



*Authors: Michael Moses, Pragati Godbole, Isabella Gallegos
Contributors: 'Sumbo Oladipo, Temitayo Ladipo*

Introduction

The MacArthur Foundation's Big Bet On Nigeria program supports Nigerian-led efforts to reduce corruption by strengthening accountability, transparency, and participation. Work to enhance criminal justice by supporting the adoption and implementation of the Administration of the Criminal Justice Act (ACJA)¹ throughout Nigeria, including at state level, is central to the success of On Nigeria's strategy.

This learning brief explores Learning Questions 4.1 and 4.4, as well as Learning Priority 1 (see box). Specifically, it investigates how grantees in On Nigeria's criminal justice cohort support the implementation of the ACJA and state-level adopted or equivalent laws (ACJ/Ls), the results to which grantees have contributed, and how their work has affected the broader reform agenda of Nigeria's criminal justice and accountability ecosystem. It also seeks to understand the sustainability of grantees' work.

The evidence presented suggests that grantees have worked independently and collaborated with others in the accountability ecosystem to implement a wide range of activities that have contributed to tangible progress in implementing the ACJA/Ls throughout Nigeria. However, they

Learning Questions

4.1: To what extent do court procedures adhere to the Administration of Criminal Justice Act & Administration of Criminal Justice Laws?

4.4: How have grantees institutionalized polices, practices, and functions that contribute to the long-term sustainability of their efforts to promote greater transparency, accountability, and participation (as defined by sector)?

Learning Priority

1: How does the work done under On Nigeria, and with respect to the accountability ecosystem, contribute to outcomes in other areas and sectors?

¹ A landmark law passed in 2015, the Administration of the Criminal Justice Act is the most significant overhaul of the Nigerian justice system in decades. While it does not explicitly address corruption, elements of the ACJA were intended to strengthen the criminal justice sector as a whole and help create an environment for increasing transparency, accountability, and participation.

face a variety of challenges, from resource constraints to inconsistent buy-in and support, that hinder further progress, and may challenge sustainability beyond 2024.

Sample and Methods

After co-creating the goals and design of this brief with the Program Team in early 2024, EnCompass reviewed all criminal justice grantees' proposals, annual reports, and project documents to identify 12 grantees that focused specifically on supporting the implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls in various ways. EnCompass conducted key informant interviews with senior staff from each identified grantee to further explore their work and results achieved under On Nigeria 2.0. After reviewing newly sourced documents and reports,² EnCompass coded, analyzed, integrated, and synthesized the collected data to generate overarching findings and conclusions.

