

## Mainstreaming change: Bureau of Public Service Reform, Kaduna State

In 2009, the Kaduna State Government launched an ambitious programme to reform public services. Previous efforts in reforming public services had stalled because there was no specific agency responsible for coordinating changes.

To remedy this problem, the Kaduna State Government created a Bureau of Public Service Reform – a dedicated office to track and manage reforms across the public service. Addressing issues that hampered the new bureau took a while to sort out, and staffing the bureau with appropriately skilled staff is still a challenge. Nevertheless, the new bureau is well underway and is proving its worth in mainstreaming reform across government.

### From idea to action

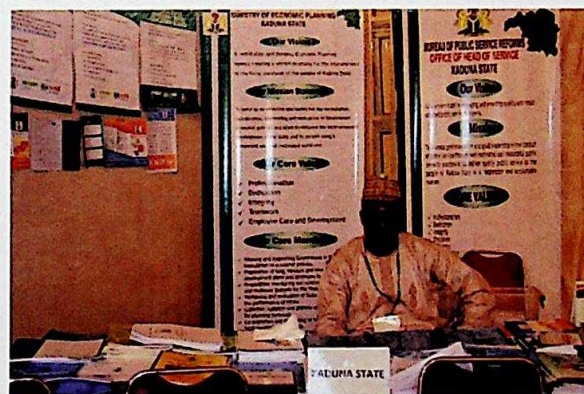
The Kaduna State Government change programme takes a holistic approach to establishing a modern, effective and efficient public service. The government was mindful that to be successful reforms needed to permeate across the whole system. The concept of a one-stop-shop for coordinating efforts was realised in 2009 when the Bureau of Public Service Reform was set up in the Office of the Head of Service.

Once operational, the bureau needed fine-tuning. Early experiences in putting the original concept into practice led to development of a corporate plan and a reorganisation in 2011. Shortly after, procedural guidelines were adopted.

### Coordinating and sharing knowledge

The bureau is now on track, identifying and designing reform programmes, and facilitating and coordinating activities. Although additional staff are needed the current staff – released from other departments and already on the government payroll – are working effectively and delivering results.

Work involves undertaking research, and liaising, communicating and sharing information on reform



activities and progress on reforms across government. The bureau works closely with a state steering committee, chaired by the Kaduna State Governor, and made up of representatives of state technical coordination committees chaired either by commissioners, the head of service or the accountant general. Involving state technical coordination committees is important because they are responsible for implementing the seven areas of reform agreed between the Kaduna State Government and development partners.

The bureau assumed responsibility for a review of the change programme in 2011, organising a high-level retreat to assess performance and reporting on the results. Recommendations from the retreat

suggested ways to build on achievements, address challenges and link action across workstreams. The next review will be in 2013.

#### How the Bureau of Public Service Reform mainstreams reforms

- Facilitates and coordinates public service reform programmes
- Researches, liaises, communicates and shares information on reforms
- Monitors and evaluates reform programmes
- Develops and oversees infrastructure such as information technologies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service
- Identifies and recommends ways to enhance service delivery
- Serves as secretariat to the State Steering Committee – the coordinating committee for state technical coordination committees for governance, education, health, infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, business climate and enterprise, environment and forestry.

#### Leading on reform

The bureau is, as the Kaduna State Government envisaged, playing a lead role in mainstreaming reform in the state. The bureau's involvement in reforms has earned it recognition and respect among chieftains and state public service staff.

An early accomplishment was organising key performance indicators to measure the success and sustainability of the Development Cooperation Framework signed between the Kaduna State Government, World Bank, United Nations and the UK Department for International Development in December 2010. Then, in 2011, the bureau reviewed the Governance Change Programme. In 2012, the bureau worked with the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) programme to organise and run self-assessment exercises for various ministries. Later that year the bureau organised a retreat for members of the Kaduna State House of Assembly to familiarise them with reform programmes.

#### Strengthening understanding and commitment

The 2011 review showed that there is a need to strengthen understanding of reform and commitment to it throughout the civil service. As an agency within state government dedicated to reform, the bureau can play a significant role in bringing about this understanding and commitment. The bureau also serves as the government's 'memory' about what worked and why in reform programmes.

#### Finding the right people

Finding the right people to foster understanding of reform and support reform processes can be a major hurdle. In most cases, setting up an agency such as the Bureau of Public Service Reform means not only arranging for suitably qualified staff to be transferred from other departments, but also developing a training plan to fill gaps in specialist skills.

#### Establishing a legal mandate

The legal status of such an agency must also be established at the outset. Without this, an agency does not have a solid basis for operating across government.

#### Encouraging cost effectiveness

Lastly, a one-stop shop for all reform initiatives, for developing relationships with donors and partners to support reform, and for allocating funds for reform programmes, can be cost-effective.

#### What lessons have we learned?

- A dedicated agency within state government can play a significant role in bringing about understanding of reform and commitment to it
- Finding the right people to foster understanding of reform and support reform processes can be a major hurdle
- A dedicated agency must have a legal mandate for operating across government
- A one-stop shop for all reform initiatives can be cost-effective.

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