

+234 (0) 708 778 4788, +1 45 45 205
info@eienigeria.org

December 20, 2016
Abuja, Nigeria

For Immediate Release

76% of Nigerians Actively Support Open Government Policies and #OpenNASS is a Panacea for Transparency and Accountability

‘There is not a crime, there is not a dodge, there is not a trick, there is not a swindle, and there is not a vice which does not live by secrecy.’ - Joseph Pulitzer

The OpenNASS Project is an advocacy campaign aimed at tackling the major disconnect between the elected representatives and the general voting population outside of the electoral process by providing both voter education and a communication platform to help voters reach their representative and demand the ‘dividends of democracy’ – education, health care, shelter, water, power, access to employment or finance for enterprise etc.

We conducted a scoping survey randomly selecting telephone numbers and collecting 1,200 responses to 39 questions between June 29 and July 4, 2016. The sample was recalibrated to get a 48-52 gender split, and proportional representation by geo-political zone. The survey was run in five languages - Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo, Hausa and English - to ensure it was inclusive. Each respondent was asked 27 multiple choice questions relating to the governance and democratic processes in Nigeria to understand the level of civic education, and if there was a link between this and a willingness to support the OpenNASS campaign. The results were fascinating.

Levels of Civic Education

- On average, 59% of respondents got the answers right, although it varied greatly for each question ranging from 29% to 89%.
- There was a small gender gap with the average man getting 61% of the answers right, and 56% for the average woman.
- Unsurprisingly, the biggest difference was in knowledge based on education level. Respondents with no formal education got 43% of answers right; followed by those with a basic education at 45%; junior or secondary education at 54%; and those with a tertiary education getting 66%.
- Respondents scored the highest on questions relating to elections which would indicate that efforts to educate voters in the recent elections were successful.
- Respondents did barely better than random when it came to questions relating to how the upper and lower chambers relate to each other and drafting and passing laws.
- There is a huge opportunity to better educate Nigerians to empower them to push for change.

Political Engagement

- Nigerians are very politically engaged with only 4% of respondents on average reporting that they do not care about political news. There is higher political apathy amongst those with no education, with 23% stating they do not care about political news, versus 3% of more educated respondents.
- There is a huge opportunity here to educate those with little to no education on the importance of good governance to build momentum for change.
- Political apathy is highest with 10%, among respondents who fall below 17 years and lowest, 0%, among persons 56 years and above.

Open Government Policies

- 74% of Nigerians support electronic voting.
- 71% of Nigerians support opening National Assembly attendance records.
- The same pattern of responses was recorded for the other open government policies which include voting records, salaries and budgets of the National Assembly.
- There is clear correlation with educational attainment and open government policies as 81% of those with tertiary education stated that attendance records should be open, with only 32% of those with no formal education requesting the same. This again, presents a huge opportunity to educate and build support.

Sources of Political News

- Radio is the most popular source of political news with 33% citing this as their preferred source.
- Internet follows with 29%; TV with 17%; and newspapers with 11%.
- Radio was the most popular among females followed by the internet and the reverse is true for males where internet is the most popular source followed by radio. This could perhaps be explained by the lower rates of literacy amongst women.
- Television remains the third most popular source of political information with both genders and across all political zones.
- Radio emerges as the most popular source with people of most educational backgrounds except people who have attained tertiary education whereupon internet overtakes radio as the most common source and followed by radio.
- Radio is, perhaps unsurprisingly, preferred by respondents who don't have a formal education at 42%; those that have a basic primary education at 60%; and those that have a secondary education at 40%.

Radio is therefore a crucial way of reaching people and EiE has gone from one radio program in 2014 to four in 2016 and by Q1 2017, we will have 9 radio programs in Lagos (2), Abuja, Port-Harcourt, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Owerri, Kano & Enugu.

What Next?

It is clear that despite low levels of civic knowledge there is already huge support for EiE's #OpenNASS campaign, especially with regards to making the breakdown of the 2016 National Assembly budget public after several promises and assurances to do so by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Lack of accountability in the National Assembly is very dangerous for our democracy because those who are elected to provide oversight over the executive arm's implementation of our budget cannot be expected to provide leadership and ensure accountability when they have refused to be accountable with resources allocated to them.

Over the last 3 years, the National Assembly has refused to respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and a court order to provide its detailed budget. The National Assembly was recently taken to court by SERAP for failing to respond to an FOI request about its running costs.

It is of great concern to Nigerians that members of the National Assembly do not know the content of their own budget, yet they hold court over how the budget of the country is spent. Public auditing of spending by the National Assembly and several reports on allegations of corruption that have been investigated remain shrouded in secrecy. This does nothing for an institution that seeks to be 'responsive, accessible, representative and accountable'.

The budgets of the National Assembly, the National Judicial Commission (NJC), and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), amongst others, are a first line charge. As such, it is not necessary for these institutions to provide a detailed breakdown of their budget as part of the annual budgeting process. This is a great disservice to Nigerians as it does nothing for transparency and accountability.

For example, between 2006 and 2016, approximately N1.3 trillion has been allocated to the National Assembly (~\$4.2 billion) and there are no records of how most of this monies were spent.

#OpenNASS has been a very active conversation on social media and we've expanded the conversation through newspaper infographs and radio programs.

We will be increasing our engagement using mobile technology and additional media platforms to enable Nigerians to get engaged, informed and most importantly, take action. A toll-free line is now available for citizens to sign the petition on the National Assembly budget breakdown and get other information on governance issues.

The 'flash' service toll free lines to call are **08139861001 and 08139861002**. 'Flash' service meaning upon dialing, the call drops up and calls you back immediately. The hotline is in English, Igbo, Pidgin, Hausa and Yoruba.

Through the hotline and our engagements on social and traditional media, we will promote three advocacy goals:

1. The National Assembly should publish the breakdown of its 2016 and 2017 budgets;
2. Maintain a functional website, provide contact information of its members, activate the switchboard in the National Assembly complex so citizens can engage their representatives and make attendance records public;
3. Replace voice voting with electronic voting and making voting records public.

The National Assembly is a critical institution in our democracy and we will ensure that it is repurposed to serve all Nigerians, not just a few. They are currently on recess until January and we encourage citizens to engage them at home and demand for accountability so they can start the new year delivering on their promise.

God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

- End -

###

The OpenNASS project is collaboration between Enough is Enough Nigeria and VOTO Mobile supported by the Omidyar Network. The project builds on the work and networks of partners across Nigeria – Budgit, CITAD, CONGOs (Edo), CSNAC, Dawn in the Creeks, Development Dynamics, Reclaim Naija (CLP), SERAP, Premium Times, Sahara Reporters & YNaija.

Enough is Enough Nigeria (www.eie.ng) is a coalition of individuals and organizations committed to instituting a culture of good governance and public accountability in Nigeria through active citizenship. EIE Nigeria was an integral part of the #OccupyNigeria movement in 2012 and it's currently very active in the #OpenNASS campaign. The coalition includes The Future Project; Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN); Education as a Vaccine (EVA); Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND); and LYNX Nigeria. Partners include BudgIT & ReclaimNaija.

Voto Mobile (www.votomobile.org) is a Ghana-based tech startup and social enterprise that makes it easy for businesses, governments, and NGOs to share information and gather feedback through interactive SMS or voice calls in local languages – using mobile to instantly reach across distance, language, and literacy barriers. Voto's mission is to increase participation and accountability in the services delivered to citizens, and to empower communities to collect and share information to drive positive social change.