Evidence and Insights

Grantee Activities and Focus Areas

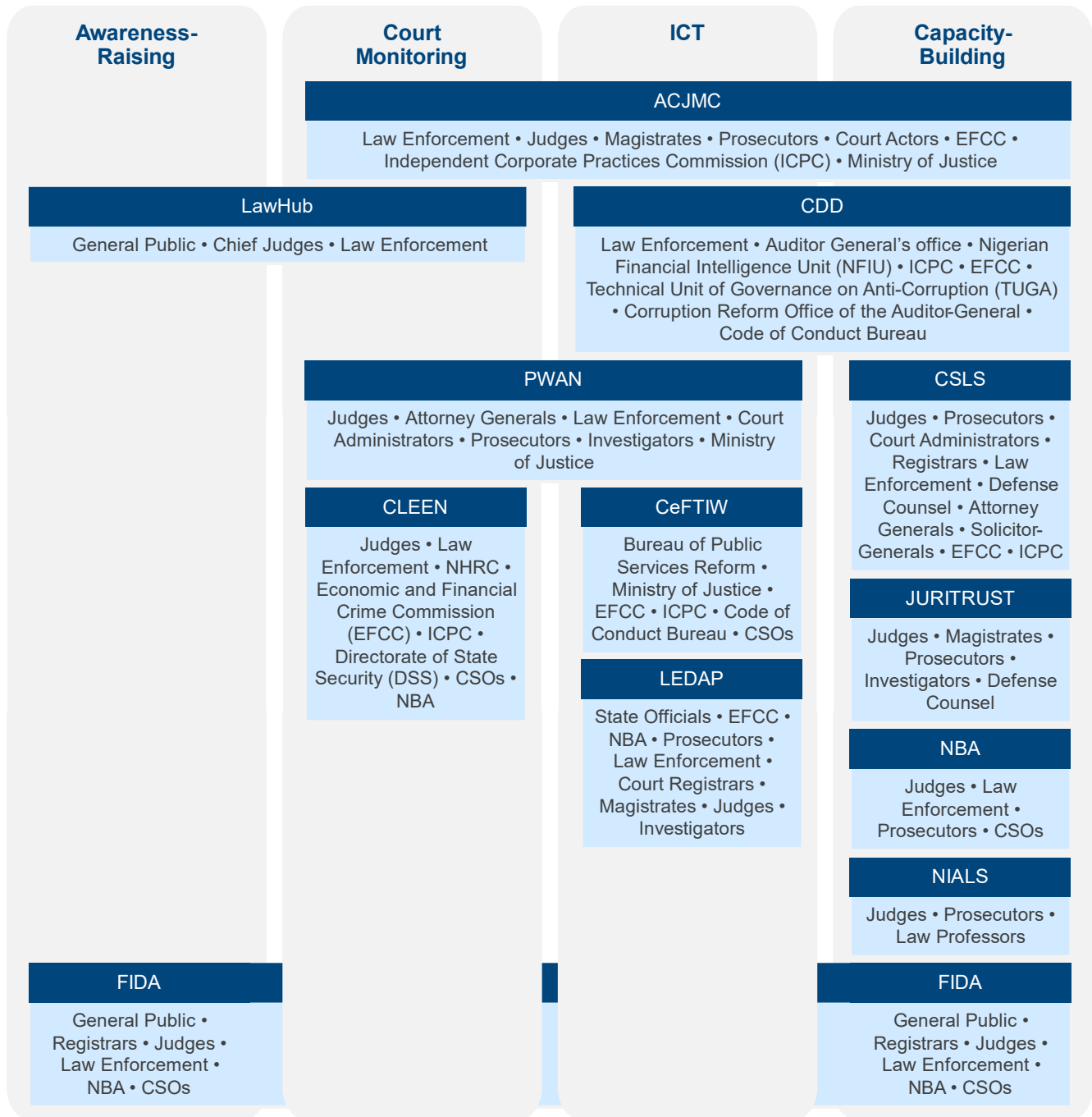
After the preliminary document review, the EnCompass team determined that the 12 identified grantee activities fell into one or more of four broad, overlapping categories:

1. **Capacity-building** activities focused on strengthening knowledge and skills related to the ACJA and ACJ/Ls and anticorruption legislation, and targeted a wide range of criminal justice actors.
2. **Monitoring** activities sought to assess compliance with the ACJA/Ls, including at the court-level.
3. **Awareness-raising** activities focused on making criminal justice actors and the public more aware of, and able to access, the ACJA/Ls.
4. **Information and communications technology (ICT)** activities involved developing technology tools and applying them to various aspects of the criminal justice system.

Exhibit 1 distributes grantees across these categories. Please consult Annex 1 for more details about grantees' activities, and the geographies in which they worked.

² The EL Partner compiled and reviewed 75 documents in the first stage of the document review, including project proposals, briefs, annual reports, grantee publications, and public reports. The EL Partner progressed 35 documents to second review stage, in which they were subjected to a more detailed review and content analysis. These 35 documents were selected based on the extent to which they provided detailed information on grantees' work, and/or the extent to which they included content related to assessing the implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls.

Exhibit 1: Criminal Justice grantees' activities and targeted participants related to the ACJA and ACJ/Ls



Background and Status of the National Minimum Standards

The Centre for Socio-Legal Studies (CSLS) and other civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in the criminal justice sector have identified four core elements of the ACJA system. These elements—the National Minimum Standards (NMS)—are considered essential for effectively implementing the ACJA and ACJ/Ls at the state level, and are useful for systematically assessing the quality of implementation (via the Peer Review Mechanism CSLS and the Ministry of Justice have created).

Exhibit 2 summarizes, for each NMS, evidence on implementation to date and key challenges, as shared and documented by criminal justice grantees.

