

Improvements in Basic Education in FCDO's Partner States in Nigeria (2016 to date)



Preamble

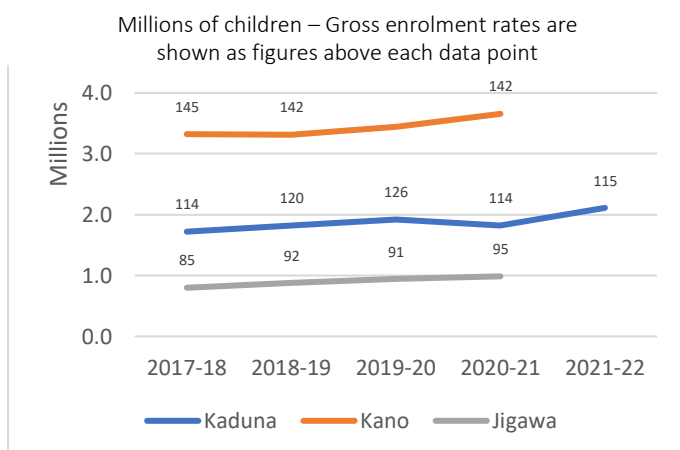
Since 2016, the PERL programme has supported governance reforms in the education sector in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa. Focusing on primary education, this note provides an overall synthesis of evidence on PERL's contribution to changes observed in the three states over the eight years of the PERL programme. It begins with a summary of changes in education indicators (Section 1) and then summarises evidence on how PERL contributed to these changes (Section 2). The paper provides a review of lessons learned on the effectiveness of PERL's approach (Section 3) and concludes with an assessment of the likely sustainability of reforms and recommendations for future programming (Section 4).

1. Results

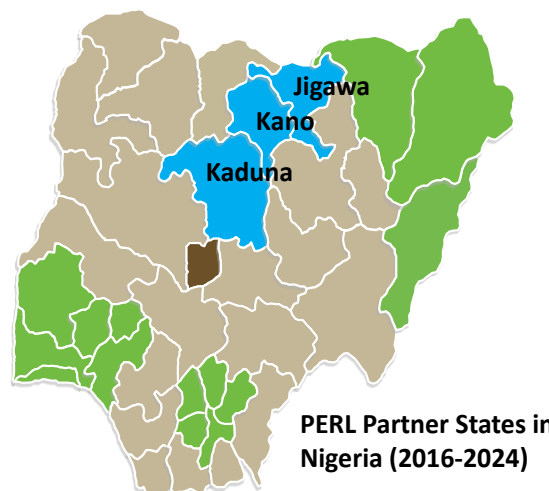
Over the eight years of PERL programming (2016-2024) there have been significant improvements across a wide range of education indicators in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa.

Increased primary school enrolment. As shown in Figure 1, there has been a substantial increase in primary school enrolment in all three states. In Kaduna and Kano there has been little change in gross enrolment ratios indicating that the increase in enrolment is roughly keeping pace with population growth. However, in Jigawa the gross enrolment ratio has increased markedly suggesting that the state is succeeding in reducing the percentage of out-of-school children.

Figure 1 – Public primary school enrolment in FCDO partner states



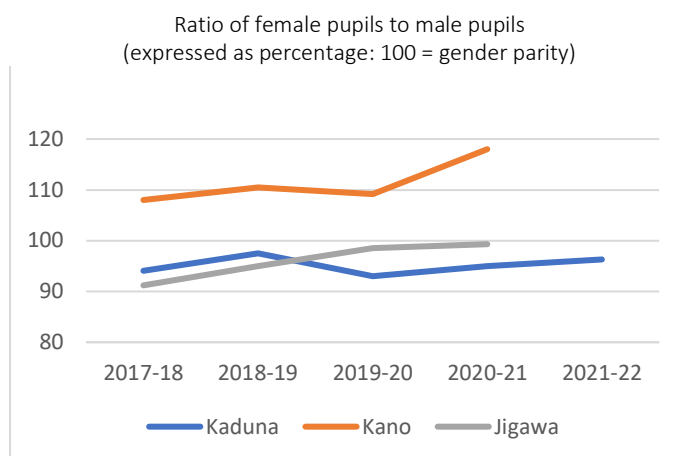
Source: Annual School Censuses



Gender parity. In all three states there have been substantial improvement in gender parity in primary schools (Figure 2). Both Kaduna and Jigawa are very close to achieving gender parity and the annual school censuses in Kano indicate a higher number of girls enrolled in primary schools than boys (gender parity exceeded).

