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Technology and Information System for CSOs Capacity Strengthening in West Africa: Milestones, Lessons Learned and Opportunities

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ABOUT WACSI

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) was created by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) to reinforce the institutional and operational capacities of civil society in the region. WACSI also serves as a resource centre for training, research and documentation, experience sharing and political dialogue for CSOs in West Africa.

www.wacsi.org

About WACSeries

WACSeries are analytical periodic write-ups on topical themes and issues relevant to West Africa. These write-ups provide experts, researchers and practitioners a space to reflect, analyse and posit views and recommendations on emerging issues and debates. The WACSeries are thought provoking and intellectually engaging write-ups that provide critical reflections and analysis of issues relevant to civil society and development in West Africa.

Objectives of WACSeries

- To raise awareness on key issues in West Africa;
- To generate debates and discussions on these issues;
- To proffer recommendations on civil society involvement in advocacy;
- To provide recommendations to policy makers.

Technology and Information Systems Capacity Strengthening for CSOs in West Africa: Milestones, Lessons Learned and Opportunities

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APDH	Action for the Protection of Human Rights
CHRI	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Ghana
CSCI	Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
HRAC	Human Rights Advocacy Centre
IT	Information Technology
LIDHO	Ivorian Human Rights League
MIDH	Ivorian Human Rights Movement
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
RAIDH	Regroupement des Acteurs Ivoiriens des Droits Humains
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute

ABSTRACT

The West Africa Civil society Institute implemented a technology and information systems capacity strengthening project to strengthen the digital infrastructure of selected civil society organisations (CSOs) in West Africa and increase their access to new technological skills, products and services. The project empowered four CSOs to confidently leverage on technology to be efficient and to contribute more effectively to advancing their causes.

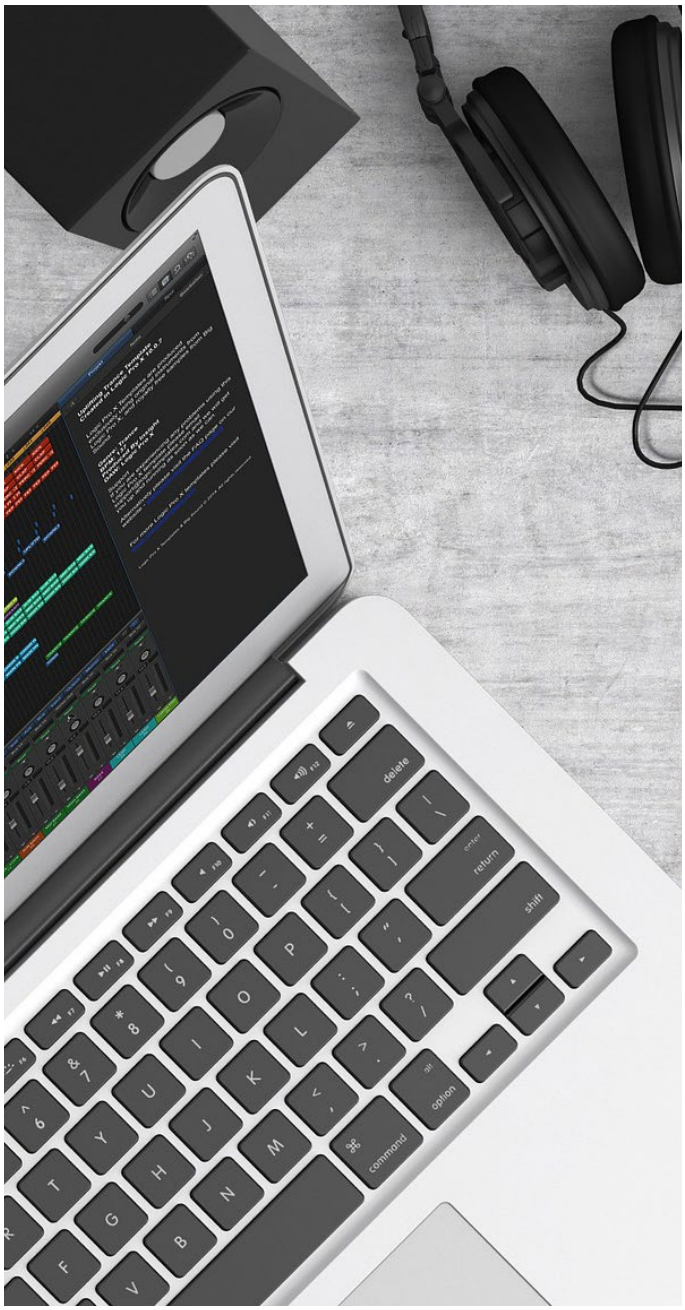
Although significant investments have been deployed to support capacity development for CSOs, and to strengthen their capacity to use technology to accomplish their missions, there is limited documentation of these efforts. Also, there isn't enough dissemination of the outcomes of processes aimed at strengthening the technology capacity of CSOs in West Africa. This prevents the possibility of sharing lessons and scaling up opportunities derived from past experiences.

