

Review of 2016 & Outlook for 2017: Extractive Sector



Penplusbytes, Extractive Team

January, 2017

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1.0 Introduction

“Failing to plan is planning to fail”- a famous principle which is the bedrock of every successful organization had also informed every decision made during the year 2016 by the extractive team at penplusbytes. With the aim of promoting an effective media oversight role over Ghana’s nascent extractive sector, the extractive team at penplusbytes came up with indubitably unique projects which included deep data dive, 1st News and Editorial Symposiums, Alumni Refresher Course and Amplifying Oil and Elections issues, oil and gas policy compass and several relevant projects. These projects were funded by Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth (GOGIG) and International Institute for Democratic and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).the extractive team can boldly pronounce the achievement of most of the targets set for the year 2016. Nevertheless, the extractive team also realized some challenges in 2016.

The various projects carried out were aimed at enhancing Ghana’s extractive industry powered by the use of digital tools. These writings give a detailed breakdown of the projects implemented in the year 2016, the achievements and challenges during the year. Further, the writings will also engage the outlook for the year 2017.

1.1 Projects implemented for the year 2016

The extractive team at Penplusbytes executed three broad projects with technical and financial support from NRGI, GOGIG and International IDEA. Under the parasol of these three projects were sub activities.

2.0 Strengthening Media Oversight Role over the Extractive Sectors

In the year 2016, the extractive team at Penplusbytes undertook five sub activities under the project **‘Strengthening Media Oversight of the Extractive sectors’**. This project is an annual project funded by NRGI. The following are the key activities implemented:

- i. 1st News and Editorial Symposium on Oil and Gas
- ii. African regional media training course A
- iii. African national media training course B
- iv. Deep dive on data-driven reporting
- v. Deep dive/alumni refresher on priority policy issues

I. 1st News and Editorial Symposium on Oil and Gas

The first news and editorial symposium was tailored for senior editors and journalists from print, broadcast and online media outlet forms part of activities under “Strengthening media oversight of the extractive sector’ projects. The symposium was held in Koforidua from 29th to 1st May 2016 with full participation of twenty-one skilled and knowledge driven oil and gas news reporters. The symposium targeted alumni of strengthening media oversight of the extractive class. At the end of the workshop participants remarked that their understanding has deepened on policy reforms and issues in Ghana’s oil and gas industry in light of current realities and the government’s record in managing the sector. Others also expressed interest in the data tools presented to them. They further indicated to incorporate these tools into their write-ups.

II. African Regional Media Training Course A

This marked the seventh edition for which penplusbytes has organized this programme. The intensive two weeks regional course “a” training was held in Dar Es Salam, in Tanzania on the 17th of October to 28th of October, 2016 and was designed for journalists from Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania. Participants from Ghana were drawn from a pool of 46 journalists who applied. Out of the total, eight (8) participants successfully met all the requirements and qualified for this training course in Tanzania.

III. African National Media Training course B

The course b is a national training programme held for the respective countries (Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania) that took part in the regional core course a. Course b concentrates on country specific issues focusing on the extractive sector of each country. The Ghana version/edition of the course “b” was held at the Penplusbytes’ new media hub in Accra, Ghana from 14th November to 25th November, 2016. Six participants were able to effectively participate in the course.

IV. Deep dive on data-driven reporting

As part of the ‘**strengthening media oversight of the extractive sector revenue and resources**’, the deep data dive training was organized for selected participants from civil society groups and business reporters (journalists from broadcast, wireless and online media houses). The training was a five- day Programme, which began on the 6th November, 2016 and ended on the 11th November, 2016. In all, 16 participants effectively participated in the Programme. Participants indicated after the training they have been equipped with the needed to mine their own data and present them in their newsroom write-ups. They also indicated their willingness to share these ideas with their colleagues in their writings.

