Rapid reform replication:
The role of knowledge management in learning between Nigerian states

The State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) uses a variety of knowledge management (KM) approaches and tools to facilitate learning between the states it works in. This case study tested the hypothesis 'KM tools can make existing SPARC programme supported reforms ideas rapidly available to an expanded number of states'. A desk review and inputs from SPARC programme staff helped identify which reforms to study. Interviews and questionnaires were then used to explore why the reform was selected, how far the reform has worked and the role of KM in facilitating the reform process.

Knowledge management and reform replication

In 2012 SPARC expanded into Anambra, Niger, Zamfara, Katsina and Yobe States. Rather than designing governance reforms from scratch, SPARC has supported these states to learn about successful reforms implemented in the original SPARC states of Enugu, Lagos, Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna. This case study sought to identify examples of where that learning had translated into reform.

The KM approaches and tools deployed by SPARC include:

- Facilitating learning between government officials from different states, both face-to-face (peer learning workshops, exchange visits and Governance Share Fairs) and digitally (Communities of Practice)
- The Resource Centre, a database of relevant documents, including specific tools such as the Human Resources Management Suite
- Publications such as technical manuals and promotional flyers
- The SPARC website and its intranet, the Fountain
- SPARC’s staff and consultants.
Lessons for the future

- Successful replication is not just about providing people with information, it is about persuading them to use that information to push forward reform.
- Reforms are more likely to be replicated if responding to a demand from the state itself.
- The lack of capacity in the civil service and the political will of its senior management need to be addressed when considering how to roll out a reform.

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