Exhibit 2: National Minimum Standards status and challenge³s

National Minimum Standard	Implementation status	Challenges affecting implementation
Section 496: <i>Creation of ACJMCs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 states have established ACJMCs, with ACJMCs reportedly improving collaboration between stakeholders throughout the criminal justice system.⁴ • Standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been established for 6 states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies exist across ACJMCs, due to differences in budgets, SOPs, secretariats, and requirements for submitting quarterly reports to the states' Chief Judge. • Some ACJMCs are not meeting regularly, e.g., Oyo State ACJMC, while others struggle to navigate changes in state-level administrations due to statutory requirements that mandate the participation of political appointees.
Section 396: <i>Provision of time frame for trials/case management/ limitations on number and duration of adjournment</i>	<p>Some states, like Kebbi State, self-report an average case completion (from arraignment to judgment) of two to three months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines vary considerably across states, with some (like Plateau State) reporting taking 12 to 60 months to complete cases, on average.
Section 106: <i>Requirement that crimes be handled by legally trained personnel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crimes are increasingly handled by legally trained personnel. • Three states have fully abolished lay prosecution. The remaining 33 states have measures in place to check abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some states still suffer from deficits of legally trained personnel in certain districts. For example, Yola (Adamawa State) still struggles to find resident lawyers in remote locations.
Section 306: <i>Prohibiting stay of trial proceedings on account of an interlocutory appeal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantee monitors observed full compliance with the prohibition of stay of proceedings in respect of a criminal matter before the court. • Eleven states self-reported that criminal proceedings are never stayed on account of interlocutory applications, while 24 states self-reported that such stays are rare. Zamfara State is the only one to report that criminal proceedings are often stayed due to interlocutory appeals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantees did not mention specific challenges on this standard.

³ Information comes from key informant interviews (KIIs) and the CSLS NMS Baseline Assessment published in 2023.

⁴According to CSLS' Baseline Assessment, these were: Abia, Adamawa, Anambra, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, and Yobe.

Findings

Findings are presented under three lines of inquiry that cut across the learning question and priorities. Findings 1 to 5 explain how grantees contributed to some of the observed successes. Findings 6 and 7 describe the factors that facilitate and challenge results, and Findings 8 and 9 shed light on how grantees think about the sustainability of their work (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Findings Summary

Finding 1: Seven out of 12 grantees reported that their capacity-building activities improved criminal justice stakeholders' knowledge and skills related to ACJA and ACJ/L provisions and strengthened their ability to support implementation.

Finding 2: Eight out of 12 grantees reported improvements in pre-trial processes. These include reduced backlogs in investigative work, the presence of legally trained personnel during arrests and interrogations, and a decline in human rights abuses.

Finding 3: State Civil Society Observatory Groups' court-monitoring efforts contributed to changes that reduced judges' likelihood to grant stays and made court proceedings more efficient.

Finding 4: Grantees' development and use of ICT tools helped criminal justice actors decrease the time and effort required to complete tasks and generally enabled speedier operations across the justice system.

Finding 5: There are preliminary indications that criminal justice grantees have strengthened collaboration throughout the accountability ecosystem, including with and across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, (MDAs) thereby improving implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls.

Finding 6: Differences in when states passed their own ACJ/Ls, the specifics of the enabling legislation, and levels of buy-in from state actors all led to inconsistencies in state-by-state implementation.

Finding 7: Resource and infrastructure deficits, criminal justice personnel challenges, and resistance to change continue to hinder implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls.

Finding 8: Strong strategic organizational leadership is essential for sustaining grantees' work in support of the ACJA/Ls. Partnership-based approaches and co-creation are also important.

Finding 9: Funding and persistent turnover in government agencies were the most frequently mentioned issues affecting sustainability. However, some grantees are employing creative methods to sustain their ACJA and ACJ/L-focused activities in the future.

In what ways have grantees contributed to successful implementation of the ACJA/Ls?

Finding 1: Seven out of 12 grantees reported that their capacity building activities improved criminal justice stakeholders' knowledge and skills related to ACJA and ACJ/L provisions and strengthened their ability to support implementation.

Grantees focused on capacity-building reported that activity participants improved their knowledge of the ACJA/Ls. Several grantees highlighted improvements in magistrates', judges', and lawyers' awareness of provisions in and jurisprudence of state-level ACJ/Ls, and noted an increased number of stakeholders throughout Nigeria who are knowledgeable about the ACJA/Ls. The activities also improved participants' skills. Some grantees reported that participants could now apply The Guidebook on Integrating ACJA 2015 while teaching law students, whereas other activity participants were more able to lodge complaints against state authorities when implementation was lacking. Collectively, these improvements have contributed to increased compliance.