V. Alumni Refresher Course

In the quest to ensure that Penplusbytes' oil and gas reporters/Alumni remain on top of issues and be abreast with current developments and trends in the sector. Penplusbytes organised an alumni refresher course in November, 2016 at the Eastern regional capital, Koforidua. 16 participants selected from a pool of 51 previous Penplusbytes oil and gas trainees participated in the three-day training Programme. Below are some excerpts from participants after the training:

- “The workshop has improved my understanding on transparency and accountability issue surrounding oil and gas sector. Also, the session on data journalism and extractive as revealing”
- “The Programme has equipped me with the tools needed to interrogate key issues in newsroom and issues to look out for in Ghana’s 2016 election”.
- “The workshop has opened my eyes to myriad of activities that have been funded with oil revenue. Some of which are not properly accounted for. I can now track oil revenue in Ghana due to new tools i have acquired from this workshop”

3.0 Amplifying Oil and Gas issues

In addition, the extractive team at Penplusbytes undertook five activities under the project “**Ghana elections 2016: Amplifying Oil and Gas Issues**” in the year, 2016. The project with funding from Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth (GOGIG) with the rationale to engage citizens on oil and gas issues and to sanitize the political space thereby making issue-based discussions the frontline for the 2016 election. In view of this, several activities were undertaken to achieve these objectives. These activities include:

- i. Voter’s compass
- ii. Media and citizen engagement
- iii. Editor’s liaison
- iv. Social media campaign
- v. Extractive salon

I. Voter's compass

The voters compass is an online platform developed with the ambition to guide the decision making pattern of voters during Ghana election 2016. Also the voter's compass contents were drawn from the manifestoes and policy position documents developed by the selected political parties with technical assistance by NRGi and international idea.

To ensure that no citizen was left behind on the voter's compass drive to simplify oil and gas issues, team Penplusbytes undertook a media campaign which included designing radio Programmes in both English and local dialects. This Programmes had phone-in sessions that allowed citizens who were not online or could not read and write to be abreast with current issues on the extractive sector. Some of the media houses engaged included Empire FM (Takoradi); Ultimate FM (Kumasi); Abusua FM; TV3 Network; VIASAT1 and EIB's Starr. This intervention by Penplusbytes contributed to making oil and gas a topical issue during the elections campaign. The voter's compass platform both online and offline reached over a million citizens during the elections period.

II. Media engagement / Citizen Engagement

A concerted media and citizen engagement was held in the Western Region during project implementation with the aim of targeting the six coastal districts which included Sekondi-Takoradi, Shama, Axim, Wassa among others. The Western Region was chosen as a focal point for this activity because the region is the main hub for Ghana's oil and gas activity and citizens in that region experience a direct impact of the sector in their daily lives. In order to take a holistic view at some of the policies and impact of oil and gas projects in the lives of ordinary citizens, eight key radio stations were engaged.

Overall, the extractive team at Penplusbytes earned a remarkable success by reaching out to over ten thousand (10,000) citizens in the region. Some of the key strategies used involves community engagement using the hashtag #ghoil2016 on social media and call-in segments on radio. The radio stations engaged included radio Maxx, paragon, twin city radio, Ankobra radio, West End, Ahanta Radio, Radio Shama and empire radio.

III. Editor Liaison

In September, 2016 at Akroma plaza hotel in Takoradi, the team held its annual editors liaison which aimed at engaging editors from various media houses on issues pertaining to the extractive industry. The workshop also aimed at outlining key trends and reporting skills needed to tackle these trends. Overall, twenty editors participated in the workshop with the likes of Mr. Elvis Darko of the finder newspaper, Israel Laryea of multimedia and Fortune Alimi of daily guide and many more.

Some of the key topics discussed during the training included transparency in the petroleum sector; detailed analysis of the policy positions of the political parties; issues surrounding 2016 elections; the legal regime (policies, laws and regulations) and guidelines for covering stories related to the extractive industry.

