CASE STUDY 11

MOBILISING FOR DEVELOPMENT:
ACCOUNTABILITY FOR BETTER SERVICES IN NIGERIA

Country: Nigeria
Focus: Services and accountability
Donor(s): DFID
Organisation(s): Palladium / Itad / DHA
Budget: GBP 20m[1]
Timeframe: 2011-2018[2]

FEBRUARY 2018

KEY POINTS

• Working at multiple levels is crucial to promoting girls' inclusion

• Building relationships and cooperation between supply and demand is a highly effective strategy

• Working in politically informed ways helps achieve gendered aims, and a gender lens enhances power analysis

OVERVIEW

Mobilising for Development (M4D) is a governance program operating in northern Nigeria, "aiming to support improved equitable access to quality basic services and accountability at the local level".[3] The program engages with stakeholders in nine local government areas (LGAs) across Kano, Kaduna, and Jigawa states. Specifically, M4D focuses on education, health, water and sanitation and livelihoods, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. To achieve this, the program's activities include working with community organisations to strengthen engagement with local government, as well as "strengthening the capacity of local and state service providers and policy makers for more inclusive practices, clearer standards and improved responsiveness".[4] M4D promotes the inclusion of girls and people living with disabilities (PWD) by supporting life skills clubs,

forums, and relevant community organisations. By completion, the program aims to achieve "improved responsiveness and accountability of policy makers and service providers to citizens' entitlements and demands. This will contribute to improving access to, use of and satisfaction with services".[5]

GENDER AWARE WAYS OF WORKING

M4D's stated approach to gender focuses on inclusion and female beneficiaries rather than roles and norms. However, as one interviewee said: "You can't address the latter without addressing the former."[6] For example, measures to include women in program activities in turn challenge norms around women's leadership. Gender-focused outputs such as the creation of Life Skills Clubs, mentors, peer champions and girls' platforms are clearly indicated in the logframe: "This makes life much easier for

POLITICALLY INFORMED

Being politically informed is a way of working that recognises that development outcomes are determined by the dynamics of power and politics. It is not about formal governance reforms, such as elections or civil service reforms. It involves analysing stakeholder interests and incentives to understand what is politically feasible.

gender advisors who otherwise have to constantly bang on the floor to get gender issues recognized."[7]

Although the focus on girls is clearly stated, the program employs careful framing of issues around gender to be as effective as possible: "We haven't faced resistance because we are working with *every* social group within each community, so there is no suspicion around us just working with girls. The framing of the program is crucial to the effectiveness of the work we do."[8]

The program also works on multiple levels promote girls' inclusion. For example, life skills clubs "improve the awareness, knowledge, confidence and skills of girls to take better charge of their personal rights, entitlements, and improve their livelihoods".[10] Subsequently, 'peer champions' are selected from these clubs to "work with girls on prioritising issues, using problem analysis tools to understand the reasons behind problems".[11] Peer champions are then able to articulate girls' priorities and demands to policy makers and service providers.[12] "By

"Girl-centred programs find it difficult to achieve what they want because it's harder to get stakeholders on board. Our program is instead saying that we want positive development for every group, including girls."[9]

GENDER AWARE

Being gender aware is a way of working that analyses how women and men, girls and boys, experience an issue differently and/or unequally, and the power relations that sustain these inequalities. A robust analysis also looks at how gender intersects with other forms of diversity, such as race, religion, ethnicity, class and disability, and non-binary gender identities or diverse sexual preferences.

empowering girls and then supporting champions to carry their issues forward, we stand a greater chance of achieving sustainable change for this critical and marginalised group."[13]

GENDER AWARE WAYS OF WORKING

While careful issue framing and a two-tier strategy and both serve as examples of a politically informed programming, as does M4D's approach to gender, the program is also notable for its practice of power mapping, focus on networks and relationships, and effective use of media.

