Nigeria: Reforming the ‘Unreformable’

Dr Joe Abah
National Programme Manager,
DFID-SPARC, Nigeria
20 June, 2013
SPARC

• State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
• Fully-funded programme of UK Department for International Development (DFID)
• Commenced in 2008
• Due to end in 2015
• Contract Value of £60m (€70m)
• Works in 10 Nigerian states (out of 36) and with some federal/national organisations
Institutional Context (Nigeria)

- Difficult History
  - Colonialism
  - Inchoate Nation-Formation
  - Military Rule
- Unearned State Income (‘Resource Curse’)
- High Levels of Corruption
- Ineffective and Corrupt Public Service
- Lack of Accountability to Citizens
- Non-Transparency of Public Expenditure
- Impunity and Criminality/ Weak Judiciary
- Weak Legislature

Culture/ Ethnicity/ Religion (incl. Boko Haram)
In Theory...

- **Rational Choice** *(Williamson, 2000)*
- **Historical/ Path Dependence** *(Skocpol, 1985; North, 1990; Ikenberry, 1994; Thelen, 1999)*
- **Sociological/ Cultural** *(Bell, 2002; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Hofstede, 2001)*

Given the bleak institutional context and going by known Institutional Theories, NOTHING should work... How do you manage Change in such an environment?
State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability.
The SPARC Partnership Approach

DFID Issues Paper:
Promoting Institutional & Organisational Development, March 2003

Technical Competence

More Effective and Efficient:
- systems,
- processes
- procedures

A Strong Civil Service

Sustainable Change

Effective Partnerships in support of a State’s own Agenda for Change

Sanction of / action by Government?

Changes in the formal and informal ‘Rules of the Game’

Institutional Capacity

www.sparc-nigeria.com
Stepped Approach: Political Will

- Stepped Technical support
- Improved institutional performance and higher technical competence leading to better use of Nigeria’s resource to deliver MDGs
- Significant political barriers to change / mechanisms used to maintain power and access to resources

Requires significant shifts in the ‘rules of the game’ by SGs

Institutional Performance

Stepped Technical Competence
Routes to Political Engagement

Engagement Route 1:
High Level Agreements and Steps

Goal: Better Use of State Resources

Technical Outputs:
State Government Performance Improvement

Engagement Route 2:
Federal Incentives

Engagement Route 3:
Society-based Political Pressure

Goal: Better Use of State Resources

Typology of Approaches

**Type A: ‘going with the grain’.** For states which:
- Have a track record of committing to delivering reforms
- Require specific technical assistance within their governance reform plan

**Type B: ‘consolidation’.** For states:
- In which there is already some governance reform
- Which understand the need for systematic cross-government reform

**Type C: ‘building foundations’.** For states which:
- Have only limited experience of undertaking governance reform
- Show some instances of reform initiatives on which to build
‘Coalitions for Change’
DO NOT WORK!
...unless linked to a source of power
Influence power with...

Incentives

Consensus

Peer Pressure
Selected Results...

- Closing dormant bank accounts in just 3 states yield £32m (€38m) in 1 year.
- Bank reconciliation in just one state yields £37m (€43m) in 1 year.
- 3,000 ‘ghost workers’ removed from the payroll in one state, saving £6m (€7m) in just 1 year.
- Internally generated revenue doubles in 1 year in one state.
- Budget performance improves to best levels in 12 years in one state.
- Probably the world’s first formal sub-national peer review process.

- ALL THESE DESPITE INSECURITY FROM BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY
Challenges

• ‘Locking-in’ reform gains to survive political changes

• Time...donors tend to be in a hurry to solve what may be ‘wicked’ problems

• The overriding focus on ‘results’ and ‘value for money’ could jeopardise deliberate and systematic change efforts

• Insecurity

*But...if change is possible in Nigeria, change is possible!*
THANK YOU!
For more information, please visit www.sparc-nigeria.com