



THE HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME: A CASE STUDY OF KANO STATE

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FOR PUBLIC POLICY REFORM?

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Acronyms and definitions

APC	All Progressives Congress
CRC	Community Reorientation Council
ECCD	Early Child Care Development
HGSF	Home-Grown School Feeding
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoBNP	Ministry of Budget and National Planning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
SBMC	School-based Management Committee
SIP	Social Investment Programme
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UBEA	Universal Basic Education Act
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme



Executive Summary

This case study examines the recently launched national HGSF programme and the existing state school feeding programme in Kano and discusses how the national programme may be implemented and integrated in Kano State. Focusing on political and institutional factors shaping the two programmes, the relationships within Kano state government and between the federal and state governments, the case study draws lessons for a range of actors working on school feeding in Nigeria and on public sector reform more broadly.

This report focuses on school feeding programmes in Kano State but forms part of a larger ongoing research project into the implementation of the Nigerian national Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme in a number of states.

Introducing school feeding in Nigeria

In Nigeria, an estimated 40% of all schoolchildren go to school hungry and more than 10 million children do not attend school at all. After an initial attempt to run a national school feeding programme in 2005, a redesigned programme was launched in 2016. The new national HGSF programme is one of five Social Investment Programmes (SIPs) which have been launched by the Buhari administration. The SIPs are a high-profile set of programmes housed under the Vice President's office. The HGSF programme's strategic plan stipulates that it will provide one meal per school day to all primary school pupils in grades 1 to 3 in Nigeria. The first funds were disbursed in January 2017 to five states: Anambra, Ebonyi, Ogun, Osun and Oyo. By August 2017, a total of 14 states had begun the national HGSF programme.

How politics are shaping the national HGSF programme

The national HGSF programme clearly stems from the electoral promises of the All Progressives Congress and its position in the Vice President's Office signals its political importance and visibility. The programme benefits from this high-level political commitment and the resources, attention and highly skilled personnel which are granted to an initiative with such political importance. The political drive which enabled and sustains the programme shapes it in a number of ways:

Structure: Learning from the first national HGSF pilot, which was housed in the Ministry of Education, this time the programme management is independent of a line ministry and line ministries do not have to contribute funds. This enables programme decisions and actions to be made quickly.

Resourcing: The political significance of the SIPs has endowed the HGSF programme with a large budget but this has drawn criticism from some donors and the media who argue that the level of spending cannot be justified in the current economic crisis.

Sustainable impact: The clear political ownership of the programme by the APC administration may mean that future administrations do not maintain it and replace it with their own flagship programmes.

Design: The political need to announce and begin the programme soon after the APC entered government created a pressure for the HGSF programme to start feeding children before a detailed

design and strategy was in place. Some development partners have argued that the programme is not addressing a clear problem in a strategic manner, and that it will not solve underlying problems.

Evidence and learning: The national HGSF programme is currently gathering basic data to ensure funds are being spent correctly and a more detailed monitoring and evaluation framework is being designed. The programme is also using past experience of national programming and its own monitoring data to inform the programme design and adapt the programme as it is implemented. This appears to be the first time that a federal government programme is investing in such a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process. The impetus for greater attention to monitoring and learning may come from the Vice President, but it is also conceivable that the media scrutiny of the programme and significant technical advice from development partners on the design of the programme have also driven improved standards.

Experience of school feeding in Kano

The National HGSF programme is gradually being rolled-out to all Nigerian states. However, there are multiple issues with how the national programme translates into action at the state level. The experience of Kano State provides one example of the complications.

Currently, in Kano State there is a state government school feeding programme which functions quite differently and independently to the new national HGSF programme. The programme is managed by the Kano State Community Reorientation Council (CRC) which reports to the State Governor's office. The programme is managed entirely by the CRC with no involvement of other ministries and the CRC is responsible for monitoring and reporting on how the programme is implemented and funds spent.

The school feeding programme in Kano is heavily shaped by political motivations but in rather different ways to the national programme. The school feeding programme is clearly linked to the former Kano State Governor Kwankwaso who appears to have used it as a political hallmark. As a result, successive governors discontinued the programme upon entering office. In 2015, when Governor Ganduje replaced Kwankwaso, the programme ceased again but has recently (in 2016) been restarted in a number of schools in some local government areas. The revival of the programme may have been due to the launch of the national HGSF programme.

The management of the Kano school feeding programme by the CRC is seen as a political move. The CRC is widely acknowledged to be a political organisation and appears to function as a way for the Governor to reward his supporters by giving them positions within the organisation. This model of delivery ensures a steady flow of funds to the programme but means that there is very limited public accountability for how the funds are used. Quality is poor because programme staff are not appointed on the basis of their skills to run the programme, and there is barely any monitoring of the programme or mechanisms for learning and increasing its effectiveness. CSOs in Kano are not currently engaged in the school feeding programme and while the school based management committees are aware of some of the problems, they lack authority and influencing power.