This paper seeks to bridge the information gap. It comprises information on the background of the project, including the challenges the CSOs which were supported through this project experienced. It further outlines the objectives of the project, the different stages in the implementation of the project, challenges encountered, mitigation strategies and the positive outcomes of the project. Additionally, a key focus is laid on the potential of scalability of this initiative across and beyond West Africa. This paper provides evidence which can be used by other organisations as a basis to design similar projects to enhance the technological capacities of CSOs. It will enable stakeholders to identify opportunities to equip CSOs with adequate technological resources.

Sharing this information will enable development stakeholders to better understand the practical technological challenges CSOs face in their day to day work, and how if addressed, CSOs can be adequately equipped to be effective and credible partners in improving governance in Africa. This will stimulate interested stakeholders to replicate or scale up this initiative to benefit more CSOs.

This presentation will further initiate reflections on how African CSOs are currently being supported to use technology to improve their internal operations and governance; and influence the overall governance of countries in which they operate.

Introduction



Civil society in West Africa remains a key constituency in ensuring the advancement and consolidation of democratic governance as the sector transitions into the fourth industrial revolution. The sector continues to actively advocate for the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, transparency and accountability from government through its monitoring and advocacy role.

For example, local and national human rights organisations in West Africa have contributed significantly to address a wide array of rights-based topics including: environmental injustice; labour rights violations; domestic, sexual and gender-based violence; abuses by multinational corporations; the ramifications of resource extraction; public health crises; unsustainable development; and the vulnerabilities of women and indigenous peoples.

Notwithstanding all these contributions, a significant number of civil society actors have challenges utilising technology to advance their causes including documenting and communicating human rights abuses. Technology continues to be poorly utilised as tool to effectively influence governance processes in the region.

On the hand, the poor understanding of technology – data security and protection - continue to make West African human rights organisations vulnerable to myriad of attacks (both physical and online) due to the sensibility of the data they collect and manage. For example, the Ivorian Human Rights League (LIDHO), Action for the Protection of Human Rights (APDH), and Ivorian Human Rights Movement (MIDH)[1], all leading human rights organisations in Cote d'Ivoire were victims of vandalism in 2007 and 2015.[2] These challenges call for a robust response to equip CSOs in West Africa with technological skills and tools to enhance their efficiency and improve their ability to engage in evidence-based advocacy and defend other social causes as required by their mandates.

Hence, the Open Society Foundation's Human Rights Initiative (HRI) in collaboration with the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) initiated a technology and information systems capacity strengthening project to boost the technology capacity of four national and local human rights organisations in West Africa. These organisations are: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative Ghana (CHRI) and the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) both from Ghana; and Regroupement des Acteurs Ivoiriens des Droits Humains (RAIDH) and Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI) from Cote d'Ivoire.

1. http://ci-ddh.org/2015/06/cambriolages-aux-sieges-de-lapdh-et-du-midh-declaration-conjointe-ciddh-roaddh-sidh/
2. https://koffi.net/koffi/actualite/7668-Crise-a-luniversite-La-Fesci-saccage-la-Lidho-et-lAPDH.htm

1. Technology Related Challenges Faced by CSOs

The advent of the fourth industrial revolution has transformed the operations and landscape of civil society in West Africa with new forms of groups, methods of engagement being adopted by civil society actors.

In recent times, West Africa has witnessed the rising spontaneous citizen's movements and informal associations including the Le Balai Citoyen (Citizen's Broom) in Burkina Faso, Y'en a Marre (We've had enough) in Senegal, Gambia has decided, Occupy Nigeria, Occupy Ghana that have become potent forces for social change by leveraging the opportunities provided by technological advances.

This new technology dynamics has partly been helpful in responding to the worrying trend of shrinking civic space and visible attacks on democratic governance and citizen's rights in West Africa. It has also come with an increased need for organisations (especially traditional organisations) to understand, prepare and embrace the opportunities and deal with the related challenges. According Marsh & Mclennan Agency (MMA), the top five (05) technological challenges facing CSOs include:

Data insecurity: Data is a key asset for any CSO. Protecting this key asset is critical to the overall operation of the organisation. The major security threat of data security to CSOs emanates from weak password policy, unsupported software and use of unprotected open source software.

• **Inadequate budget for technology:** With the dwindling of funding resources, technology has often not been prioritised during budgeting process. Organisations direct most of their resources towards planned operations to support their mission directly. This situation leads to the use of obsolete software that are vulnerable to cyber-attacks.

• **Underutilisation of mobility solutions:** Mobile-friendly technology allows all staff including field staff to have 24/7 access to data, files and connection regardless of the geographical positions. This opportunity is being underutilised by CSOs.

• **Cloud computing:** According to JMG Solutions, while the majority of non-profits are using the cloud for common tasks like email, only about 15% are using this affordable resource effectively. TechSoup found that beyond email and file storage, most non-profits are reluctant to embrace the cloud for their other organisational needs.

• **Underutilisation of data:** Data is the new currency for non-profits, however about 57% of non-profits are not using data at their disposal effectively. The investment CSOs make in data will enable them to make faster decisions with more fluidity, based on the information they have collected and analysed, thus improving their bottom-line.

