Tackling Inequalities: Results achieved through Mainstreaming Gender and Social Inclusion across SPARC programmes

Nigeria has committed to a range of equalities-related legislation, including international accords, a National Gender Policy and a Child Rights Act. Despite some improved outcomes, Nigeria still has many inequalities to tackle. Between 1980 and 2013, although life expectancy at birth increased by 6.9 years, mean years of schooling increased by only 0.2 years. Nigeria is 152nd out of 187 countries according to the UNDP Human Development Index 2014.

The State Partnership for Accountability Responsive-ness and Capability (SPARC) has mainstreamed equalities issues throughout its programme, at federal and state levels with a comprehensive set of work on gender and social inclusion (G&SI). Specific initiatives have included: providing specialist technical assistance; designating focal point ‘leads’; providing capacity building and establishing a Community of Practice (CoP).

SPARC provided direct and indirect support to state governments’ policy-making, planning, service delivery, finance and human resource management reforms to ensure that G&SI was appropriately reflected in outputs. Although mainstreaming led to progress, the need to supplement the approach to pursue improved government practice and sector outcomes became apparent. A continuum approach was developed, as shown below, evolving from concepts to tools and capacity building, through process development, towards outputs and impact - and this has proved to be effective.

### SPARC’s continuum approach to equalities

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<th>State</th>
<th>Tangible results: examples of governance and wider achievements in states</th>
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| **Programme-wide** | - Plans such as Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) include a G&SI focus. State Development Plans (SDPs) increasingly address inequalities issues.  
- Human Resources Management (HRM) policies include a focus on G&SI, particularly gender (e.g. maternity and paternity policies), age and disability. |
| Anambra | - Indigent Relief Law (2013): a funded social security scheme is in place for people over 74 with no means of livelihood. |
| Enugu | - Call Circulars require all sectors to focus on G&SI issues in MTSSs and budgets.  
- Antenatal clinic first visits increased from 23,626 (2008) to 81,600 (2014). The leprosy treatment rate improved from 42.09% in 2008 to 85.4% in 2014.  
- More widely: There is a child protection network in 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs); a sexual assault referral centre established for women and girls. 1160 women were provided with improved planting materials; easy, affordable transportation provided for additional 3000 people by 50 mass transit coal city shuttle buses. |
| Jigawa | - Jigawa Gender Policy being implemented, with gender focal persons in key sectors.  
- Maternal/infant mortality is steadily decreasing; there is free education for girls/people with disabilities (PWDs); male/female school enrolment rates are increasing. |
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Sustainability Of Achievements

Through the programme work on G&SI, SPARC has:

1. Raised the profile of G&SI and improved state governments’ capacity to address equalities in policy-making and programming;
2. Supported significant improvements in the capacity and profile of Ministries of Women’s Affairs in partnership with Ministries of Planning and Budget to lead G&SI in states;
3. Supported much improved equalities focus in state MTSS contents and processes in priority sectors;
4. Supported G&SI sensitive public service HRM;
5. Brought a stronger equalities focus to service delivery;
6. Improved collection and use of disaggregated data;
7. Facilitated partnerships and engagement with civil society to tackle inequalities.

Remaining challenges include: poor data, limited state government commitment to implementation, and capacity gaps.