Despite the absence of data or accountability of the programme, public opinion in Kano is strongly in favour of school feeding. Consequently, there is little political pressure on the State Governor to prove or justify the use of funds for the programme.

Challenge of integrating the national HGSF programme in Kano

The national HGSF programme has not yet started in Kano despite initial steps being taken in January 2017. While the Governor and Deputy Governor are reportedly in support of the introduction of the national programme in Kano, there appears to be a process of negotiation over how this will integrate with and affect the existing structure for school feeding. There are a number of issues:

Accountability: Considering the limited provisions for monitoring and accountability in the current state programme and the lack of technical expertise in the CRC, it may be unsurprising that the federal government school feeding team have not yet begun disbursing payment in Kano. Although the national programme money will not pass through the CRC, it is the CRC which has responsibility for monitoring and evaluation and managing the national as well as state programme. There are strong vested interests in the CRC which would oppose a more transparent, strategically planned and monitored form of delivering school feeding, as proposed by the national HGSF model.

Finance: If the national HGSF programme is implemented in Kano, it would take over the responsibility for funding meals for grades 1-3 from the state government, and so there would, in theory, be surplus money in the Kano school feeding budget. This surplus could be used to improve the quality and quantity of food provided by the state to pupils in other grades and to increase the cooks' wages, but the current lack of incentives for the CRC to use funds effectively may mean this potential improvement is not realised.

Quality: The national school feeding programme allows a much larger budget per child than is provided by the Kano programme. This would, in theory, mean that there would be a notable difference in the quality and quantity of food which children in grades 1-3 (the federal scheme) would receive compared to those in early child care development and grades 4-6 (state scheme). This may push the state government to invest more funds in the school feeding programme but school communities currently have little power to make such a demand of the CRC or state government.

Lessons and recommendations

For the national HGSF programme: The federal government team needs to have a detailed understanding of if or why each state government would be interested in implementing the programme so that it develop an effective approach to working at state level. In Kano specifically, the federal government is facing a challenge. The federal government team may have to invest more heavily in their own direct monitoring in Kano to ensure transparent use of funding. The team could work with Action Aid Nigeria to mobilise and coordinate local state CSOs to undertake independent monitoring.

To be able to assess the HGSF programme's value for money, effectiveness and relevance, the programme needs to be addressing a clearly identified problem and its design needs to draw on evidence on how to tackle the causes of the problem. Improving this is important for justifying the programme's budget to critics.

For the national HGSF programme to generate sustained improvements, other challenges faced by the education, health and agriculture sectors need to be addressed. The national HGSF should aim to catalyse cross-sector collaboration and problem-solving within line ministries to solve these other underlying problems.

In Kano State: To improve the transparency and effectiveness of the Kano State school feeding programme, local state actors could engage in monitoring the programme at the school level. Pro-reform actors such as donor-funded programmes operating in Kano could support CSOs to do this.

Further research: This study has generated many more questions which merit further research. These include:

1. How federal-state relationships can be effectively managed to enable nationwide uptake of a federal government initiative?
2. How states such as Anambra and Enugu which have no prior experience of school feeding are implementing the national HGSF programme.
3. What are the implications for sustainability of housing a cross-sector programme within the Presidency?
4. How, and under what circumstances, can effective governance practice be shared between states?

LEAP seeks to address these questions in future case studies and to tailor the next stage of this research to the interests of the policy community engaged in school feeding. To do this, LEAP intends to discuss the findings and recommendations of this study with the national school feeding programme core team and SIP national office. LEAP will also discuss the study with its partners, ARC and ECP as well as with DFID and other donors involved in the national HGSF programme.

Introduction

This case study has been carried out as part of a series of studies on governance reform in Nigeria conducted by the Learning, Evidencing and Advocacy Partnership (LEAP), a pillar of the DFID-funded Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) programme. The aim of these studies is to understand the process by which public sector and/or policy reform initiatives in Nigeria have been achieved, how reform spreads across Nigerian governments, and to examine the role of learning, adaptation and the use of evidence in these change processes.

Objectives of the study

This briefing note on school feeding programmes in Kano State is part of a larger ongoing research project into the Nigerian Home-Grown School Feeding programme. A full report is underway which will include analysis of the school feeding programme in Osun State and two other states, potentially Anambra and Kaduna, in order to examine how the national programme is being implemented differently by different state governments with differing priorities and capability.