• **Poor data backup and disaster recovery systems:** Based on its experience of supporting non-profit organisations, ATB technologies identified data backup and disaster recovery as a key technology challenge facing non – profit organisations. According to ATB, organisations do not only need to make efforts to protect their data, but it is equally important for them to have a plan in place in the unlikely event of a cyber-attack or a total loss disaster.

Some of the above challenges were affecting the four organisations that benefited from this support. Some of the identified challenges are listed below.

• Prior to the project, most of the participating organisations were using unlicensed softwares.

• CHRI had issues with saving and retrieving data from their server due to unstable networking between the server and staff' computers.

• The communication and information management system of the selected organisations were very weak. CSCI did not have website and social media accounts to amplify its work.

• HRAC and RAIDH were also experiencing a malfunctioning website. For HRAC was quite tedious for the dedicated staff to update the website in a timely manner. While, RAIDH had to rely on support from an external webmaster anytime the organisation had to post (articles, pictures, videos) on the website.

In response to these challenges, the project was implemented to enhance the technology capacity of four human rights organisations in West Africa.

2. Project Goal

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen information management systems, software and hardware capacities of CSOs to improve data security, storage, document sharing systems and evidenced based advocacy.

More specifically, the project sought to:

Develop the basic software and hardware capacities of the selected organisations;

Improve information systems management, data security, storage and sharing; and

Strengthen advocacy tactics and tools based on data-driven evidence and technology.

3. Methodological Approach

The capacity development model adopted to achieve the project goal is illustrated in the picture below. It comprised of four principal stages: (1) assessment and project meeting, (2) Training and Action Plan development, (3) virtual mentoring and (4) Onsite coaching coupled with the documentation of lessons learnt.

• Assessment

A needs assessment was conducted for the selected organisations to ascertain their specific technology related capacity gaps. The scope of the assessment exercise included but was not limited to data collection, data management, data analysis, communication, archiving, and policy. Discussions on other technology-related aspects were initiated to gauge the extent to which technology could effectively enhance their operations and productivity. The results of the assessment informed the format of the support that would respond effectively to the need of the participating organisations.

• Project leadership meeting

To build ownership of the process, the leadership of the selected organisations were invited to a one-day project meeting where the proposed project plan and methodology were shared for input and suggestions. This session helped to strengthen the commitment of the organisations to the process and collectively determine the expected results.

• Training and action plan development

A 3-day technology and information system training was organised for the participating organisations. The objective of the training was to transfer best practices on information systems management, data security, storage and sharing as well as strengthening advocacy tactics and tools based on data-driven evidence and technology. The key outcomes of the training were the development of organisational action plans under the guidance of resources persons. The action plans formed the basis of technical support and measuring the project results and impact on each organisation.

• Provision of seed funding

A seed funding of USD $ 3,000 was provided to each organisation to facilitate the implementation of the key action priority areas as outlined in each organisation action plan, specially buying licensed software and servers. The seed funding and connecting the organisations to the TechSoup platform were critical in yielding noteworthy achievements. Through the TechSoup Platform, the organisations received several licensed software at very subsidised prices compared to the market prices[4].

• Virtual mentoring

Through phone calls and skypes, the participating organisations received guidance and technical assistance in the implementation of their action plans.

• Onsite coaching and documentation of lessons learnt

Technical experts spent one day with each organisation to tackle contextual challenges encountered during the implementation of actions outlined in the respective action plans. The coaching took place 3 months after the mentoring component and four months after the training session. Feedback was collected from participants on the various stages of the project. Key lessons were also documented to inform future projects of this nature implemented by WACSI.

Comments from the participants about their impressions on this training include:

• The main challenge we face as an organisation is our capacity to analyse data and the skills gained from this training will enable us to improve in this area;
• The training has improved my knowledge on data management and analysis and has provided me with insights on practical tools that I can use to analyse and visualise data;
• The course has enabled me to learn and understand the information management and analysis and communicating impact;
• I can now work on how to manage and detect certain software issues through the training received;
• I was able to gain more techniques and ways to manage and analyse date especially the data visualisation;
• I gained a lot of knowledge and skills;
• I am now able to manage information effectively and analyse and visualise data; and
• I can now say without doubt that I'm well equipped in information management system and can work on how to manage data received from the field as per my organisation's mandate.

A synopsis of the assessment results and recommendations of the one of the participating organisations: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)

The assessment of Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) revealed some practices, systems and also challenges with managing their IT environment. It was also observed that the organisation was weak in areas of data security and use of licensed software applications.

A notable discovery was that all of the data analyses in CHRI are done manually without any use of available technological tools. There was no knowledge of these tools which makes the essence of the project most ideal for them.
In view of the issues and risks identified as a result of the above and other findings, a two-layer capacity building process/session is recommended to address the foundational IT systems management and data analyses challenges identified. CHRI is suggested to be eventually exposed to data analytics tools such as Tableau Desktop, Tableau Public, HURIDOCS' tools (Uwazi, Casebox etc).