Grantees also explained that their capacity-building work has enabled trainees to support implementation of the ACJA/Ls. One noted that a training of trainers for law enforcement and other stakeholders—which intended to build capacity and enable inter-agency coordination and collaboration—was so successful that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) replicated the training in its work to protect human rights.

Training sessions are also reportedly resulting in increased demand for similar capacity- building opportunities in subnational contexts. One grantee mentioned that its national workshop on plea bargaining led to demands for similar workshops for state-level actors. Another grantee highlighted that state representatives from Akwa-Ibom, a state in which this particular grantee does not typically work, requested additional training for its registrars.

A grantee mentioned that to support ACJ implementation, they provided targeted capacity-building support for the Office of the Auditor-General, which enabled the establishment of a modern audit house at its headquarters in Abuja. Prior to grantee support, there were delays in the Auditor-General’s report. The Auditor-General has now been able to fast-track the backlog of reports, and they are being used by anticorruption agencies to lodge cases or complaints in the judicial system, seek justice, and reduce corruption in Nigeria.

Finding 2: Eight out of 12 grantees reported improvements in pre-trial processes. These include reduced backlogs in investigative work, the presence of legally trained personnel during arrests and interrogations, and a decline in human rights abuses.

Most grantees interviewed described improvements in compliance with pre-trial processes and regulations set out in the ACJA and ACJ/Ls. Police, in particular, are now more aware of, and adhere to, pre-trial detention time limits and refrain from arrests-in-lieu (which are illegal under the ACJA). For example, one grantee mentioned that before its intervention, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) interrogation rooms had many backlogged cases due to lack of knowledge about ACJA provisions and systemic inefficiencies. Interrogators were able to complete only seven or eight interrogations per day. Now, ICPC interrogators can complete close to 32 interviews in a day. This has further ensured that corruption cases are not thrown out due to delays. Two other grantees reported that their work has improved the public’s understanding of their rights under the law, which has contributed to the reduction of illegal arrests in lieu.

Exhibit 4 presents other pre-trial improvements to which grantees report their work has contributed.

Exhibit 4: Pre-trial improvements to which grantees have contributed.

Pre-trial Improvements



Reduction in plea bargaining that has led to high-profile convictions



Increased efficiency in submission of case files to Attorney General



Increased use of lawyers by police; increased police knowledge about areas of discretion

Pre-trial Improvements



Improved investigative processes, especially related to financial intelligence investigations; increased collaboration with Interpol



Reduction in number of detentions; reduction in detentions and arrests in lieu



Production of records related to arrests, demographics, length of detention, and number of people awaiting trial that are analyzed by grantees to show trends over time



Use of ICT such as recordings of arrests that can be used to determine if laws were upheld, even when lawyers are absent; reduction in women used as surety for siblings (in lieu of arrests)



Reduction in backlogs in interrogation and investigative processes; increased number of interrogations completed

Finding 3: State Civil Society Observatory Groups' court-monitoring efforts contributed to changes that reduced judges' likelihood to grant stays and made court proceedings more efficient.

Four of 12 grantees specifically mentioned court-monitoring activities that have contributed to the identification of progress and challenges in ACJA and ACJ/L implementation, and reduced timelines for court proceedings. For example, one grantee asserted that its court monitoring activities enabled it to understand how to:

1. Support the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme (PDSS) to be implemented across Nigeria to address pre-trial concerns occurring at police stations;
2. Ensure proper case management through tracking and provision of legal advice within the Ministry of Justice; and
3. Engage with the support staff of the judiciary to fast-track proceedings.

One grantee mentioned that the court monitoring it conducted on politically exposed people and their corruption-related cases has contributed to the evidence base and literature around ACJA implementation. The policy briefs the grantee disseminated at the state and national levels have further enabled advocacy and research to study court processes and judgements, and to understand ACJA implementation progress. Another grantee noted that court-monitoring efforts have improved courts' accountability in targeted geographies. Monitors generate monthly and quarterly reports that document the names of judges and their conduct, among other court processes. This provides extra accountability, so that, even though lawyers continue to apply for stays of proceedings or interlocutory appeals, judges are less likely to allow them, and are more careful in the management of court proceedings.