Budget documentation and presentation. The capacity of key actors to produce timely and complete budget documents has increased in all three states. All three states are now presenting their budgets in line with the National Chart of Accounts. Jigawa has fully implemented the programme segment of the National Chart of Accounts in the 2023 budget, which enables disaggregation of spending on women and girls in the health and education sectors and makes Jigawa State the most advanced of the 36 States (and Federal Government) in the application of the programme segment coding.

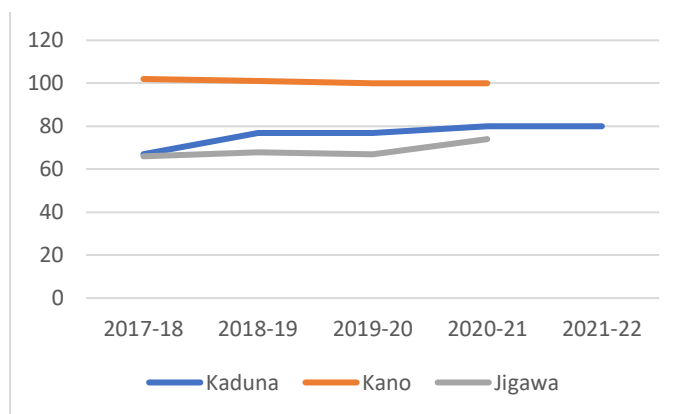
Figure 2 – Gender parity in public primary school enrolment in FCDO partner states



Source: Annual School Censuses

Primary school completion rates (Figure 3) have improved in both Kaduna and Jigawa, but not in Kano. However, in all states there are still gender disparities in primary school completion rates.

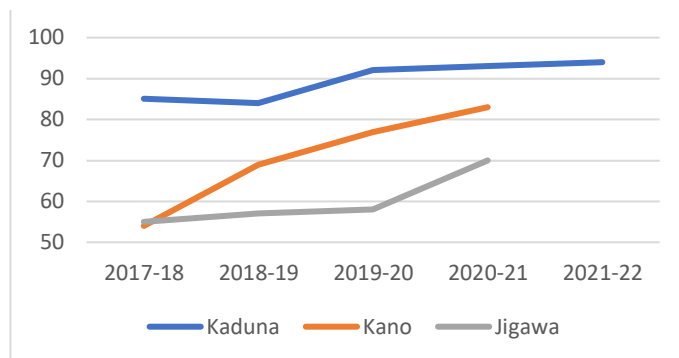
Figure 3 – Primary school completion rates (girls and boys) in public primary schools in FCDO partner states



Source: Annual School Censuses

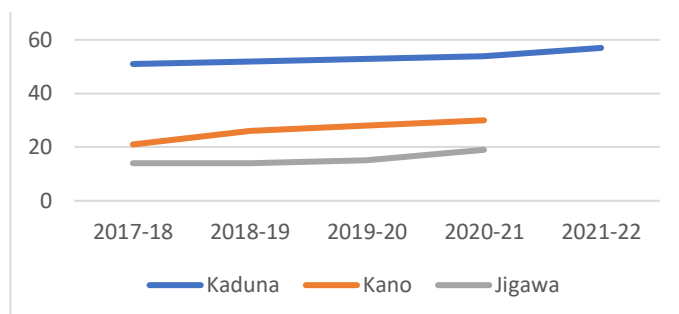
More qualified and more female teachers. In all three states there have been substantial improvements in the percentage of primary school teachers with required qualifications (Figure 4) and in Kaduna and Jigawa this has been driven by new policies for teacher recruitment, deployment and management. The percentage of female teachers in primary schools has increased in all three states with female primary school teachers now outnumbering male teachers in Kaduna (Figure 5). In both Jigawa and Kano, the ratio of pupils to qualified teachers has improved, but not in Kaduna where teacher recruitment has not kept pace with the large number of additional children enrolled in primary schools (Figure 6).