Power-mapping "was embedded in the program at the project development stage".[15] For example: "We work with community based organisations to identify where power lies […] we have identified that the state government has the power, and you therefore need to get the state government to approve the local government budget."[16] As a result, "community-based organisations have realised that the local government can't (not won't) meet their needs, so now the two have formed an alliance to lobby state government for resources".[17] Power-mapping has also helped re-frame issues by focusing on cooperation rather than conflict: "Nobody argues with the idea that, instead of being inundated with complaints, it's better for service providers meet with people, listen,

respond (within constraints), and work together to overcome problems."[18]

M4D has focused on building relationships between supply and demand through strategic capacity-building on both sides. For example, in Jigawa State, the program has supported both community-based organisations and local government to pass a disability act, which uniquely includes the concept of community-based rehabilitation. This will help enable people living with disabilities in the state to "participate in school, receive trade education and earn their livelihood".[19]

"It's about bringing supply and demand together in a non-confrontational way."

The program has also built networks with a wide range of other stakeholders, including powerful religious leaders, who constitute informal state actors: "We work with them to create an environment where it isn't seen as offensive for women to enter leadership organisations or interact directly with government."[20] For example, the M4D recognised that domestic gender roles were preventing women from engaging within the program: "How could they participate when they had to think about what next meal their kids would eat?"[21] As a result the program "created a platform for women and girls to complain to religious leaders if there was a grievance in the family, and this in turn allowed them to participate more in governance".[22]

Finally, M4D has used media to "disseminate best practice, share the lessons of success, engage stakeholders and convene debate on how change happens in basic services."[23] The program has achieved this by entering into "strategic partnerships with selected media organisations, covering print, radio, television and web-based media to achieve its objectives […] selected according to how far they can reach

1. https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202352
2. Ibid
3. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/about-m4d/
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
7. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
8. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
9. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
10. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/resources/strategies/adolescent-girls/safe-spaces/
11. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
12. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/resources/strategies/adolescent-girls/safe-spaces/
13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
16. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
17. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
18. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
19. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
20. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
21. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/resources/strategies/adolescent-girls/safe-spaces/
22. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
23. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/resources/strategies/adolescent-girls/safe-spaces/
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
27. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
28. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017
29. http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com/resources/strategies/adolescent-girls/safe-spaces/
30. Key informant interview, 23.03.2017

and influence key audiences; their drive for tackling development issues; and their geographical coverage".[24] The program does not purchase airtime, opting instead to support "the development of quality program content that can be used by the media to generate revenue".[25] The effectiveness of this strategy, and of the program as a whole, is then evaluated through "periodic research with key audiences, on whether they are aware of M4D and through which media, as well as the issues and messages they would like to see M4D prioritising".[26]

CONVERGENCE OR TENSION?

M4D highlights both the need to work politically to achieve gender equality, and the benefits of incorporating a gender lens into politically informed programming. For example: "You need to work with the grain when you are addressing gender issues. You need to work with what exists and build up from there."[27] Similarly, when a gender lens is added to politically informed programming: "You have a rounded view, you take power not just as political power, but you take it to every level and facet of society. For example, you don't go to a workshop on power-mapping and then go home and expect your wife to behave like a servant."[28] Furthermore: "The role of educated and healthy women and girls in improving not only their own life-chances but those of their children, families and communities is well documented. [...] If M4D is to improve the fortunes of the citizens of the states where it is working, it is imperative it invests in improving the status of girls."[29]

EFFECTIVENESS: CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

The success of M4D can be attributed primarily to its ability to foster cooperative networks between supply and demand side forces, as well as positive relationships with holders of informal power such as religious leaders. However, its effectiveness is bounded by the degree of power held by local government: "The number one limiting factor is that, according to the constitution, local government should be the third tier of government, but in practice, each state has its own local government act and there is no real devolution of power, only the invitation to work with the state."[30]

METHODS

A rapid review of select program documentation, combined with confidential interviews with at least two key informants per case. Informants include project staff, independent reviewers, donors and other stakeholders. Identifying and listening to local and/or female informants has been prioritised. Interviews for this case took place on 23.03.2017.

SELECTED RESOURCES

http://www.mobilisingfordevelopment.com

Cover photos:
DFID, Saving lives: Lindsay Mgbor

Australian Aid

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM   LA TROBE UNIVERSITY   Palladium MAKE IT POSSIBLE   UCL