



POWER AFRICA NIGERIA POWER SECTOR PROGRAM

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA'S POWER SECTOR: PATTERNS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION



ABOUT PA-NPSP'S RESEARCH ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN NIGERIA'S POWER SECTOR

The Nigerian energy sector has not comprehensively examined diversity and social inclusion. Due to absence of data, the sector has limited scope of understanding of the value of social inclusion and diversity or measures to achieve it. The Power Africa Nigeria Power Sector Program (PA-NPSP) commissioned a study to fill the gap in knowledge and understanding of social inclusion and diversity and to provide practical guidance to strengthen sector policy and practice.

The full report, *Social Inclusion and Diversity in Nigeria's Power Sector*, presents the detailed findings from information gathered from power sector stakeholders, social inclusion actors, and diverse communities as well as an extensive literature review. The study aims to inform public, private, and civil society efforts to achieve social inclusion and diversity in power sector planning, operations, and workforce development.

PA-NPSP also developed two background papers—*Patterns of Social Exclusion* and *Legal, Policy and Regulatory Framework*—to provide policymakers, practitioners, development partners, and others with deeper insight into social inclusion and diversity in Nigeria. In addition, Power Africa's [*Gender and Social Inclusion: What Do I Need to Consider?*](#) checklist serves as a practical guide to considering how to act on the concepts covered in this

brief, including promoting gender parity in capacity building activities, meetings, and conferences; addressing gender norms and stereotypes; and striving for equality and equal access and participation during community engagement.

Deloitte Consulting LLP prepared this publication for review by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared under Task Order No. 01: The Nigeria Power Sector Reform Program (the "Task Order") of the Power Africa Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity ("IDIQ") Contract No. 720-674-18-D-00003 implemented by Deloitte Consulting LLP. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Deloitte Consulting LLP and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. The publication was produced by Dr. Adaobi Nkeokelonye with the support of program staff members Melissa Payson, Jenine Jaradat, Leah Umeokeke, and Miracle Ogunbowale.

INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion is a process of systematically disadvantaging groups of people in a given society on the basis of social characteristics that align with the society's power relations. It is a manifestation of inequalities that spring from unequal power relations in social interactions. These relational values are often reflected not just in public service institutions, but also in social institutions such as households.¹

As a society with differentiated identities, social exclusion in Nigeria has multiple dimensions, with different dynamics as to how exclusion affects or impacts people over time. The intersectionality of exclusion within Nigeria is clear. Acknowledging the relationship between poverty and social exclusion is important,² given the existing gaps between the rich and the poor in a country where over half of the population continues to live below the international poverty line.³ Identifying excluded groups entails looking beyond poverty to determine the factors unrelated to an individual's capabilities that can affect their access to opportunities, such as employment, education, healthcare, physical and social services, and overall participation in sociocultural and political life.

Within Nigeria's socio-economic context, these factors are underscored by the social identities to which individuals and groups subscribe. Given Nigeria's mosaic ethno-linguistic society, the Nigerian polity is defined by multiple overlapping layers of identities or "markers," including gender, ethnicity, religion, class, employment, disability, sexual orientation, education, parental status, and more. Spatial factors also define people's exclusion or inclusion status.

Within the power sector, it is important to recognize these differentiated identity markers and consider the roles they play in exclusion and inclusion. This creates a sturdy foundation to expand dialogue and decision-making on energy needs, uses, and priorities as well as to enable public and private energy sector actors to gain access to talent and benefit from diverse perspectives, skill sets, and experiences.

These factors are just as important to consider in Nigeria's other sectors—as well as in contexts beyond its borders.

FACTORS THAT IMPACT SOCIAL EXCLUSION

ETHNICITY

Ethnic nationalism has characterized Nigeria's history, pre- and post-independence. Ethnic and regional consciousness within the three largest ethnic groups continues to drive sentiments on resource allocation as well as political and economic exclusion.⁴ This impacts decision-making and makes it a factor to consider in determining exclusion. Validating this, many Nigerians belong to minority ethnic communities that fear being absorbed by, and living in the shadow of, larger ethnic groups.⁵

One minority group of interest when it comes to power exclusion is the nomadic Fulani, whose livelihood is based on a pastoral lifestyle, which has consistently resulted in struggles and conflicts between farmers and herders over land and scarce resources.⁶ This group is Nigeria's primary pastoral group, with a population estimated at over 15 million in Nigeria. Renowned across West Africa for their lifestyle, the pastoral Fulani community mostly have their wealth concentrated in livestock.⁷ In sub-Saharan Africa, they have a population of about 50 million and constitute 12 percent of the rural population.⁸ In Nigeria and neighboring countries, societal relations with this ethnic group are marked by stereotypes and prejudice,⁹ resulting in discrimination.¹⁰ Within the country, their lives are defined by the need to find pasture for their animals, thus leaving them at the margins of rural society, constrained from participating in civic activities or accessing social services.¹¹ A study of the group in Kwara State, which focused on understanding coping mechanisms of pastoralist households during the period that the men go grazing, reveals that the pastoralists live in marginalized conditions and are unable to access the social services necessary to improve their living conditions.¹²

RELIGION

The value of religion is deeply entrenched in Nigerian society. Complex crises often manifest in religious forms, but not without some layers of regionalism and ethnicity.

