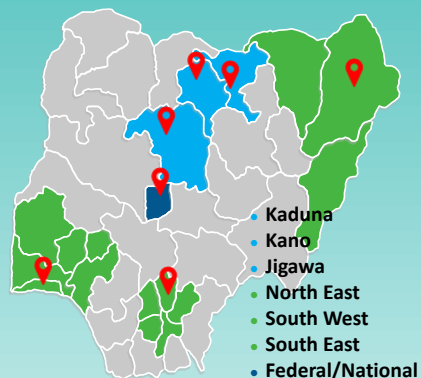


Partnership to Engage, Reform & Learn (PERL: 2016-2024)

PERL is the flagship Public Sector Accountability & Governance programme of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in Nigeria.

It brings together governments and citizens across Nigeria to collectively address governance challenges associated with the delivery of pro-poor public goods and services.



Major Achievements

Over the past eight years, PERL has partnered with governments, parliaments, citizens groups, media houses, labour unions, traditional authorities and a host of other civil society/non-state actors, including other development programmes, to effect major governance reforms impacting public services.



Budget reforms



Citizen input, influence and improved implementation of public projects – increased citizens participation in budget processes, with an average 7% increase in inclusion and 32% increase in implementation of citizen nominated projects in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa (KKJ) States

Govt prioritisation of expenditure on health and education – average 31% share of annual budget to education sector, 16% to health sector in KKJ States, consistently maintained by 2024, with an average 20% increase in budget execution rates in education, and 6% in health in Kaduna and Jigawa between 2019 and 2024

Improvement in overall state budget performance – from 49% in 2017 to 92% in 2021 in Kaduna State, and **fiscal transparency** – attracting World Bank grants worth \$48.4 in KKJ States between 2019 and 2022

Health reforms

Improved Universal Healthcare Coverage – 396,446 more beneficiaries enrolled in health insurance schemes in KKJ States between 2020 and 2024, with a 24% increase in coverage of health supplies in Kaduna, renovating and upgrading 225 primary health centres

Increased public expenditure on health – average 2% increase in allocated share of the budget in KKJ States between 2018 and 2024, with an average 9% increase in budget execution rates in health in KKJ States (20% in Jigawa) between 2019 and 2023



IGR/DRM reforms



Improved revenue generation – 440% increase in Kaduna State from 2015 to 2023 (124% in Jigawa from 2019 to 2023), contributing 61% of funds required for recurrent expenditure in Kaduna State by 2024, and an average 6% increase in allocation to health and education in Kano and Jigawa States from 2019 to 2023

Tax reforms, enhanced compliance through tax education – improved tax laws, medium term revenue strategies, taxpayer service & grievance mechanisms, automation & deployment of digital technology, 'tax for service' policies, public-private dialogue in KKJ States

Constitutional changes (SHoA & LG Autonomy)

All 36 State Houses of Assembly granted financial & administrative autonomy – through vote on constitutional amendment in 2018, since which 33 states have passed SHoA Service Commission Bills into Law, 30 have passed State Legislature Funds Management Bills into Law, 21 of which have been assented to by their State Governors, with 3 states now operating fully autonomous SHoAs, 6 more partially.

All 774 Local Governments granted financial & administrative autonomy – through supreme court ruling in July 2024, in a lawsuit filed by the Federal Government against all 36 State Governors, in response to an escalation of public pressure fuelled by national discourse and growing frustration, following a succession of attempted constitutional amendments (in 2019 and 2023) blocked by State Governors.



PERL's Approach

PERL is delivered through three main interlocking components:

Accountable, Responsive and Capable Government (ARC), managed by DAI, works directly with Nigerian government institutions to develop more transparent, responsive, and accountable government processes. It assists governments in working with citizens to identify and address blockages to the effective delivery of services.

Engaged Citizens (ECP), managed by Palladium, works with citizen groups and representatives, the media, and the legislature. It supports these partners to represent citizens' voice, bring citizens' priorities to the attention of government, and hold government accountable for the implementation of policies.

