2021 Subnational Audit Efficacy (SAE) Index that ranked Benue, Lagos and Zamfara states as least accountable states in Nigeria having scored 39%, 41% and 44% respectively and Bauchi and Osun States as most accountable states which scored 88% each. The SAE Index report prompted Channels TV to investigate further to validate the research findings.



PLSI's Executive Director; Olusegun Elemo on Arise TV discussing Nigeria's 2021 Open Budget Survey Report.

Press Briefing

PLSI team hosted two press briefings to highlight key findings contained in the 2019 report of the Auditor-General for the federation and the performance audit report on the management of resources for the provision of affordable/social homes for low-income earners in Nigeria (2018 - 2020) PLSI used the opportunity to call on anti-corruption agencies and accountability institutions to investigate and recover funds not accounted for.



PLSI Commended the Federal Government on approving salary review for federal auditors

Our team released a press statement in August 2022 to commend the federal government on the approval of salary review for federal auditors and calls for accelerated implementation of the reviewed salary structure. PLSI also urged the federal government to enact a modern audit law to improve the accountability ecosystem in Nigeria. Also, PLSI released a press statement charging Supreme Audit Institutions at national and subnational levels to strengthen accountability on climate adaptation and energy transition policies and programs.



We urge the Executive and National Assembly to collaborate as they've always done to swiftly enact a new audit law for the good governance and development of Nigeria.

www.plsinitiative.org



Tuesday, November 29, 2022 Abuja, Nigeria.

For Immediate Release

PLSI Charges Supreme Audit Institutions to Strengthen Accountability on Climate Adaptation & Energy Transition Policies

The Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI) – a civic organization fostering accountability in Nigeria has charged Supreme Audit Institutions at national and subnational level in the country to extend their constitutional mandates to ensure accountability on climate change adaptation and energy transition policies and programs of governments. PLSI made this call at a Policy Dialogue on "Climate Adaptation and Energy Accountability – Role of Supreme Audit Institutions" Held on Tuesday 29th November 2022 in Abuja. Nigeria.

The organization noted that climate action is crucial for the up to 95 million Nigerians who are anticipated to be living in poverty by the end of 2022 and with the shifting energy markets around the world, these poor Nigerians run the risk of experiencing severe economic instability, loss of property, and fatalities. They also must deal with catastrophic climatic impacts, such as flooding brought on by increasing sea levels.

The reality that spending and policy objectives for climate adaptation and energy transition are widely acknowledged to require accountability only serves to emphasize the critical role that Supreme Audit Institutions play as foremost accountability institutions. SAIs must evaluate how governments respond to energy and climate change related issues in their capacity as key public auditors, aiding in both responsible and cost-effective financial management.

The Executive Director, Olusegun Elemo emphasized the importance of ensuring that funds earmarked for Nigeria's equitable energy transition and adaptation to climate change are used as effectively and efficiently as possible. He further expounded the necessity to evaluate and audit both the management of public expenditures as well as the effectiveness of policies and programs if Nigeria is to achieve the objectives of adapting to climate change and make the transition to a more sustainable energy source a reality.

Considering that Nigeria is striving to deploy its resources to mitigate the effects of climate change and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, PLSI is advocating for Supreme Audit Institutions to be engaged, mandated and well-resourced with viable techniques and technologies to ensure accountable climate change and energy transition policies and programs.

SIGNED

Head of Communications, PLSI

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Institutional Engagements

Institutional Engagements

CSCAN Meets National Assembly Public Accounts Committees

PLSI collaborating with Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) facilitated engagement between the Civil Society Coalition on Audit in Nigeria (CSCAN) and members of the Public Accounts Committees of the National Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate) to discuss the status of the Federal Audit Service Bill and how the Coalition can support to accelerate its enactment.



