



WACSI: Striving for Sustainability

By late March 2018, with the economy improving in West Africa in general, and in Ghana in particular, civil society organisations (CSOs) in the region were feeling the pinch of decreased funding from international donors, who now preferred to provide funding where they perceived the need to be greater. Nevertheless, Nana Asantewa Afadzina^a, executive director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), an organisation dedicated to empowering and strengthening the capacity of CSOs in the region, believed that their work remained as important as before. Since 2013, as a means of ensuring that its work could continue, WACSI had taken steps to diversify its donor base, generate its own income and strengthen internal sustainability. Ahead of a board meeting to discuss the organisation's 2018-2022 strategy, Afadzina wondered whether WACSI's strategies to ensure its future sustainability would succeed.

West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)

Being sustainable is not just about organisations having sufficient financial resources and the ability to manage them. Being sustainable is also about being relevant in contemporary times; it is about having institutional capacity and the infrastructure to pursue a well-defined mission, build on a reputation and maintain strong internal and external relationships
- Arhin, Adam and Akanbasiam¹

In 2005, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)^b established the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI).² Situated in East Legon, a town in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, WACSI started operating in July 2007. WACSI's mandate included training CSOs on capacity development and policy influencing and advocacy, research on CSO-related topics, and facilitation of policy dialogue in order to empower and strengthen the capacity of CSOs in West Africa.³ (See **Exhibit 2** for a map of the West African region.)

WACSI assisted other CSOs in the region to act as strategic partners to advance democracy, good governance and sustainable national development: the overarching goal being to create a peaceful and prosperous West African region with development driven by its people. WACSI's mission involved strengthening the institutional and operational capacities of the region's CSOs through knowledge sharing, collaboration, the promotion of democratic values and networking with a focus on increased and effective

^a See **Exhibit 1** for a profile of Nana Asantewa Afadzina.

^b OSIWA promotes and supports open societies, democratic government and economic advancement. Part of the global network of Open Society Foundations, OSIWA functions in the West African region as an advocate, grant maker and partnership builder. [Source: Open Society Initiative for West Africa (n.d.), "Our strategy", available at: www.osiwa.org/about-us/our-strategy/ (accessed 2 November 2018).]

This case was prepared by senior lecturer Dr Bhekinkosi Moyo with research associate Dr Amanda Bowen. It is intended for classroom use only. It is not intended to demonstrate effective or ineffective handling of a business situation.