These resources and resource persons can also be accessed from partners like TechSoup and Open Source Initiative. As a top up to the above, it is advised that these identified tools, some licenses and other security applications should be acquired for CHRI to use following an agreement on suitability and satisfaction of systems requirements for its installation.

Data encryption has been suggested as a means of curtailing the risk of leaking sensitive data or information in the event of stolen, lost or compromised devices or systems. These options or set of options to address the challenges are noted to be made keeping in view budgetary and financial responsibilities/obligations that would accompany them. An awareness is raised to look out or ahead during the lifecycle of the Project for sustainability issues.

Participants' feedback

"At one time we were unable to access saved documents from our in-house server, we work with a lot of data which means that having access to stored data is very key to our work. We knew then that we had to do something to rectify this worsening situation. Today CHRI staff are now able to have direct access to their saved files as opposed to the previous experiences where I had to support each staff member to retrieve data manually'' Gideon Neequaye, Project Officer of CHRI

"We look at our organisation, and we're dumbfounded by how much we have metamorphosed. We can attest to an increase in knowledge about the latest technological tools, and an expansion in our reach and audience. We can only attribute it to the training and support we receive from the WACSI-OSIWA technology project'' Doudou Lou Goore Corinne, Project Officer at RAIDH.

Corinne and Neequaye's comments above highlight the timely relevance of the project to their organisations. Overall, the project provided significant gains to the organisations. The following are additional results realised from supporting these organisations:

The project has helped the organisations to understand the importance of having licensed software to guard against malware and also from potential attacks due to the sensibility of their data. All the organisations are now equipped with licensed software including Microsoft, window, antivirus as well as software for data analysis – tableau (HRAC) etc. CSCI acquired more than 50 Microsoft packages for their district monitoring groups across the country.

HRAC has developed a digital archive system to secure their data and to improve the efficiency in accessing the data. HRAC further developed an IT policy that guides the usage of data (who can assess, how etc) and technology tools within the organisation.

RAIDH deployed a new server for its data storage and updated its previous IT policy (which was outdated) to make it relevant with the new technology infrastructure of the organisation.

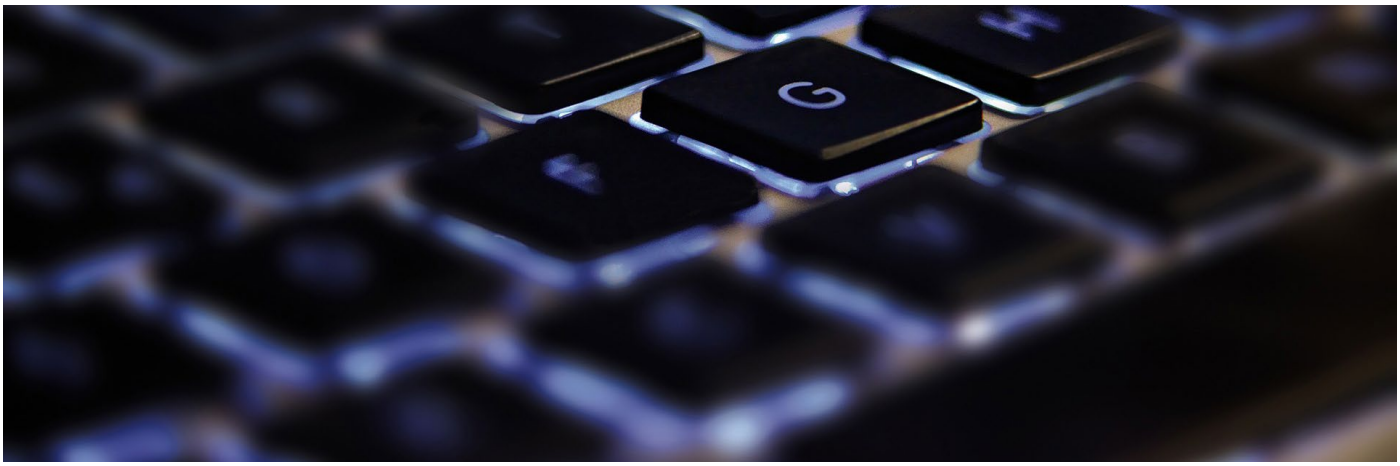
The project has helped CSCI develop a new website[3] , while RAIDH[4] and HRAC[5] have revamped their websites and have been attracting more visibility within their constituents and partners. "Thanks to the OSIWA-WACSI project, we now have a functional website that has extended our reach and audience. We're now able to project our impact and achievements to our partners and beneficiaries," Oscar Gaguy, Administrative Secretary of CSCI shared.

"Our website which was not functioning well is now functioning appropriately. The redevelopment of the www.hracghana.org website has made our work more visible as it is easier for our beneficiaries to navigate our website to learn more about our work" Bright Bampoe Addo, IT Officer of HRAC.