Below are some of the raves by Participants:

- “Penplusbytes is really doing well in building the capacity of journalists in the oil and gas sector and i pray you find more money for that cause. I hope there could be bi-annual engagement with educators on oil and gas”
- “All speakers knew their fields very well and delivered their topics well. Dr. Ackah also brings an added value to having Dr. Manteaw and the two provided the needed information on the subject”
- “I have learnt a lot and i think the program should be organized at least twice a year”

IV. Social media campaign

Social media is one of the avenue that the extractive team adopted to hype and direct traffic to the platform. It was also used to sustain discussion on oil and gas and also engage netizens on the subject matter. Subsequent activities that were undertaken during the project's implementation used the hashtag #ghoil2016. Surprisingly, the platform trended number one each time an activity was being executed.

V. Extractive salon

The extractive salon was held on 18th October, 2016 at the Penplusbytes new media hub. The event was organized under the theme **“Does Oil and Gas matter in Ghana's elections.”** Also, participants from various media houses, extractives industry experts and civil society organisations; alumni of Penplusbytes extractive media course with the likes of Ghana anti-corruption coalition, GIZ among others participated.

Participants had the opportunity to share their viewpoints freely since the programme was organized under Chatham rules.

- The impact of this project was that the platform was the first initiative to have been implemented by Penplusbytes since the history of the country.
- It provided citizens the opportunity to have a face-to-face encounter with their political leaders and to seek clarification on some of the issues pertaining to the oil and gas sector.
- The project also chalked the achievement of engaging over two million populace directly and indirectly through radio discussions, social media, community interviews and online platform (www.oilmatters.info).

4.0 Other Relevant Projects

Engaging Political Parties in Ghana on Policy Debate on Oil and Gas

This project was mainly organized by NRGi and International IDEA in partnership with Penplusbytes. The event took place at Accra on Friday, 12th February, 2016. The project was aimed at encouraging political parties to draft their policy positions on managing the oil and gas sector should they be given the nod to rule the country. It aimed at adding to the insight of the ordinary citizens in terms of policies, which the various political parties in Ghana have in place to ensure transparency and accountability and to ensure good management of the oil and gas sector.

In this vein, policy positions on oil and gas books were put forward by the four political parties with representation in Ghana's 6th Parliament. These parties included Convention People's Party (CPP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP) and people's national congress.

Later, a three hour debate was held on the policy books presented and its relevance for national development on Monday, 19th September, 2016. This was organized to seek more clarification on the policy books presented in the run up to the general election.

5.0 Achievements made in 2016

5.1 Extractives Class of Trainees

Over the years, the extractive team at penplusbytes has been able to train a vast number of journalists to enhance and improve their reporting and oversight of the extractive sector. The extractive team has a trainee based of fifty- nine from class 1 to class 7.

It is worth mentioning that, two of our alumni from class 6 had the opportunity to receive further training from international organizations in Europe. Thus, Jessica Acheampong - a business journalist with the graphic communication group received a scholarship for a master class to train on data journalism at Rhodes University likewise Prince Appiah from Luv FM (Kumasi). Notwithstanding this, the skills of several journalists trained by the extractive team at Penplusbytes have enhanced tremendously.

A typical case is that of Abubakari Seidu Ajarfor with punch newspaper who through the skills gathered during our training programmes on ‘**Strengthening media oversight of the extractive sector revenue and resources**’ participated in the ACEP’s media fellowship training with outstanding performance. There has been an increase number of stories produced weekly by our alumni with a high level in terms of the quality

5.2 Online asserts:

In the year 2016, the extractive team at penplusbytes was able to productively publish **19** publications on extractives on its reportingoilandgas.org website. The team was able to update the website- reportingoilandgas- with a total number of **1361** extractive stories out of which had about 10 per cent were published as in-house content with the likes of daily blogs, feature stories, daily oil and gas service posts and summit stories of many kinds. Again, the extractive team at the end of the year 2016 had reached **66,938** subscribers with a breakdown percentage of **68.1% new** visitors and **31.9%** returning visitors.

