

Interview with Gilbert Sendugwa Septembre 2016



Gilbert Sendugwa is the Coordinator & Head of Secretariat of the Africa Freedom of Information Centre, and an active member of the GPSA Knowledge Platform. In this interview, he shares his reflections on the current state of the right to information around and how it can enhance social accountability. He also tells us about the work his organization does.¹

1) What is the state of the right to information around the world these days?

The situation of citizens' access to information has improved rapidly around the world and more so in Africa over the past decade. This is particularly so in respect to adoption of Access to Information Laws. Altogether there is nearly 105 countries with these laws. In Africa, the number has increased from 5 countries in the year 2010 to 19 today, with Kenya whose ATI law was signed by President Uhuru Kenyatta some weeks ago.

Whereas a lot of work still needs to be done in terms of implementation, more knowledge tools and technology have evolved over the past few years, which present important opportunities to strengthen both the demand and the implementation of Access to information Laws.

2) How can access to information be increasingly and effectively used to hold governments to account and realize people's rights? How can we potentiate the usefulness of the RTI for SAcc?

Citizens Access to information is an important tool for citizens to hold governments to account. When people are empowered through the laws and capacitated with knowledge on how to exercise their right to information, their demand for accountability and service delivery is strengthened. We recently elaborated some case studies of how citizens in Uganda, Kenya and Malawi have used ATI to demand for information resulting in exposure of corruption and redress. We learned a number of lessons that are important to advance social accountability:

- a) ATI laws are important in providing people the power to exercise their right to know
- b) Existence of laws in themselves is not enough. People need awareness of the existence of laws and ability to use the law to solve their problems.
- c) When people are trained on ATI, they use the acquired knowledge to solve their problems in a variety of spheres.

Please follow this link for case Studies

<http://africafoicentre.org/index.php/resources/reports-publications/209-final-case-studies-ati-and-anticorruption-uganda-kenya-malawi>

3) What does your organization do to advance the right to information?

¹ This interview was made by Janet Oropeza, Fundar's Knowledge Management Coordinator, in September 2016.

Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) is the largest membership organisation and Resource centre promoting citizens Access to Information in Africa. AFIC advocates for adoption and implementation of ATI laws, trains its members and partners on ATI laws, has developed tools and resources on ATI, conducted research on ATI in various spheres and information sharing. AFIC has Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and sits on the Africa-EU Civil Society Steering Committee of the intercontinental Partnership on democratic Governance and human rights.

To read more interviews, visit the GPSA Knowledge Platform [here](#).