



Center for Civic Education CIVITAS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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Civitas Success Story: Nigeria

It was March, 2001, I was driving south of Onitsha, Nigeria after having spent time at schools in the city and visiting with students and teachers discussing Project Citizen. About twenty miles south of Onitsha a young girl, about 10 or 11 years old, lay dead on the road. She was obviously hit by a car and left there. Tears filled my eyes at seeing this tragedy as it was only the day before, at Creative Minds Foundation School in Onitsha, a secondary school that students there had been working on a public policy designed to address the dangers of road crossing in their state.

In June, 2001, I returned to Nigeria to assist with the finals of the first Nigerian Project Citizen national showcase. Thirty-one schools were present in Abuja, Nigeria's capital city. Upon seeing me, the students from Creative Minds Foundation School rushed over to greet me. Proudly they showed me a piece of official paper dated May 27, 2001. In their province, where the little girl had died, they had moved their public policy forward and it was adopted into law by the state House of Delegates. The students policy recommended "zebra" crossings as a way of protecting pedestrians in the entire state. This public policy turned out to be the first Project Citizen public policy adopted by a governmental body in Nigeria. The second happened in Lagos just a few days later.

*Douglas Phillips, Senior Consultant
Center for Civic Education*