5.3 Our mailing list:

The mailing list is one of the valuable database that is managed by the team. This is online database of civil society groups, media, partners, facilitators and several organizations both local and international whom we share daily information and media alerts with. By the end of year the extractive team had reached 420 membership as against **288** members previously.

5.4 Youtube account

In the year 2016, 36 videos were posted on the YouTube page of the extractive team. Out of which 10 were produced by the extractive team at penplusbytes while the remaining 26 were video stories from our alumni in the year 2016. Also in 2016, the YouTube account of the extractive team recorded 196 engagements for 12 months. In all, a total sum of 5304 people were reached in 2016.

5.5 Facebook page

The extractive team were able to post over 1000 stories on our Facebook page – reporting oil and gas page. Nevertheless, there was a slight increase in our Facebook likes – increasing from 655 to 703 likes at the end of the year.

5.6 Twitter handle (@oilgasghana)

As part of our achievement, the team had a total of **3005** followers at the end of the year 2016 as against **2500** followers at the beginning of the year.

5.7 Bursary awards:

The extractive team at penplusbytes were able to secure bursary for some selected journalists to produce detailed oil and gas stories. Out of a total of ten journalists selected for the award, seven Journalists successfully qualified for the bursary to produce their stories.

6.0 Challenges in 2016

- Poor internet connectivity
- Lack of pre-course materials for trainees
- Poor time management of project activity
- Low rate of increasing Facebook likes and followers on reporting oil and gas twitter handle

7.0 Outlook for 2017

In the year 2017, the extractive team at Penplusbytes will enhance and keep-up the pace with some of the successes made in the year 2016 and improve on identified gaps. Likewise, the extractive team at Penplusbytes will be carrying out some of its annual programmes such as the deep data dive, alumni refresher course; editor's liaison meeting and the extractive salon. Also, the extractive team will improve upon the number and quality of write-ups such as monthly publications; weekly blogs; monthly insights and others.

In the year 2017, there will be a rebranding and launch of the reportingoilandgas.org information portal as part of the programme for the year. In addition, the extractive team will undertake some training course such as training of CSPOG members on oil technology and extractive sector; training of PIAC members on technology in the extractive sector and several others. Again, there will be online discussions organized on topics such as 'our oil money'.

As part of 2017 package, the extractive team will be advocating for revenue management law in the mining sector and enforcing measures of state institution. The extractive team at Penplusbytes will engage energy committee and also company engagement.

Penplusbytes also plans to publish a data journalism training manual for the oil and gas sector, and oil and gas handbook. In order to overcome some of the challenges faced in 2016, the extractive team have adopted some strategies, which will help tackle some of those challenges. Some of which includes:

- Urging participants to conduct research on their own on some of the course
- Providing participants with pre-course assignments
- Introducing online course for participants
- Incorporating more videos during course delivery.



Penplusbytes website front end- www.reportingoilandgas

About the Extractive Team

Since 2007, Penplusbytes has been working in Ghana's Oil, Gas and Mining sector. We expanded our work to Uganda and Tanzania in 2010 working with Revenue Watch Institute, Africa Office. Recently we launched our latest oil, gas and mining project in Liberia. We can count Nigeria, Cameroun and Cote d'Ivoire as some of our key countries of experience in the oil and gas sector.

Penplusbytes mining, oil and gas training program involves the following building blocks:

1. Baseline study and needs assessment
2. Training workshop
3. Mentoring
4. Local and International Field trip

We work hand-in-hand with key companies, government, institutions and non-profit organizations during project implementation with the likes of STARGhana, DFID, DANIDA, EU, USAID, Revenue Watch Institute now Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), Thomson Reuters Foundation, National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL), African Center for Energy Policy among others.

Our Service

- Training
- Online & Social Media Integration
- Information
- Events
- Publication