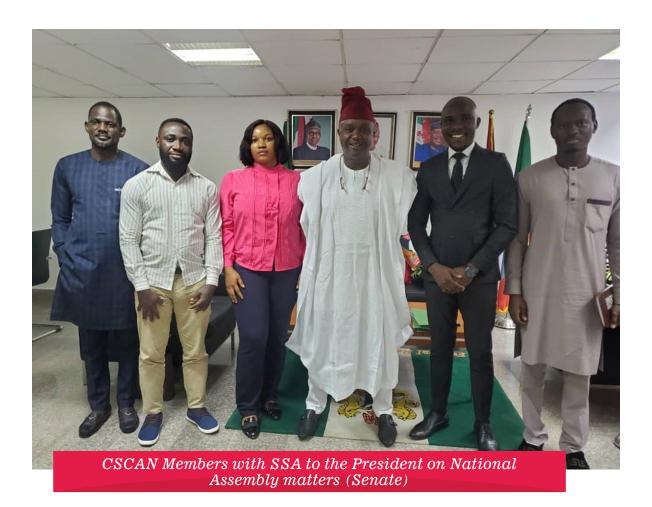


Follow-up on review of audit reports by the Public Accounts Committees

PLSI monitored activities of Public Accounts Committees of the National Assembly particularly the consideration of reports of the Auditor-General during which government agencies including Accident investigation Bureau, Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research, etc. were invited to respond to audit queries and issues raised in 2017, 2018 and 2019 reports of the Auditor-General for the Federation.

Visit to the Senior Special Assistant to the President on National Assembly Matters

PLSI led the Civil Society Coalition on Audit in Nigeria (CSCAN) members on a courtesy visit to the Senior Special Assistant to the President on National Assembly Matters (Senate) – Senator Babajide Omoworare to discuss the Federal Audit Service Bill 2022 and areas the coalition can support his office to accelerate the enactment of the Bill.



Visit to Auditor-General for the Federation

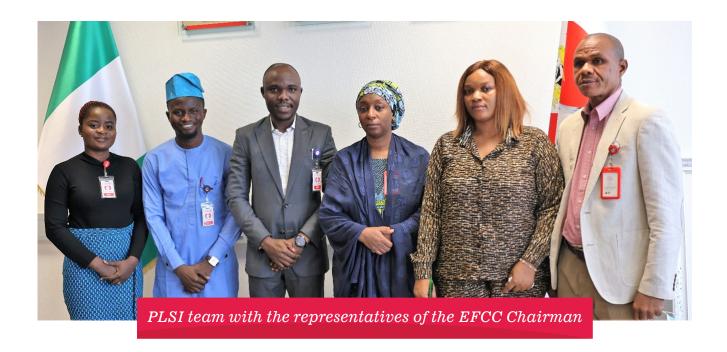
The PLSI team visited the Auditor-General for the Federation of Nigeria to discuss issues affecting public auditing and the accountability ecosystem in Nigeria. We also used the opportunity to highlight areas our organizations was willing to support the office of the Auditor-General for the federation to achieve its constitutional mandate.

PLSI leveraged the visit to request publishing of pending reports of the Auditor-General for the federation including performance audit reports on COVID-19 Expenditure, NERC, FERMA, FGN Budget preparation process and implementation.

Courtesy Visit to the Chairman, EFCC

On Friday, November 11th, 2022, our team visited the Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to discuss the possibility of collaboration and areas our organization can support the Commission to use audit data in the fight against corruption.

Also, our organization offered to strengthen the capacity of staff of the Commission to enable them analyze audit reports, track and investigate illicit financial flows and prosecute suspected offenders using audit information.



PLSI Presents Memo at Public Hearing

PLSI team presented a memorandum on our position on the Service Compact Management Agency (SERVICOM) (Establishment) Bill, 2020 at the Public Hearing organized by the House of Representatives Committee on Governmental Affairs on Wednesday, 9th February 2022.

Our memorandum commended the effort of the House of Representatives members in strengthening the management and efficient operations of SERVICOM in improving the quality of public service delivery in Nigeria and Nigeria's commitment to the Open Government Partnership. We also emphasized some fundamental issues in the proposed Bill such as public accessibility to the annual report and audited accounts of the Commission as well as offenses and penalties for violating any of the service compact principles as defined in the Bill. PLSI provided useful recommendations for the House of Representatives Committee to consider before passing the proposed Bill.