Finding 4: Grantees' development and use of ICT tools helped criminal justice actors decrease the time and effort required to complete tasks and generally enabled speedier operations across the justice system.

One grantee mentioned that it digitized an ACJA and ACJ/L reporting platform where court monitors can submit daily reports on cases pertaining to politically exposed persons. Digitization has helped create a repository of cases and enabled case-tracking that is easily accessible to civil society, researchers, and academics. In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), another grantee developed a tool that automates investigation and prosecution reports for the Attorney General’s office within the Ministry of Justice. This has facilitated collaboration between legal actors and reduced case processing times.

Another grantee developed an electronic learning system and e-curriculum for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Academy and Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and reported that the system enables efficient, uniform, and – importantly, for sustainability beyond On Nigeria – the institutionalized, ongoing training of large numbers of officials and investigators. Additionally, a grantee has enabled the use of speech-to-text technology to reduce instances where judges and staff have to handwrite notes during case proceedings, a manual process which is both time-consuming and prone to errors. This ICT intervention has had a positive impact on the health of judges and court staff (see box).

“She had issues with her wrist because of the amount of time she takes to write out court proceedings . . . she had mentioned clearly how this technology has really improved things, even had benefits to her health.” — KII

Finding 5: There are preliminary indications that criminal justice grantees have strengthened collaboration throughout the accountability ecosystem, including with and across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, (MDAs) thereby improving implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls.

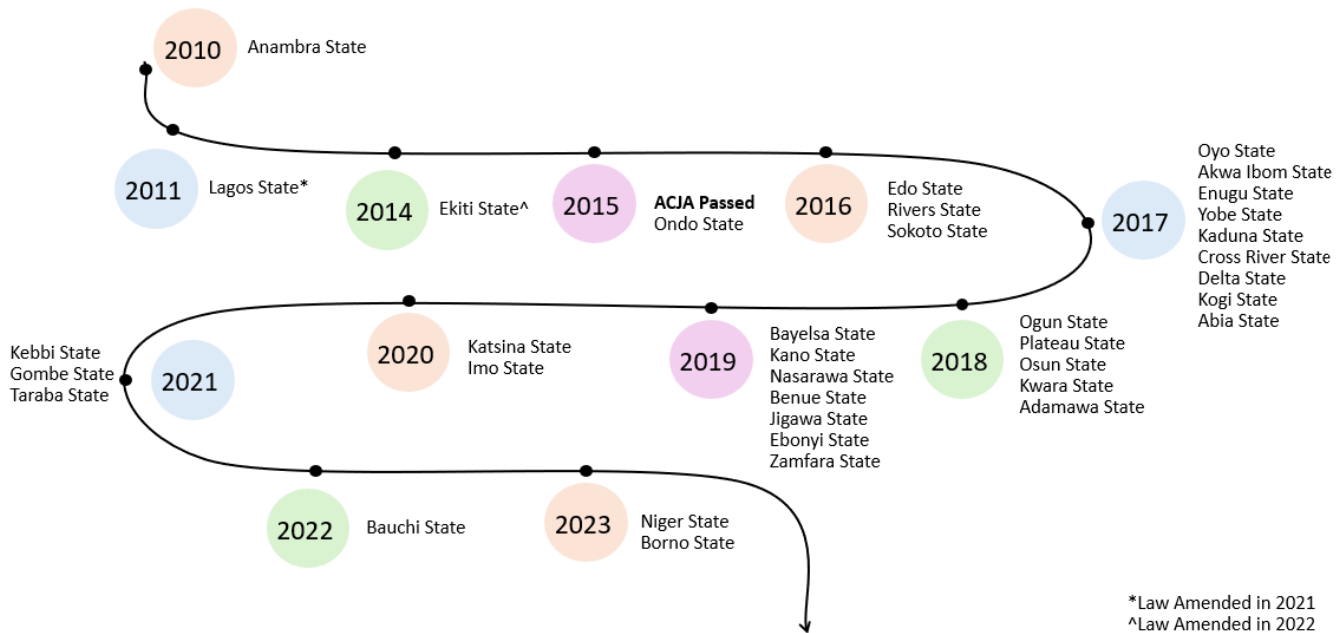
In their work related to ACJA and ACJL implementation, most of the grantees interviewed described improvements in collaboration throughout the accountability ecosystem. These included examples of grantees working together to support implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls, as well as initiatives involving other CSOs, anticorruption agencies, and state- and federal-level government actors across Nigeria. For instance, a grantee mentioned that CSOs are often perceived as “troublemakers” and government bodies are resistant to sharing information about their work. However, this grantee now works closely with the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, which has contributed to the agency improving its compliance with the Freedom of Information Act’s proactive disclosure requirements. Furthering institutionalization and sustainability, another grantee mentioned that its work with the Federal Ministry of Justice to organize the National Forum on the Review of Implementation of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act and Criminal Justice Laws of the 36 States played a key role in the Federal Attorney General’s decision to formally adopt the National Minimum Standards Project, including the Peer Review Mechanism, as a federal government initiative.