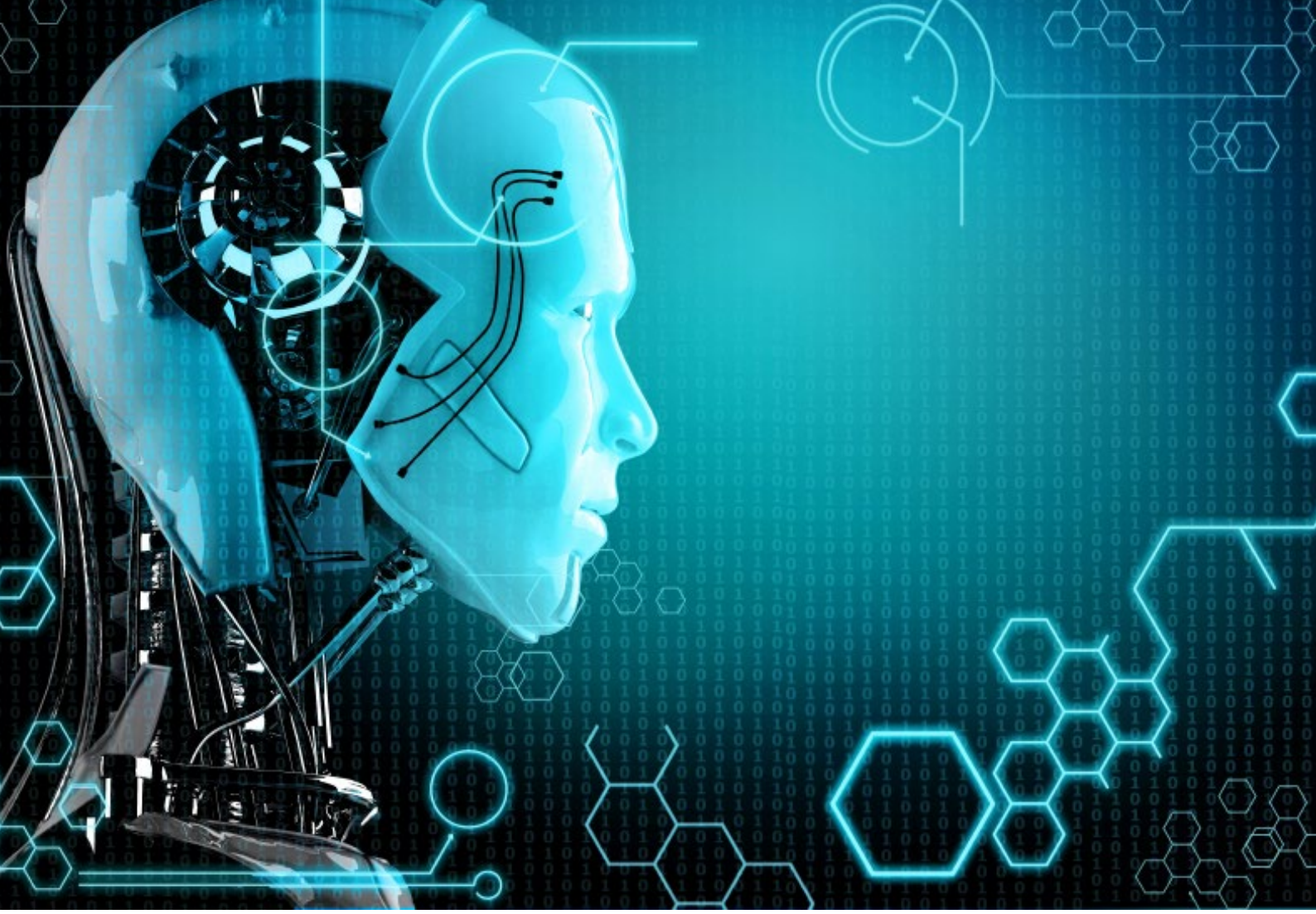
The project supported CHRI in upgrading its malfunctioning server and now the new server is making work more effective for the staff. "Before the project we had issues with saving and retrieving data from our server, our usage of unlicensed software made work difficult because we were unable to upgrade it. Today we are able to upgrade our software which was made available on the Techsoup platform we benefitted from through the technology project", confessed Gideon Neequaye, Project Officer of CHRI.

Another key achievement was RAIDH and CSCI professional email addresses. Prior to the project staff within both organisations were using their personal email addresses for all professional correspondences. This situation posed a greater threat to the security of their data and work. With the new website, CSCI has generated professional email addresses for all staff. The project team has helped RAIDH to migrate on office 365 and generated professional email addresses for all staff to enhance the security of their data.