Figure 4 – Percentage of qualified public primary school teachers in FCDO partner states



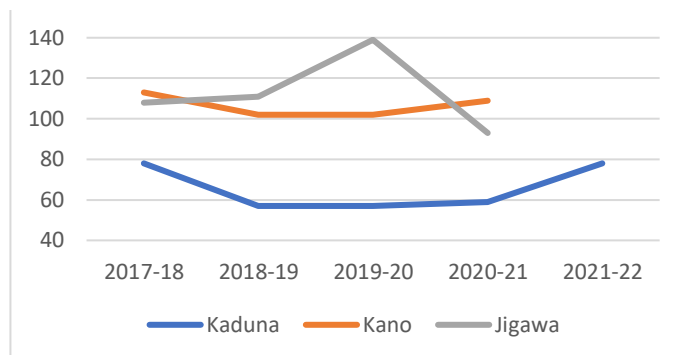
Source: Annual School Censuses

Figure 5 – Percentage of female teachers in public primary schools in FCDO partner states



Source: Annual School Censuses

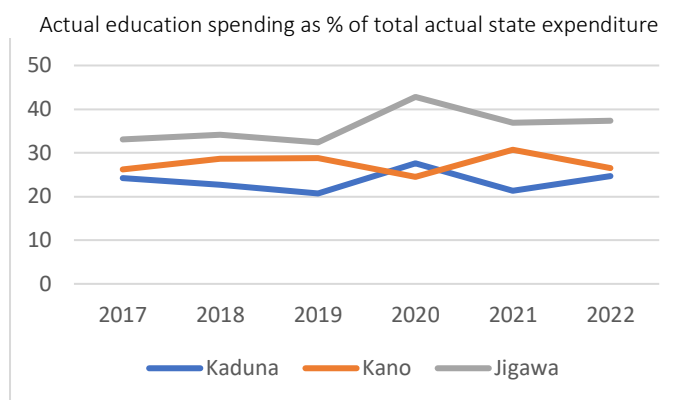
Figure 6 – Pupil to qualified teacher ratio in public primary schools in FCDO partner states



Source: Annual School Censuses

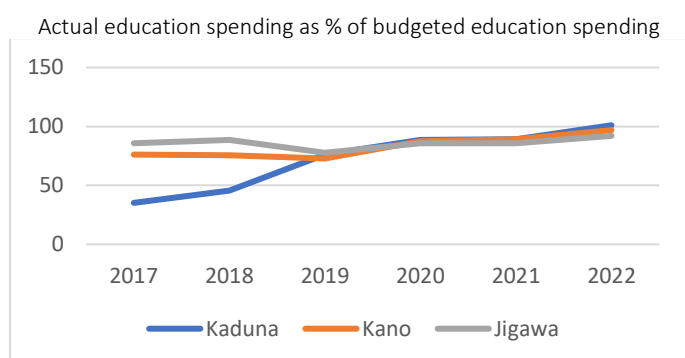
Increased budgetary allocation for education and improved budget performance. In terms of public expenditure, all three states have allocated substantial shares of their budget to the education sector. In Jigawa actual spending has exceeded the ratio of 26% of total spending recommended by UNESCO's Education for All Initiative (Figure 7). All three states have made substantial improvements in education budget performance as measured by marked increases in budget execution rates (ratio of actual education spending to budget educated spending – Figure 8).