Review and Analysis of Audit Reports

Our data analysts reviewed and analyzed the 2018 and 2019 reports of the Auditor-General for the Federation of Nigeria and highlighted a total of 820 audit issues across 149 government agencies and for which the sum of N1.072tn was not accounted for. We also reviewed and analyzed the 2020 COVID-19 Budget Execution reports and 2020 audit reports of Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, and Yobe states and identified N2.2billion, N804.6million and N1.9billion not accounted for respectively.

The 2018 report of the Auditor-General for the Federation had 426 audit issues which posed 438 risks to public finance management. 86 responses were received from auditees while the Auditor-General made 448 audit recommendations Similarly, the 2019 audit report had 394 audit issues which posed 603 risks to public finance management.342 responses were received from auditees while the Auditor-General made 1,528 audit recommendations.

Our team also reviewed and analyzed the performance audit report of the Auditor-General for the Federation on the Management of Resources for the Provision of Affordable/Social Homes for Low-Income Earners in Nigeria (2018 – 2020).



Subnational Audit Efficacy Index 2021

Our research team took the Subnational Audit Efficacy Index 2021 a step further and produced a report that stakeholders adjudged to be credible and acceptable given the evidence contained in the report. The 2021 Index themed "Leveraging Accountability for Subnational Development in Nigeria" was publicly presented on 31st March 2022. The SAE Index is PLSI's flagship research work aimed at accessing the level of transparency and accountability operational in the management and utilization of public funds in all the 36 states of the federation of Nigeria through public audit and key stakeholders in the public audit action cycle.

During the 2021 index, our research team interacted with and collected data from 108 public institutions including offices of the Auditor-Generals, Offices of the Accountant-Generals, Public Accounts Committees, and 108 civil society organizations from across the 36 states of the Federation.

The report highlighted the enactment of audit legal frameworks in 34 states except Benue and Anambra State and poor implementation of Audit Laws across the 36 States. Citizens participation in the audit process is very poor in 17 states and Public accounts Committees in 31 Houses of Assembly are either less or not effective at all. Only 11 out of 36 states conducted either compliance or performance audit on public expenditure in 2020, while a total of 19 states refused to publish full audit reports for 2020 financial year.

The report ranked Bauchi and Osun States 1st having scored 88% while Akwa Ibom and Ekiti States occupied 3^{rd} and 4^{th} places scoring 86% and 83% respectively. Adamawa, Delta, Ebonyi and Gombe states scored 70% and were graded 12^{th} while Zamfara, Lagos and Benue states were rated 34^{th} , 35^{th} and 36^{th} position with 44%, 41% and 39% respectively.



SAE Index Engagement with OGP/Nigeria Governor's Forum

Our team honored the invitation of the Secretariat of the Nigeria Governor's Forum to facilitate workshop sessions focused on findings from the 2021 Subnational Audit Efficacy Index report. Partcipants included Auditors-General and Accountant-Generals from 18 states of the federation. Our Executive Director emphasized the need to effectively implement enacted audit laws at subnational level.



Cross-section of PLSI's Executive Director; Olusegun Elemo presenting the findings of the SAE Index 2021 reports to the subnational Auditors-Generals and Accountants-Generals.

High Level Policy/Stakeholders Dialogue to Facilitate Effective Implementation of Audit Laws in Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States.

As part of effort to strengthen public audit practices and accountability at subnational level, PLSI held a High-Level Policy/Stakeholders dialogue to facilitate effective implementation of enacted Audit Laws in Akwa-Ibom, Bauchi, and Yobe States. The dialogue which held at Reiz Continental Hotel, Abuja on Wednesday, 21st September 2022 brought together key stakeholders including Auditors-General, Chairman Public Account Committees (PAC), Civil Society and Media to review all sections of the audit laws and key accountability issues highlighted in the 2020 COVID-19 Budget Execution reports as well as 2020 audit reports of the three States.



Auditors-General, PAC Chairmen, Civil Society members and Media from Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe State at the High level policy dialogue on effective implementation of Audit laws.

Support to Subnational Auditors to Conduct Performance Audit on Government Projects and Programmes.