Learning, Evidencing and Advocacy Partnership (LEAP), managed by ODI, worked closely with ARC and ECP to ensure PERL had the space to reflect, iterate and adapt in real time in response to internal reflection and research from within the programme. This component ended in 2021.

Three other smaller components, on elections, social protection and conflict & security, were added in 2021 to bring FCDO's governance portfolio in Nigeria under one roof.

Areas of Intervention

PERL has made a significant contribution to governance reforms and service delivery improvements in a wide range of areas:

BUDGET PROCESS  <i>inclusive budgeting, prioritisation of health and education, improving state budget performance</i> KKJ, Fed/Nat, NE, SW, SE	FISCAL TRANSPARENCY  <i>improving state fiscal transparency, accountability and sustainability in partnership with WB</i> KKJ, Fed/Nat	EDUCATION  <i>improving education policy, strategy & budget allocation, tackling barriers to girls' education</i> Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa	HEALTH  <i>improving universal health coverage and increasing public expenditure on health</i> KKJ, NE	IGR / DRM  <i>improving tax policy, strategy and compliance, increasing revenue generation</i> KKJ	LOCAL GOVERNANCE / CITIZENS CHARTERS  <i>integration of citizens charters into state and local govt planning, budget and policy</i> KKJ
DUE PROCESS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT  <i>improved compliance of contractors thru effective public partnership with local citizen groups</i> Jigawa	PUBLIC COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS  <i>increased response of govt to feedback on public services thru an expanding range of mechanisms</i> Kano	DISABILITY LEGISLATION  <i>improving public services for PWDs through inclusive policy making and implementation</i> KKJ	WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE  <i>promoting women in leadership, improving policy on gender-based violence and harassment</i> SE, KKJ	RECOVERY COORDINATION  <i>parliamentary oversight and citizens tracking of reconstruction and restoration of services</i> NE (Yobe)	WATER SUPPLY  <i>inclusive revision and citizen led monitoring of water and sanitation sector strategy</i> NE (Borno)
CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE  <i>state assemblies & local govts gain autonomy from state executive, improving public accountability</i> National	OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP  <i>increasing civil society participation in core governance processes and scrutiny of PFM</i> Fed/Nat	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT  <i>strengthening public oversight of federal MDAs thru improved central delivery coordination</i> Federal	SOCIAL PROTECTION  <i>improved accountability of national social investments programs thru grievance redress</i> Fed/Nat	REGIONAL NETWORKING  <i>cross-state scale-up of governance reforms thru strengthening regional platforms and CoPs</i> SW, SE	EASE OF DOING BUSINESS  <i>scaling-up investment promotion, improving states' EoDB rankings, boosting IGR/DRM</i> SW, SE

Key Learning

Through broad reflection and analysis of these achievements, PERL has drawn valuable lessons for future programming:

- **Fundamental link between core governance reforms and service delivery improvements** – The latter are unlikely to be achieved and sustained without supporting core governance reforms in public financial management, public service management and accountability.
- **Value of persistent, long-term programme engagement** – This is essential to nurture, deliver and sustain core governance and service delivery reforms, tailored to changing political economy conditions. National legislative reforms took many years to bring to fruition.
- **Supporting political transition, transition management** – Effective analysis and flexible relationship management during transition enabled PERL to identify and rapidly engage with the incoming administration's agenda and critical reforms in 2019 and 2023.
- **Connecting the supply and demand side, taking a whole-of-society approach** – Bringing together actors from across govt and society with common interests has enabled PERL to convene and build multistakeholder coalitions to generate broad-based support for reform.
- **Federal-state-local government linkages** – Because PERL operates at all levels of govt, it has been able to strengthen critical linkages between federal, state and to some extent local govt, leveraging mutually reinforcing reforms, relations and incentives at each level.