Figure 7 – Education spending as percentage of total state government expenditure



Source: PERL PFM database. NB Future version of this paper to compare budget allocation in KJ states with regional and national trend (analysis of NGF database – forthcoming)

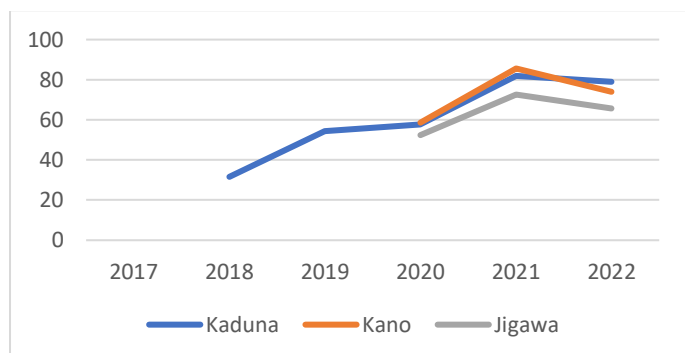
Figure 8 – Education budget performance



Source: Annual School Censuses

Better learning outcomes. In all three states there is evidence of improved learning outcomes with increases in the percentage of upper secondary school leavers achieving five credits and above including mathematics and English language (Figure 9).

Figure 9 – Percentage of students obtaining five credits and above in WASSCE exams including mathematics and English language



Source: WAEC data request. NB data points for missing years to be requested. Future version of this paper will compare performance of KJ states with regional and national trend.

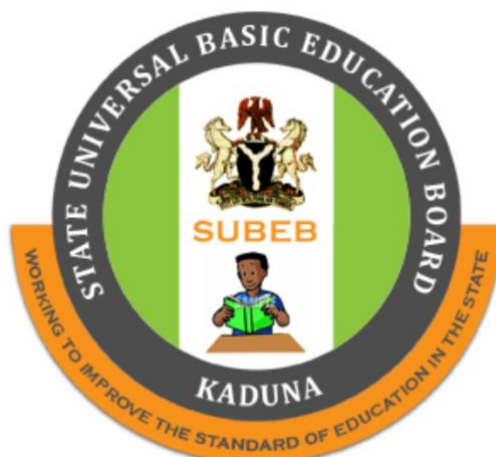
These indicators demonstrate that all three states have made substantial progress in improving basic education services over the course of the PERL programme. The strongest improvements have been achieved in Jigawa and Kaduna where PERL monitoring indicates

improvements in service delivery that have been assessed as being ‘substantial’ (Jigawa) and ‘very substantial’ (Kaduna). In these states reform processes are assessed as having reached the stages of ‘extended islands of reform’ (Kaduna) and ‘sustained islands of reform’ (Jigawa). In Kano, reforms have been limited to mainly to girls’ education, which can be regarded as an ‘emerging island of reform’ that has delivered ‘moderate impacts’.

2. How did PERL contribute to these results?

The results indicated in Section 1 are mainly attributed to education governance reform processes led by the partner states. These reforms have been supported by several development programmes including PERL and the Partnership for Education for All in Nigeria (PLANE). PERL’s main contributions are summarised in the paragraphs that follow:

Core governance reforms. By focusing on core governance, public financial management and administrative reforms, PERL has built technical and administrative capacities in the partner states required for more effective planning, delivery and monitoring of realistic medium term sector strategies and annual budgets for the education sector. PERL has supported states to manage these processes in a more transparent and participatory way creating opportunities for citizens to advocate for improved resourcing and delivery of education services. PERL has provided organisational development support to state level Ministries of Education and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs). It has supported states to strengthen their capacity to collect and analyse data on education needs and challenges (for example the Kaduna State Education Baseline, Learning Poverty Assessment, and whole school evaluations), which has helped states to develop their strategic plans and respond to citizen’s needs. The evidence on public expenditure presented in Figures 7 and 8 indicate that with PERL support, partner states governments have given greater priority to the sustainable delivery of public goods and services that meet citizens’ needs.



Policy reforms. PERL has supported states to develop their education sector policies, for example the Kaduna State Education Policy. PERL has focused in particular on supporting the development of teacher recruitment, deployment and management policies in Kaduna and Jigawa and girls' education policy in Kano. PERL has assisted the states to ensure that these policies have been developed on the basis of broad-based stakeholder participation, and that they will be backed up by robust implementation and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Following support from PERL, both Kaduna and Jigawa states have made progress in recruiting additional teachers and ensuring that they have required qualifications, as attested by indicators on qualified teachers shown in Figure 4.



