

Building for the future: assessing local training capability

The UK Department for International Development (DFID)'s State Level Programmes (SLPs) in Nigeria are all committed to leaving a legacy of an improved capacity in public service and elsewhere, through the provision of training and development. To further ensure sustainability, this training and development is carried out in collaboration with Nigerian training institutions, at state or national level, whenever possible.

In order to understand the existing training and development capacity of indigenous Nigerian organisations, the programmes jointly undertook a Training Capability Assessment in 2010. This assessment now provides a comprehensive guide to potential partners or contractors for the delivery of training and development services, describing their areas of expertise and their relevance for the SLPs.



Enugu International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) training workshop

The State Level Programmes

The four DFID State Level Programmes in Nigeria are:

- SPARC: Aims at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector, including public service management, public financial management, policy and strategy setting, and monitoring and evaluation of service delivery performance
- ESSPIN¹: Supports the governance and delivery of education services
- PATHS 2: Supports the governance and delivery of health services
- SAVI²: Strengthens demand-side mechanisms (the voice of civil society) and improves accountability.

(A fifth programme, GEMS⁴, which supports growth and enterprise initiatives, is a more recent addition, and was not party to this exercise.)

The programmes co-operate by sharing information, adopting common approaches, and undertaking joint activities wherever opportunities arise. They all have a critical focus on improving the capacity of public servants and others through the provision of training and development, and the joint commissioning of the Training Capability Assessment is a prime example of this co-operation.

How the assessment was conducted

In the first stage, desk research and contributions from SLP staff generated an initial 'long list' of over 200 training institutions. The list included a wide range of national, sub-national and state-level institutions, from specialist organisations such as teacher and nurse training colleges, to public and private sector management training organisations, and further and higher education institutions.

An expert team drawn from the SLPs expanded this long list into a database, adding information about target client base, primary and secondary areas of expertise, training methodologies, and potential relevance to all or any of the SLPs. The database is available on "the fountain" – the SPARC intranet.

As a second stage, the long list was reviewed by SLPs at national and state level, using four parameters to describe their potential for collaboration with the SLPs:

- Organisations offering programmes already sufficiently relevant, affordable and of sufficient quality for SLPs to use or recommend to state governments
- Organisations offering programmes of sufficient quality and with the possibility of adaptation to more closely meet the needs of SLP states

- Organisations with sufficient flexibility, skills and credibility to design new programmes to meet the needs of SLP states
- Organisations offering the potential for collaboration to deliver a programme on a pilot basis (e.g. to support the development of curricula, materials, or training skills).

The review arrived at a shortlist of the 12 organisations which appeared to have the greatest promise; these organisations were then visited and reviewed in depth. Although each of the shortlisted organisations had some relevant characteristics, not all of them were judged capable (or potentially capable in the near future) of providing training in the management and other skills that the state programmes need. Three organisations (in Lagos, Kaduna, and a national organisation) emerged as the most suitable immediate providers of relevant training, offering a breadth of programmes as well as a commitment to tailor programmes and services to meet specific needs.

The Results

The results that produced:

- A cost-effective tool to streamline future selection of training service providers
- A database of training organisations which is available to assist all SLPs in identifying potential partners or contractors for provision of training and development
- A detailed profile and objective evaluation of the strongest organisations, enabling SLPs to confidently contract, support, or partner with these organisations.

Already, the database is in demand – for example:

- In Lagos State the report has been shared with the Director General of the Office of Transformation
- The Public Service Staff Development Centre is likely to create new courses relevant to SPARC, such as Human Resources training for Public Sector Management agencies
- Outside the SLPs, ENABLE⁵ have requested and been provided with access to the data and report.

⁵ Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment

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¹ Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria

² Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase II

³ State Accountability and Voice Initiative

⁴ Growth, Employment and Markets in the States