3. http://www.csci.group/
4. https://raidhci.org/
5. http://hracghana.org/



Challenge Prior to Project	Benefit / Result of the Project
Prior to the project, most of the participating organisations were using cracked version (not licensed) of software	The project has helped the organisations to understand the importance of having licensed software to guard against malware and also from potential attacks due to the sensibility of their data. All the organisations are now equipped with licensed software including Microsoft, window, antivirus as well as software for data analysis – tableau (HRAC) etc. CSCI acquired more than 50 Microsoft licensed packages for their district monitoring groups across the country.
CHRI had issues with saving and retrieving data from their server due to unstable networking between the server and staff' computers	The project supported CHRI in upgrading its malfunctioning server and now the new server is making work more effective for the staff. "Before the project we had issues with saving and retrieving data from our server, our usage of unlicensed software made work difficult because we were unable to upgrade it. Today we are able to upgrade our software which was made available on the Techsoup platform we benefitted from through the technology project", Gideon Neequaye, Project Officer of CHRI.
HRAC and RAIDH were also experiencing a malfunctioning website. It was quite tedious for the dedicated staff to update the website in a timely manner. For example, RAIDH had to rely on support from an external webmaster anytime the organisation had to post (articles, pictures, videos) on the website	"Our website which was not functioning well is now functioning appropriately. The redevelopment of the www.hracghana.org website has made our work more visible as it is easier for our beneficiaries to navigate our website to learn more about our work" Bright Bampoe Addo, IT Officer of HRAC. With support from the project RAIDH has revamped its website and now has trained in house staff to manage the website. They no more refer to an external webmaster to update their site.
The communication and information management system of the selected organisations were weak. CSCI did not have website and social media accounts to amplify its work.	"Thanks to the project, we now have a functional website that has extended our reach and audience. We're now able to project our impact and achievements to our partners and beneficiaries," Oscar Gaguy, Administrative Secretary of CSCI.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall goal of the project was to strengthen information management systems, software and hardware capacities of CSOs to improve data security, storage, document sharing systems and evidenced based advocacy. The various activities of the project have contributed to the achievement of the project goal with significant technology related improvement changes recorded within the participating organisations during the project period.

From this project, it is imperative for different stakeholders to leverage on their strengths to support CSOs faced with similar challenges as these four.

Researchers exploring issues related to technology and development can carry out research in different African countries to provide evidence on how CSOs are using or grappling to use technological resources.

Donors supporting technology related projects should dedicate financial and technical resources to CSOs. Financial resources will enable CSOs to cater for costs related to acquiring technological resources (hardware and software). This can be done by making a conscious effort to incorporate costs to support organisations' technology needs that are related to the project and organisation's overall operations.

Technical experts (coders, digital experts, developers, etc) should design tailor-made programmes and offers dedicated to CSOs. This can be in the form of pro-bono services, reduced rates or volunteering within organisations to better understand their strengths and weaknesses and be able to leverage on their expertise in ways that are relevant and beneficial to CSOs.

CSOs should proactively acknowledge the need to leverage on technology to advance their work. They should assess their technological infrastructure. This will enable them to take practical measures to respond to any identified gaps, hence paving way for positive adaptation to current trends, enhancing their efficiency and increasing their possibility of scaling up their work.

ANNEX

Annex 1: Success Stories of the four (04) Participating organisations

1 - Enhancing CSCI's Communication through Technology

Technology has become an essential tool for development in recent times. For the development sector, it has helped to amplify various organisational impact, causes and connected like-minded organisations to work together. The absence of functional technological tools in Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI) posed a serious problem for members of the organization. They were not equipped with the adequate tools and skills to enhance their work and organisational visibility.

"We faced a lot of challenges with augmenting the visibility of our organisation and our work and impact because we did not have an operational website. Due to this, many of our partners and beneficiaries were not informed about the work we were doing or the influence we were making through our activities." Oscar Gaguy, Administrative Secretary of CSCI lamented.

CSCI was also confronted with internal communication issues. Without access to Internet, staff had to exchange documents in person with each other. This hindered the efficacy and progress of their work especially when staff were away on official duties.

"Our computer networking system had glitches which prevented us from printing documents from our offices. We had to move our computers to the room where the printer was located," Gaguy explained. "This made our work very cumbersome especially during meetings when we needed to print documents in real time," he added.

In 2017, the organisation concluded on the urgent need to enhance their capacity especially in the area of technology. This led them to apply for the technology project initiated by WACSI in July 2017 and supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). The CSCI team was convinced that their participation in the project would afford them the know-how and tools to address the technology challenges they experienced.

A year after their participation in the project, CSCI has witnessed a drastic turnaround in their productivity. They've achieved significant milestones.

"Thanks to the OSIWA-WACSI project, we now have a functional website that has extended our reach and audience. We are now able to project our impact and achievements to our partners and beneficiaries," Gaguy happily shared.

The website package included professional email addresses that have greatly improved communication with their external audience.
Through the technology project, the organisation benefitted from donated products such as licensed software that have been installed on their computers making their work more efficient.

2 - Reaping the Gains of Enhanced Technological Capacities at RAIDH

In the fast-paced world, we live in now, it is imperative for civil society organisations to not only be abreast with the latest technological applications and tools, but also master their utilisation in order to enhance their organisation's overall development. Regroupement des Acteurs Ivoiriens des Droits Humains (RAIDH) based in Cote d'Ivoire, identified some technological skills gap among its staff. They realised the need to step up their game especially in the area of data management. Hence, they applied for the technology project initiated by WACSI in July 2017, which was supported by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). "We lacked the sufficient skills needed to handle our information management systems, understanding its functionalities and mastering the software. We desperately needed RAIDH members to gain prowess in this area and that's how pivotal the WACSI-OSIWA technology project was for our organisation," Doudou Lou Goore Corinne, programmes staff at RAIDH said.