PERL's promotion of girls' education in all three states has supported improvements in girls' enrolment in primary schools. The particular focus on girls' education in Kano has resulted in the state government creating a dedicated budget line for targeted girls' education initiatives, as well as establishing girls' education units, innovations that have since been replicated in Jigawa and other states. Another focus of PERL policy support has been to establish quality assurance policies and responsible agencies (e.g. the Jigawa State Education Quality Assurance Agency - JISEQAA).

Citizen engagement. PERL has made a substantial contribution to enhancing citizen engagement in education policy, planning, delivery and monitoring processes. In Kaduna, PERL was instrumental in establishing the Kaduna Basic Education Accountability Mechanism (KADBEAM) which has participated in policy planning and budgeting processes, as well as monitoring the implementation of policies and school level performance using a scorecard tool. This approach has been replicated in Kano with the Girls Education Partnership and in Jigawa with the Girls' Education Coordination Platform and Jigawa Education Accountability Forum. Across the three states these

platforms have been supported by PERL to conduct evidence gathering and analysis, to prepare advocacy initiatives and to communicate effectively through traditional and social media. PERL has supported the organisational development of these platforms and consistently encouraged inclusiveness in participation, including for women and people with disabilities. These trends have been assessed using PERL's annual Constituency Influencing Assessment tool, which has measured positive trends relating to citizen engagement, representation and inclusion across the three states.

3. What did PERL Learn?

The lessons learned from PERL support to basic education in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa are in line with broader observations on PERL's theory of change and theory of action and can be summarised as follows:

Core governance reforms are essential for bringing about improvements in service delivery. The core governance reforms supported by PERL have been targeted at critical bottlenecks holding back service delivery, in particular the inadequate resource allocation to the sector, weaknesses in budget processes, low teacher quality linked to deficiencies in teacher recruitment and deployment, lack of quality assurance and citizen-led monitoring. Alleviating these bottlenecks in upstream governance problems has contributed to downstream improvements in service delivery.



Collaboration with sector programmes has been important to bringing about service delivery improvements. Many of the achievements documented in this paper have been delivered through collaboration between PERL and FCDO funded education sector programmes, including the Teacher Development Programme (completed in 2019) and PLANE (started in 2021). PERL successfully combined its expertise in supporting core governance reforms with the detailed knowledge of education governance and service delivery challenges provided by the sector programmes. PERL has also entered into effective partnerships with development projects funded by other donors including the World Bank AGILE and BESDA programmes.



PERL has achieved results by following a locally-led and politically smart approach. PERL has engaged selectively in reform areas based on its understanding of the political economy context of each state. This has enabled PERL to identify and support feasible reform pathways even for politically sensitive issues, such as teacher recruitment and deployment. Political economy analysis has also enabled PERL to recognise where policy commitment is faltering (for example the case of the free and compulsory basic education policy in Kano) and to reposition itself in support of emerging policy opportunities (for example, girls' education in Kano). The overarching principle has been to work in support of reform processes that are locally led and supported by coalitions of stakeholders in each state. This is essential to for reforms to gain traction and to ensure local ownership and sustainability.

PERL has connected citizen voice to budget and policy processes aimed at bringing about service delivery improvements. A common feature of PERL interventions has been to strengthen citizen voice on education issues by fostering inclusive citizen engagement in advocacy and accountability processes, promoting media coverage of education issues, and facilitating citizen participation in budget, planning and policy processes. This has contributed to improved policy design and budget formulation and enabled greater citizen monitoring and oversight that has contributed to improved policy and budget delivery.