Research conducted in 2012 by Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life found that Nigerians were 49.3 percent Christian and 48.8 percent Muslim.¹³ A 2010 survey found that two percent identified as belonging to other faiths (namely the Jewish and Baha'i) or were unaffiliated.¹⁴ The survey found that many Nigerians integrated traditional African practices within Islam or Christianity. Of the Muslim population, 97 percent of respondents identified as Sunni, Shia, "just a Muslim," or "something else." Christian denominations include "Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Baptists, Anabaptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Jehovah's Witnesses."¹⁵

The country is divided along the lines of a largely Muslim north and Christian south. Therefore, depending on the part of the country where a citizen resides, religious identity can be a cause of exclusion. In the majority Muslim northern states, the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups dominate.¹⁶ A notable number of Christians, some of whom are Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri, are also found in the north. In the central and southwestern regions, including Lagos, where the Yoruba ethnic group dominates, the numbers of Christians and Muslims are roughly the same. Christians are the majority in the southeastern states, where the Igbo group is most prevalent, and Christians are the overwhelming majority in the Niger Delta region, where the Ogoni and Ijaw groups prevail.¹⁷ Religious houses, like churches and mosques, are categorized among the "special¹⁸ group in The Nigeria Electricity Supply Industry end-user classification.

GENDER

In Nigeria, the population is almost evenly split between women and men. With a population nearing 200 million, Nigerian women constitute over 96 million.¹⁹

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Center's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures discrimination against women in social institutions across 180 countries.²⁰ In 2019, SIGI ranked Nigeria high at 46 percent, finding that women suffer discrimination in the family institution, restricted physical integrity, and restricted access to productive and financial resources and civil liberties.²¹

Gender inequalities are implicated in diminished physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. While Nigerians constitute 2.4 percent of the world's population, the country accounts for 10 percent of global deaths for pregnant mothers, making the maternal mortality rate for Nigeria the fourth highest in the world.²² In a 2018 study of 21,004 ever-partnered²³ women, 13.4 percent had experienced physical violence, 4.5 percent sexual violence, and 18.4 percent emotional violence by intimate partners in their lifetimes.²⁴ According to the United Nations Population Fund, 25 percent of women and girls in Nigeria aged 15-49, have undergone some form of female genital mutilation and 28.8 percent of girls aged 15-19 are married. Incidences of gender-based violence (GBV) are also linked to conflict in the country: A 2016 study found that six in 10 women in the northeast—an area suffering from political instability and armed insurgency—had experienced a form of GBV.²⁵

According to the World Economic Forum's 2021 World Gender Gap Report, Nigeria ranks 139 of 156 countries in terms of gender equality.²⁶ The report finds clear gender distinctions in participation and access to economic, social, and political opportunities. As of 2019, women held 5.6 percent of seats in the lower house of parliament and 6.4 percent of seats in the upper house.²⁷ A woman has never held the position of governor of any of Nigeria's 36 states. According to World Bank statistics, as of 2019, men's participation in the workforce in Nigeria stood at 60.89 percent, compared to women's participation at 48.52 percent.²⁸ Disparities in access to education and other opportunities play a role. Nigerian women are more likely than men to be in jobs and sectors that pay less and have lower productivity levels;

however, even with the same level of education and experience, women are likely to earn less.²⁹ Nigeria labor laws do not always support gender equality: there is no law mandating equal pay for equal work,³⁰ there are restrictions as to the type of work women can do,³¹ and, while sexual harassment is addressed in other laws, there is no provision made against it in the labor law.³² There are widespread reports of women facing overt and covert discrimination in the workplace;³³ one such example is women having their contracts terminated upon becoming pregnant.³⁴

DISABILITY

The population of persons with disabilities in Nigeria was placed at 3.3 million, or 2.32 percent of the population, by the 2006 Nigerian census report.³⁵ Environmental, institutional, and social challenges form barriers for this group,³⁶ limiting opportunities to actively participate in society and limiting visibility. Persons with disabilities in Nigeria face significant employment discrimination in public and private institutions. They report that after graduation from high school or university, they spend a huge amount of their lives indoors because of mobility challenges. Living home-bounded shields them from stigma and negative attitudes but contributes to their exclusion from information and employment opportunities. Where employment is offered, persons with disabilities are relegated to positions invisible in the organization.³⁷