In order to extend their reach and brand visibility, RAIDH needed to have a website that helps them to project their story to their audience. Unable to raise the funds to acquire a functional website, they were ecstatic when they realised that the support from WACSI and OSIWA would enable them to develop an institutional website.

"Our participation in the project was timely for the advancement of our organisation. Not only did we benefit from a seed funding that has helped us to get a website, but our skills have been strengthened," Corinne happily exclaimed.

"Currently, RAIDH no longer needs to call a webmaster for the management of its website, because its members now have the needed skills in managing a website," she added.

The wind of change that has blown through the organisation is evident from the widespread visibility of RAIDH's activities throughout Cote d'Ivoire and around the world. "We look at our organisation, and we're dumbfounded by how much we have metamorphosed. We can attest to an increase in knowledge about the latest technological tools, and an expansion in our reach and audience. We can only attribute it to the training and aid we receive from the WACSI-OSIWA technology project," Corinne disclosed.

Almost a year later, RAIDH has the required skills to access and effectively manage their data. They continue to build their capacity by applying the knowledge they acquired from the training and technical assistance in 2017.

3 - Promoting Human Rights through Technology

In today's world where technology makes it easier to reach out to a wider audience thereby growing existing networks and amplifying the visibility of any organisation, the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) realised they needed to upgrade their information technology (IT) capacity to promote the rights of Ghanaian citizens more effectively.

Their malfunctional website hindered their partners and beneficiaries from engaging with them. "Prior to our participation in the technology project, many of HRAC's target audience and potential donors, tried engaging with us virtually without any luck. Now, our upgraded online presence will enhance our engagement," Bright Bampoe Addo, IT Officer of HRAC gleefully shared.

To achieve this, HRAC felt the need to apply for the technology project initiated by WACSI in July 2017 which was supported by OSIWA. HRAC knew that they needed to enhance their productivity so that they can promote the human rights of the Ghanaians. "Through this project, HRAC has improved its use of technology and its tools to promote human rights in Ghana", Bampoe Addo explained. As part of the project, HRAC benefitted from donated IT products such as Office 365 and licensed Microsoft Office products from Techsoup WestAfrica, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to providing donated technology products to nonprofit organisations.

"The introduction of licensed software has made our work easier. Our team can now boast of the same versions of applications. Due to the different cracked versions of software we used, we mostly could not access each other's documents as a team when shared", Bampoe Addo confessed.

"Now, the issue of losing documents and our inability to view documents collectively is a thing of the past", he concluded. HRAC also benefitted from seed funding through which they developed a functional website. "Our website which was not functioning well is now functioning appropriately. The redevelopment of the www.hracghana.org website has made our work more visible as it is easier for our beneficiaries to navigate our website to learn more about our work," he happily shared.

4- Enhancing CHRI's Capacity through Technology

In this technologically advanced era, every organisation needs effective information technology (IT) tools to efficiently accelerate its operations. Organisations that work to collect and document information have a dire need for IT tools. Data collection and documentation form an integral aspect of the work done by the Africa office of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) in promoting the respect for human rights in Africa. However, staff of CHRI's Africa office based in Accra faced issues with saving and retrieving data from their internal server, caused by a malfunctioning internet network.

"At one time we were unable to access saved documents from our in-house server. We work with a lot of data, which means that having access to stored data is very essential to our work. We knew then that we had to do something to rectify this worsening situation", Gideon Neequaye, Project Officer of CHRI confessed.

The IT challenges were affecting their overall organisational productivity. This urged CHRI to apply for the technology project initiated by WACSI in July 2017, which was supported by OSIWA. They knew that their participation in the project would equip them to address the technology capacity challenges experienced by CHRI's staff.

After their participation in the technology project from July 2017 to April 2018, the organisation's data collection and documentation processes have seen a significant improvement. "There is a vast improvement in the way we share data in the office. We are now able to do more work and faster," Neequaye ecstatically shared. "Before the project we had issues with saving and retrieving data from our server, our usage of unlicensed software made work difficult because we were unable to upgrade it", he added. "Today we are able to upgrade our software which was made available on the Techsoup platform we benefitted from through the technology project," he explained. He further expatiated how this support has empowered his team to have more autonomy in their work.

"CHRI staff are now able to have direct access to their saved files as opposed to the previous experience where I had to support each staff member to retrieve data manually", he said. As part of the project, beneficiaries benefitted from a $3000 seed funding, a unique aspect of the project which permitted them to use these funds to strengthen information management systems, software and hardware capacities of participating organisations to improve data security, storage, document sharing systems and evidenced-based advocacy.

CHRI used its funds to purchase licensed Microsoft Office products from Techsoup West Africa, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to providing donated technology products to non-profit organisations. "Access to the Techsoup platform to me was the highlight of the entire project. The ability to have access to a wide range of software at discounted prices, is helping us improve on the way we work", Neequaye said.