Policy reforms have been driven by multistakeholder coalitions linking government and non-state actors. A common feature of the most successful policy initiatives has been the role of multistakeholder coalitions bringing together actors from government and civil society. Examples include the Girls Education Partnership in Kano, the Girls Education Coordination Platform (GECP) in Jigawa and the Technical Working Groups working on education policy in Jigawa. Coalitions have been helpful for broadening and strengthening ownership and commitment to reforms, balancing different stakeholder perspectives and improving coordination and collective action. Coalition building has been particularly important for building commitment to girls' education issues where broad ranging reform constituencies have included Emirs, Islamic Scholars, and community influencers, whose supportive statements have been critical to mitigating socio-cultural barriers affecting girls' education.

The specific focus on the challenges on girls' education has been helpful for bringing about targeted action and use of resources. PERL has encouraged states to address the challenges of girls' education using specific and targeted initiatives including the establishment of a dedicated budget line in Kano and Jigawa states, as well as the establishment of specific girls' education units. This approach has been effective because it has helped to draw attention to girls' education as a specific and urgent challenge requiring targeted action.

The use of Mutual Accountability Frameworks has been critical for building and sustaining political commitment to education reform. In all three states, education policy reforms have been a key feature of the Mutual Accountability Frameworks signed between FCDO and state governments that set out mutual commitments in terms of state governments 'asks' and FCDO 'offers'. There is now a process of structured dialogue between FCDO, FCDO programmes and state governments that has ensured continued focus on priority reforms backed by high level political commitments.

4. Sustainability and Recommendations for Future Support

PERL assesses that education reforms have reached a moderate to high level of sustainability in the three states. This is most evident in Kaduna where education reforms are agreed as priority by a wide variety of actors, are politically accepted with responsible owners and institutions with skills and supporting laws. This is supported by voice and pressure from citizens, media, the legislature, with well-established accountability mechanisms. In Jigawa, these conditions are also largely in place, but there are concerns about the high level of attrition in the civil service and loss of institutional capacity as staff leave the service. In Kano, girls' education reforms are also backed by political commitment, skilled staff and legislative arrangements. However, sustainable financial arrangements have not yet been put in place and citizen pressure to sustain reforms needs to be strengthened.

In spite of this progress in achieving sustainable reform progress, further support will be needed to state governments and civil society to ensure continuation of the positive trends in the education sector achieved over the course of the PERL programme. Key recommendations for support by future core governance and sector programmes include:

- **Maintain a continued focus on core governance issues affecting the education sector** including public financial management and human resource management issues. PERL's experience has demonstrated the close links between core governance reforms and service delivery improvements. Following the completion of PERL, this function will need to be taken up by PLANE and/or a successor governance programme.
- **Continue to focus on better public financial management in the education sector.** While PERL has helped to ensure increased and more reliable flow of resources into the education sector in the three states, these trends need to be taken further and extended to cover issues including more transparent management of teacher salaries, more equitable targeting of resources towards areas of greatest need (e.g. primary schools and underserved locations), availability of funds at school level and reforms to federal funding instruments (UBEC funds).
- **Continue to focus on teacher recruitment and development.** The ratio of pupils to qualified teachers remains very high in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa and will need to be reduced substantially in order to improve learning outcomes. Measures to address the overall shortage of qualified teachers need to be combined with more effective programmes for teacher development to improve teaching skills and teaching quality.
- **Strengthen quality assurance policies and practices.** PERL has made progress in supporting new laws and institutional arrangements on school inspections and quality assurance. Further support will be needed to deliver the full benefits of these initiatives.
- **Continue to promote inclusiveness and gender parity in the education sector.** PERL has contributed to significant improvements in girls' education, but further support is needed to address remaining gender disparities (e.g. in girls transition rates) and to address the needs of other marginalised groups including out-of-school children and people with disabilities.
- **Increase attention to the school security and safeguarding agenda.** Attacks on schools and kidnapping of schoolchildren has become a very serious problem, particularly in Kaduna state. In addition, there is increased concern with safeguarding issues and a need to protect schoolchildren from physical and psychological abuse.



The opinions expressed above are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

PERL is the FCDO's flagship
Public Sector Accountability
& Governance programme in
Nigeria since May 2016



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