The intersection of gender and disability poses additional risks for women and girls with disabilities, particularly where related to mobility and gender-based violence.³⁸

EDUCATION

One in every five of the world's out-of-school children is Nigerian. The country suffers from poor educational infrastructure and a lack of textbooks and qualified teachers.³⁹ There are regional, income, and gender dimensions to school attendance and illiteracy rates. Only one of every three children enrolled in primary school in the North is a girl.⁴⁰ The poorest 20 percent of women have a literacy rate of 13 percent, while the richest 20 percent of women have a literacy rate of 92 percent.⁴¹ Countrywide, the literacy rate is under 50 percent for women and over 69 percent for men.⁴²

AGE

Almost half of Nigeria's population is under the age of 15.⁴³ Seventy-five percent of children in Nigeria live below the poverty line,⁴⁴ and the country has the world's second highest total of neonatal mortality rates.⁴⁵ The under-five mortality rate is 128 per 1,000 live births; 64 percent of these are a result of malaria, pneumonia, or diarrhea. Low access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation is a key factor in diarrhea-related deaths.⁴⁶

In Nigeria, a factor that often determines participation in decision-making is age. While the country has one of the largest youth populations in the world, there is a lack of representation of this demographic in critical decision-making processes in political, economic and social realms.⁴⁷ In 2019, the unemployment rate for male youth, aged 15-24, stood at 18.36 percent and for young women of the same age at 7.5 percent.⁴⁸ Youth in rural areas suffer higher rates of unemployment than those in urban areas. A jump in the population growth rate; poor educational infrastructure, curricula and teachers; and lack of viable employment opportunities have been blamed for high unemployment rates.⁴⁹

Older adults (65 years and above) make up 3.1 percent of the total population and the percentage is rising.⁵⁰ The biological, psychological, economic, and social needs of this group are leading to a rising demand for a trained workforce to care for this demographic; reliable and sufficient healthcare services; and a functional social security system to support retirement. Nigeria currently has no national social security system and the general population has poor access to adequate healthcare.⁵¹

LOCATION

Just over half of the country's population, 51 percent, lives in rural areas.⁵² Being a rural or urban dweller has implications for access to opportunities, social assets, amenities, and participation in certain levels of socio-political and economic activities. The location of individuals therefore becomes a potential marker in determining excluded groups.

As earlier noted, there are levels of intersectional relationships with regard to social exclusion in Nigeria. Many of these dynamics can be linked to spatial factors. One example is the exclusion experienced by the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta and the space they identify with and occupy. The Ogonis, organized into six kingdoms with four languages, earn their livelihoods from agriculture and fishing. Central to their well-being, culture, and religion is the conservation of their environment. But the oil resources in Ogoniland have attracted extensive exploitation by oil companies and the Nigerian State, which has led to the destruction of their environment, under-development, and poor access to social services. In spite of the wealth in natural resources, the average life expectancy of the Ogoni people is lower than the national life expectancy, indicating lack of well-being.⁵³

The linkage between social exclusion and conflict or crime is manifested in the Ogoni experience. The backlash from the exclusion of the Ogoni people has had implications that resonate within the Nigerian energy sector, especially the experiences of crude oil pipeline vandalization and oil bunkering.⁵⁴

Nigeria's internally displaced persons are by reason of conflict, environmental disaster, or terrorism⁵⁵ dislocated from their homes and therefore forced to locate themselves and their families in the camps for internally displaced persons spread across the country.⁵⁶ Being displaced, especially from or within Northeastern Nigeria, leaves one in a position of vulnerability and exclusion.⁵⁷ Displaced people receive inadequate attention from the government of their habitual residence.⁵⁸

POWER AFRICA NIGERIA POWER SECTOR PROGRAM

PA-NPSP is the signature initiative of Power Africa in Nigeria. PA-NPSP promotes Power Africa goals by working to increase electricity availability, access, and reliability throughout Nigeria. PA-NPSP contributes to comprehensive reform in Nigeria's power sector, addressing gas-to-power challenges, competitive procurement of clean and conventional energy, regulatory and policy reforms to foster greater sector transparency and private investment, utility distribution sector reform, and off-grid electricity access.

Power Africa is a U.S. Government-led partnership that harnesses the collective resources of over 170 public and private sector partners to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. Power Africa's goal is to add at least 30,000 MW of cleaner and more reliable electricity generation capacity and 60 million connections by 2030.

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