What factors facilitate and challenge implementation of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls?

Finding 6: Differences in when states passed their own ACJ/Ls, the specifics of the enabling legislation, and levels of buy-in from state actors all led to inconsistencies in state-by-state implementation.

Though all states have now passed ACJ/Ls, four of 12 grantees reported that implementation is highly variable. Date of passage is one reason for this. For example, though the ACJA passed in 2015, many Nigerian states passed their ACJ/Ls sometime after that—Borno State was the last to do so, in September 2023. This variation means that some states are more established in their implementation while others are just starting (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Timeline of ACJA and ACJ/L passage⁵



Further, the details of ACJ/Ls differ between states. For example, one grantee highlighted that Delta State passed an improved version of the ACJA with unique provisions such as the Pre-Trial Case Management system. In contrast, the Edo State ACJ/L retains lay prosecution, a stark departure from best practice. State-level buy-in also matters for implementation. Five grantees mentioned that the commitment and political will of state actors such as governors, chief judges, and attorneys general are essential, but these factors vary in different states. However, one grantee pointed to the Supreme Court of Nigeria’s 2017 decision to uphold the constitutionality of the ACJA facilitated political will across the country.

Considered together, these factors lead to different states applying key ACJA provisions in very different ways. Grantees describe Lagos State as having both strong legislation and high levels of buy-in, making it a positive outlier when it comes to ACJ/L implementation and compliance with the NMS. Indeed, Lagos has made rapid and impressive progress with respect to implementation (see box).

⁵ Adapted from PWAN’s ACJ/L Tracker.

Snapshot: Success to Date in Lagos

“Lagos has made more progress than other states in criminal justice administration, in the implementation of the ACJA . . . because after passing the ACJA, Lagos took steps to provide infrastructures for the law to work. . . . For instance, [the ACJA] says that legal aid should be provided for persons facing criminal trial. Lagos State went ahead [and] set up an office of the public defender, which provides free legal assistance. They set up community service centers in each of the local governments . . . without community service officials, you cannot commit people to community service.” —KII

Finding 7: Resource and infrastructure deficits, criminal justice personnel challenges, and resistance to change continue to hinder the implementation of ACJA and ACJ/Ls.

Eight of 12 grantees explained that to adhere to the National Minimum Standards, states must be able to hire and pay criminal justice personnel (lawyers, judges, law enforcement, etc.), and to fund ACJMCs. Equipment, electricity, and facilities are also needed for effective implementation. The federal ACJA does not provide funding for any of these needs, and states take very different approaches to resourcing implementation, which leads to a number of challenges.

One grantee explained that its efforts to implement a state-level case management system was affected by electricity blackouts. To support the new system, the grantee had to install solar panels and inverters. Another grantee mentioned that many police stations lack interview facilities. Such infrastructure deficits hinder ACJA and ACJ/L implementation.

“Most of these police stations do not have interrogation rooms, and they do not even have recording. Those infrastructures are also not available, and that in itself is also not promoting the issue of compliance. This also happens in court when courts do not have adequate infrastructure to protect witnesses.” —KII

“The corruption within the sector is unprecedented, data collectors bribe court officials from 5,000 upwards to enable them facilitate necessary approvals for them to deliver their task on the project.” —Grantee Report

According to seven grantees, legal actors’ resistance to change also challenges implementation. Many grantees think criminal justice actors want to maintain the status quo and that other legal actors simply resist change and demonstrate an unwillingness to adapt to a new way of doing things. Three grantees also mentioned bureaucracy and lack of collaboration between stakeholders as a challenge. These grantees point to the complicated nature of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls, which require collaboration and information sharing to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the

law. Many legal actors simply do not have the time or desire to engage in such activities.