To enhance the effectiveness of the Offices of Auditors-General in Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe states to conduct performance audits on government programmes and projects and produce quality reports to enable citizens monitor effectiveness, efficiency and economy of government spending, PLSI with support from Innovation for Change (I4C African Hub) organized a one-day workshop for Senior Auditors and Auditor-Generals in Akwa ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States to strengthen their capacity to conduct Performance Audit on government's Projects and Programmes.



Technical Support to Public Accounts Committees of State Houses of Assembly to Effectively Review Audit Reports

Our team organized workshop to strengthen capacity of Public Accounts Committee Chairman in Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States as part of effort to enable effectiveness of the public audit action cycle in the aforementioned States. The Public Accounts Committee is the constitutional Committee responsible for considering reports of the Auditor-General and recommending sanctions against violators of public finance management rules and regulations.



Mr Ahmadu Abdullahi, taking the PAC Chairmen from Akwa Ibom, Bauchi and Yobe States through the workings of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

Policy Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation and Energy Accountability

Our organization held a Policy Dialogue on Climate Change Adaptation and Energy Accountability which highlighted the roles of Supreme Audit Institutions at national and subnational levels in achieving climate change and energy transition policy objectives. The policy dialogue also emphasized the need to ensure that funds allocated for Nigeria's energy transition plan & climate change adaptation is used in the most effective & efficient way possible.



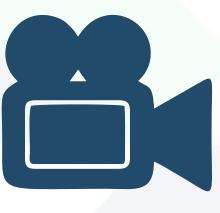


Roundtable Discussion/Stakeholders' Workshop on the Proposed Federal Audit Service Bill 2022

In continuation of our advocacy for a modern audit law for the Federal Government of Nigeria, our organization convened a meeting of members of the Civil Society Coalition on Audit in Nigeria (CSCAN) and other policy influencers to examine provisions of the Federal Audit Service Bill 2022 and map advocacy initiatives to accelerate enactment and assent to the Bill.

The key outcome of the workshop included advocacy commitments from key stakeholders to ensure enactment of the proposed Federal Audit Service Bill 2022.





Special Documentary

Production and Screening of Documentary Video

PLSI produced its first documentary video which featured the abandoned shore erosion control works in Akipelai, Ayakoro and Otuoke Communities of Ogbia Local Government Area in Bayelsa State, Our team visited the Communities to document opinions of citizens on the impact of the abandoned project and erosion on socioeconomic and environmental development of the Communities.

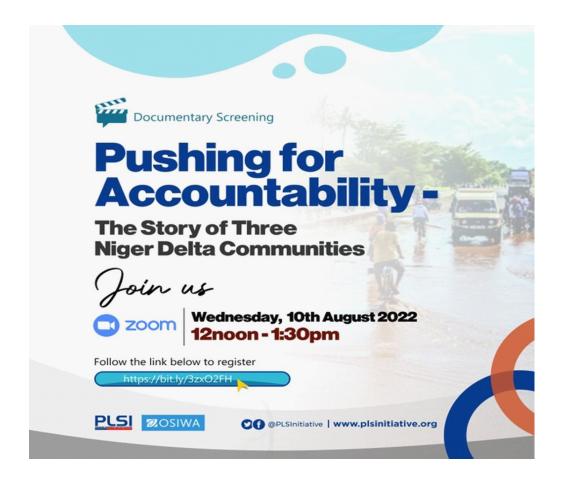
We organized a virtual screening event titled "Pushing for Accountability - The Story of Three Niger Delta Communities". This documentary revealed how N4.2billion disbursed from the N7.5billion awarded by the Nigeria Port Authority in 2012 to solve the shore erosion crisis in the three communities in Bayelsa State was inefficiently utilized leaving the communities bedeviled by the menace of coastal erosion despite government intervention.



PLSI's team visited Ogbia local government in Bayelsa for community engagement



Documentary Screening - 1



Fostering Public Accountability in Nigeria

At PLSI, we believe public accountability necessary for improved service delivery in Nigeria is possible ONLY with a vigilant and involved citizenry.

We use a combination of research, policy advisory, advocacy, civic-tech, public sensitization and multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration to achieve social change.

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