Annex 2: Technology Capacity Assessment Tool

This questionnaire is designed to ascertain the technology usage capacity of Four (4) Human Rights Organisations in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. It is also designed to help the Project Team understand the challenges these organisations face when adopting technology and analyse what is working and what is not for their human rights initiatives.

This assessment would be conducted with relevant staff from these four recipient organisations. The assessment will focus on technology functionality in six main areas: (1) Data collection (2) Data management (3) Data analysis (4) Communication (5) Archiving and (6) Policies.

Select all applicable options where necessary.

Data Collection

1. What kind of data does your organisation use?
   - Videos, Photos, Audio Recordings
   - Social media posts,
   - Electronic Files (such as PDFs, .docx etc),
   - Emails & attachments
   - SMS messages, WhatsApp messages, etc
   - Paper documents
   - System files - Registry settings, Event logs, configuration files etc
   - Other (Please explain) .....
2. What are the most commonly used types? (1-Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always)
   - Videos, Photos, Audio Recordings
   - Social media posts,
   - Electronic Files (such as PDFs, .docx etc),
   - Emails & attachments
   - SMS messages, WhatsApp messages, etc
   - Paper documents

 System files - Registry settings, Event logs, configuration files etc
 Other (Please explain):.....

3. Who is/ are responsible for data collection?
 Country Representative/Director; Executive Director
 Head of Finance & Admin
 Programme/Project Manager/Officer
 Any other (Please state who).....
4. What are the various methods and approaches you use to collect data relevant for your work?
 Interviews
 Questionnaires and Surveys
 Observations
 Focus Groups
 Ethnographies, Oral History, and Case Studies
 Documents and Records
 Online Registry / Subscription Lists
 Other (please give brief explanation) .....

5. Who could your data put at risk? Think about the people that create the data, who are described in the data, who provide or deliver the data, who store the data (including your team)!

Data Management

1. Who is/are responsible for data Management?
 Country Representative/Director; Executive Director
 Head of Finance & Admin
 IT Manager/Officer
 Any other (Please state who) .....
2. How is your data organised and recorded?
 Structured
 Unstructured

Please explain
further.....

3. Are you currently using any technology tools to record your data?
 Huridocs
 Apache Hadoop
 Salesforce
 Others (name them, if any) .....
4. a. Where is your data stored?
 Cloud
 Server (in the office)
 Server (online/collocated)
 Other (Please name location) .....
   b. Do you use your own server or someone else's? Own Someone else's
   c. Can you access it safely? Yes No
   d. Do you trust the 'owner' or entity in charge of the server? Yes No

5. a) Does your organisation have a website? Yes No
 b) Who manages it?
 Country Representative/Director; Executive Director
 Head of Communications and Information
 IT Manager/Officer
 External Person. (Please specify) .....

6. What measures have you put in place to ensure the stored data is secure? Brief explanation.....

Data Analysis

1. Who is/are responsible for data analysis?
2. State the position(s) and/or qualifications of all responsible persons
3. What are the various methods and approaches you use to analyse data relevant for your work?

4. To what extent is your data accessible for your target audience? Scale of 1-10. With 1 being Not Accessible and 10 being Highly Accessible
   □1 - 3
   □4 – 6
   □ 7 - 10

Communication

1. Who are your primary target audience?
2. What are the various approaches and tools you use to share data to your primary stakeholders?
3. What are the various approaches and tools you use to share data to your other stakeholders?
4. What measures have you put in place to ensure that sensitive data is not shared to potential violators?
   □ Firewall
   □ Physical devices (routers & Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) etc)
5. Are there any Access Restrictions such as roles, role hierarchy, and permissions?
   □ Yes □ No

Archiving

1. Does your organisation have a data archiving system? □ Yes □ No
   B. How does this system work?
   C. Do you scan paper documents? □ Yes □ No,
   D. Classify and tag them □ Yes □ No,
   E. Make them machine-readable □ Yes □ No,
   F. Encrypt them □ Yes □ No
   G. Make backups in case they get lost □ Yes □ No

2. Do you currently use any technology tools for archiving your data? □Yes □No
   If yes, can you share examples of these tools?

3. How much data does your organisation archive within a year? State in a range of storage capacity (□GB or □TB).
   □ 0.5 – 2TB
   □ 2.5 – 5TB
   □ 6 – 10TB
   □ 10 – 15TB
   □ above 15TB

4. How do you keep records of your backed-up data?
5. How frequently is the data accessed when it is archived?
   □Weekly
   □Monthly
   □Quarterly
   □Bi-Annually
   □Annually
   □As and when needed
6. What are the plans regarding redundancy and restoration?
7. Are there any data integrity checks? □Yes □No
8. How often?
   □Weekly
   □Monthly

Quarterly
Bi-Annually
Annually
As and when needed

9. Who does this data integrity check?
   Country Representative/Director; Executive Director
   Head of Finance & Admin
   Programme/Project Manager/Officer
   Any other (Please state who) .....

Policies

1. Are there any policy documents regulating data life management in the organisation?
   Yes No

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