In what ways are grantees trying to sustain their work and results?
What challenges do they face?

Finding 8: Strong strategic organizational leadership is essential for sustaining grantees’ work in support of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls. Partnership-based approaches and co-creation are also important.

Six of 12 grantees mentioned that they have strategic plans and/or buy-in from organizational leadership to support activities and ensure sustainability beyond 2024. Grantee staff also mentioned that strong organizational leadership and board members provide useful input and recommendations in ways that support sustainability.

Five grantees mentioned that co-creating their strategies and activities with partners—other grantees; government agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice, EFCC, and Department of State Services; quasi-governmental organizations like the NHRC; and other CSOs such as the NBA and Legal Aid Council—also helps drive sustainability.

Three grantees mentioned that investment from partners and the relationships they built together will help sustain activities beyond On Nigeria 2.0 funding. One grantee discussed how it is intentional about sustainability at the onset of project design and asks the states it is working with to make tangible commitments and contributions so they can take ownership of the project. Another grantee discussed creating action plans with the EFCC, ensuring that its partner owns and supports project activities and goals. This same grantee co-created a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that formally describes the role of the institution, the role of the grantee, and outlines the plan for sustainability. Other grantees report that their ICT-focused activities should continue beyond 2024 but do not mention how they or others will maintain and resource those activities.

“One of the activities we had in mind to make sure that the work that we do is sustainable and even provide a platform for future projects was the implementation assessment. During this implementation assessment, we gathered together major criminal justice stakeholders in states . . . to speak to their experiences. We had situations where experts, judges, and senior lawyers had impacted and taught on the ACJ/L ways to implement, how these criminal justice stakeholders can properly implement the provisions of the ACJ/Ls. But we also got to hear feedback from these stakeholders, some of the issues they had with implementing the ACJ/L, what are the benefits of the ACJ/Ls in their opinion, and even some of the gaps they could see and got recommendations from them.” —KII

Finding 9: Funding and persistent turnover in government agencies are the most frequently mentioned issues affecting sustainability. However, some grantees are employing creative ways to sustain their ACJA and ACJ/L-focused activities in the future.

“The continuous support of the international partners is what I consider the major factor that will sustain us. Any withdrawal now will kick us backwards another five years or so. The next five years will be very crucial in sustaining all the results and achievements we have made so far.” —KII

Many grantees noted that their activities, such as court monitoring, training and mentorship, and public awareness-raising, are not one-time practices, but should be consistent efforts. This entails ongoing funding. Seven grantees revealed fears that they will not have the funds to continue or expand their activities in the future. When asked about their plans to continue activities in the future, six grantees mentioned that they are exploring alternative pathways for both funding and sustainability. These plans include incorporating fees for publications, charging for in-person and/or online courses, renting out spaces in buildings they own, or other

niche self-funding activities.⁶ Other grantees explained that securing commitments from partners such as the National Association of Law Teachers to continue activities like compulsory legal education and ongoing assessment of ACJ/L implementation beyond 2024 was also an important aspect of ensuring sustainability.

Five grantees described leadership changes in government organizations and turnover of justice personnel, like lawyers, judges, and law enforcement, as challenging to sustainability. Many grantees partner and work with government actors, like attorneys general, who are elected and/or (re)appointed every few years. Turnover is also high in other parts of the criminal justice system, which can result in shifting priorities and lack of continuity and reduce the efficacy of capacity-building activities. For example, one grantee described conducting a two-part training for law enforcement officials in Bauchi state in 2022, but only 2 percent of participants completed both parts.

“If a new leadership comes in and is not comfortable or interested in the work that the previous leadership is doing with us it can stop it. It can truncate it and there is nothing we can do about it, so there are external factors that we cannot control in ensuring sustainability.” —KII

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Criminal justice grantees have leveraged a variety of activities and approaches to spur action related to the administration of criminal justice and, despite considerable variance across states, have contributed to substantial improvements in the implementation of ACJA and ACJ/Ls throughout Nigeria.

Implementation of the ACJA/Ls varies across Nigeria. This is due to a number of factors, including the specifics of the legislative language in relevant state-level laws, and the timeframe in which the adopted legislation was passed. Resourcing and buy-in from local political actors also affect implementation and compliance. In the face of these challenges, criminal justice grantees have deployed a variety of activities to strengthen awareness of and capacity related to the ACJA and ACJ/Ls, drive action to support NMS assessment and compliance, and engage others throughout the accountability ecosystem in efforts to improve the administration of criminal justice. These efforts have contributed to meaningful results—from strengthening the extent to which lawyers and judges are aware of and have the skills to comply with the provisions of ACJ/Ls, to introducing monitoring processes that drive accountability in the court system, and leveraging creative technologies to reduce case backlogs and streamline proceedings—that have made a difference in the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

These gains, though not universal, highlight the promise of On Nigeria’s cohort approach to supporting criminal justice reform. On Nigeria provided resources to organizations working on a

⁶ For example, one grantee discussed a “Waste for Justice” activity where trash and recyclable material is collected and used to support a prison decongestion service.

range of issues in different ways and supported the implementation of state-level projects that sought to respond to the specific contexts of the criminal justice system in target geographies. This sort of approach, which gave grantees space and support to find contextually relevant ways to engage and affect teeth actors, while also benefiting from occasional touch points and strategic learning opportunities with each other, has facilitated the achievement of results.

Conclusion 2: The sustainability of grantees’ activities beyond 2024, and the enduring nature of results achieved to date, is yet to be determined. However, the collaborative initiatives that many grantees have led and/or supported may help sustain ongoing collective action on issues related to the ACJA and ACJ/Ls beyond 2024.

Many criminal justice grantees have deployed approaches grounded in principles of collaboration in their work to support the implementation of the ACJA/Ls. These approaches range from co-creating projects with government partners, to leveraging MoUs to formalize partnerships, and systematically building partners’ skills to use training materials and ICT tools to engage others. Their efforts have often directly engaged teeth actors at various levels of government and included a variety of non-state actors throughout the criminal justice system.

These collaborative initiatives are especially encouraging in light of On Nigeria’s impending conclusion. Despite some grantees’ concerns about the sustainability of their work, by kickstarting collective action throughout the criminal justice system and transferring ownership of activities and initiatives to other partners, they have not only contributed to short and intermediate-term progress toward important results in the Criminal Justice cohort’s Theory of Change (Exhibit 6), but may have laid the groundwork for locally led, enduring progress in the future.

Additional support for criminal justice reform is almost certainly needed, but successes to date—illustrated by the example of Lagos State and other early adopters—suggest that some of the gains to which grantees have contributed may persist.

Exhibit 6: Examples of progress towards outcomes in the Criminal Justice Theory of Change

CJ Outcome Summaries	Examples of Progress
CJ.1 Key criminal justice actors have an improved understanding and application of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls in their work	Many legal actors – lawyers, police, investigators, and others – have completed a variety of grantee-led and/or supported trainings and courses related to their duties under the ACJA/Ls
CJ.2 ACJMCs have strengthened capacity to monitor and promote ACJA and ACJA/L compliance	ACJMCs have been created in most states Several states have formal SOPs to guide the operation of ACJMCs
CJ.3 CSOs can identify barriers to ACJA and ACJ/L compliance	Many barriers – infrastructure deficits, turnover, resistance to change, and buy-in, among others – identified
CJ.4 On Nigeria grantees collaborate to consistently promote ACJA and ACJ/L adoption, implementation	Frequent within-cohort collaboration involving many grantees, including CLEEN, FIDA, LEDAP, the NBA, and ICPC
CJ.5 Law schools and legal credentialing bodies require entry-level and continuing training on the ACJA and ACJA/Ls	Training center established at the Human Rights Institution and Institute of Continuing Education of the NBA. Established curriculum for EFCC investigators and prosecutors to ensure consistent and uniform training Established curriculum for teaching about the ACJA/Ls at universities and law schools

<p>CJ.6 ACJMCs and civil society monitor application of the ACJA and ACJ/Ls to protect all Nigerians (including historically disadvantaged groups)</p>	<p>Civil Society Observatory Groups monitor courts to ensure adherence to ACJA and ACJL provisions. Reported reduction in number of arrests of women in-lieu of family members</p>
<p>CJ.7 CSOs implement programming that responds to barriers to ACJA/L compliance</p>	<p>Grantees are leading capacity building and awareness raising activities and co-creating initiatives with partners to address barriers in ACJA/L compliance</p>