The research project aims to:

- a) Document the political process motivating the initial and subsequent launches of the programme at state and federal level;
- b) Understand the reasons for progress (and failure) in implementing the programme at the federal, state, and local level, exploring how federal-state relationships shape this process;
- c) Understand what enables or prevents the replication of programme success in one state to other states;
- d) Identify the use and relative importance of evidence and learning in the design and delivery of the programme.

The research does not attempt to assess the extent to which the national Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme is achieving its aims, but rather aims to understand the extent to which the programme is being implemented and the institutional and political factors shaping this process. The primary concern of the case study is to understand these factors, rather than the suitability of its design.

This briefing paper examines both the national HGSF programme, initiated by the federal government and the existing school feeding programme designed and implemented by Kano state government. We begin by discussing the factors shaping the national programme's design and implementation and then focus on how the planned roll out of the programme in Kano may affect the state's own school feeding programme. The juxtaposition of the two programmes in the state creates particular complexity and is an interesting example of how different political and institutional factors are influencing the prospective integration of the two programmes.

The study aims to explore how federal-state relationships are playing out in the roll-out of the national programme and so identify lessons to learn and take forward to future key policy reforms which cut across different levels of Nigerian government. We expect the learning to inform institutional reform approaches and practice in Kano and in Nigeria more broadly. It is intended that the findings link to wider debates on political analysis of non-implementation of policies, and the use of evidence and learning in reform processes.

Research Questions

1. What factors motivated the initial and subsequent launches of the HGSFP nationally and in Kano?
2. What has enabled and hindered progress in implementing the programme at the federal and state government level? What are the success or failure points and what are the contributing factors?

3. What factors may enable or prevent the replication of successful programming in Kano to other states and vice versa?
4. What role does evidence and learning play in shaping the design and implementation of the school feeding programmes at the federal and Kano state level?
5. What does the case study suggest for:
 - a) How Kano State and other state governments can effectively implement the school feeding programme?
 - b) How the federal government can work effectively with the Kano State government to support the roll-out of the school feeding programme?
 - c) How federal government could approach future nationwide public sector programmes?
 - d) What role evidence and learning could play in supporting public sector programming?

Methodological Approach

This study draws on principles of political economy analysis to understand how and why the national HGSF programme came about and is being implemented in different states. We use a body of theory and evidence on how politics determines the process and outcomes of public sector reform in Nigeria and elsewhere, and how international development actors can (helpfully or not) influence this change.⁵ Based on this literature, we ask how political incentives are driving the design and implementation of the national HGSF programme at both the federal and state level. In particular, we examine how the interests and relative power of the key stakeholders are influencing the operationalisation of the programme. This includes studying the relationships within state governments and between state and federal actors, as well as how donors and civil society organisations are shaping the programme design and delivery. To answer the research questions, we use this analysis to understand how ideas and evidence are informing the roll out of the programme and what can be learnt about how national public sector programming is developed and realised in Nigeria.

Please see Annex 1 for further detail on the methodology and organisations consulted. Direct quotes from the primary research are included in the text with a code instead of the interviewee's name in order to preserve anonymity.

Introducing the School Feeding programme

In Nigeria, an estimated 40% of all schoolchildren go to school hungry¹ and more than 10 million children do not attend school at all. Rates of school attendance in Nigeria continue to be lower than average for West and Central Africa despite Nigeria's higher GDP.² In 2017, the Permanent Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Education announced that Nigeria is the country with the highest number of out-of-school children, being home to more than half of the estimated 20 million out-of-school children worldwide.³

After an initial attempt to run a national school feeding programme in 2005, a redesigned programme was launched in 2016. The new national HGSF programme is one of five Social Investment Programmes (SIPs) which have been launched by the Buhari administration. The SIPs are a high-profile set of programmes housed under the Vice President's office. They aim to address a range of

¹ Yunusa.I, Gumel., A. M., Adegbusi.K and Adegbusi.S (2012, Dec). "School Feeding Program in Nigeria: A Vehicle for Nourishment of Pupils". *The African Symposium: An online journal of the African Educational Research Network*. 104 Volume 12, No. 2

² UNICEF (2017) *Education, Nigeria Factsheet*.

³ *The Guardian* (2017) "Nigeria has highest number of out-of-school children", by Murtala Adewale, 25th July 2017, <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-has-highest-number-of-out-of-school-children/>

poverty-related problems simultaneously, including youth unemployment, low agricultural productivity, child nutrition, primary school attendance, and gender inequality.

HGSF Programme aims

The HGSF programme's strategic plan stipulates that it will provide one meal per school day to all primary school pupils in grades 1 to 3 in Nigeria.⁴ By doing so, it aims to:

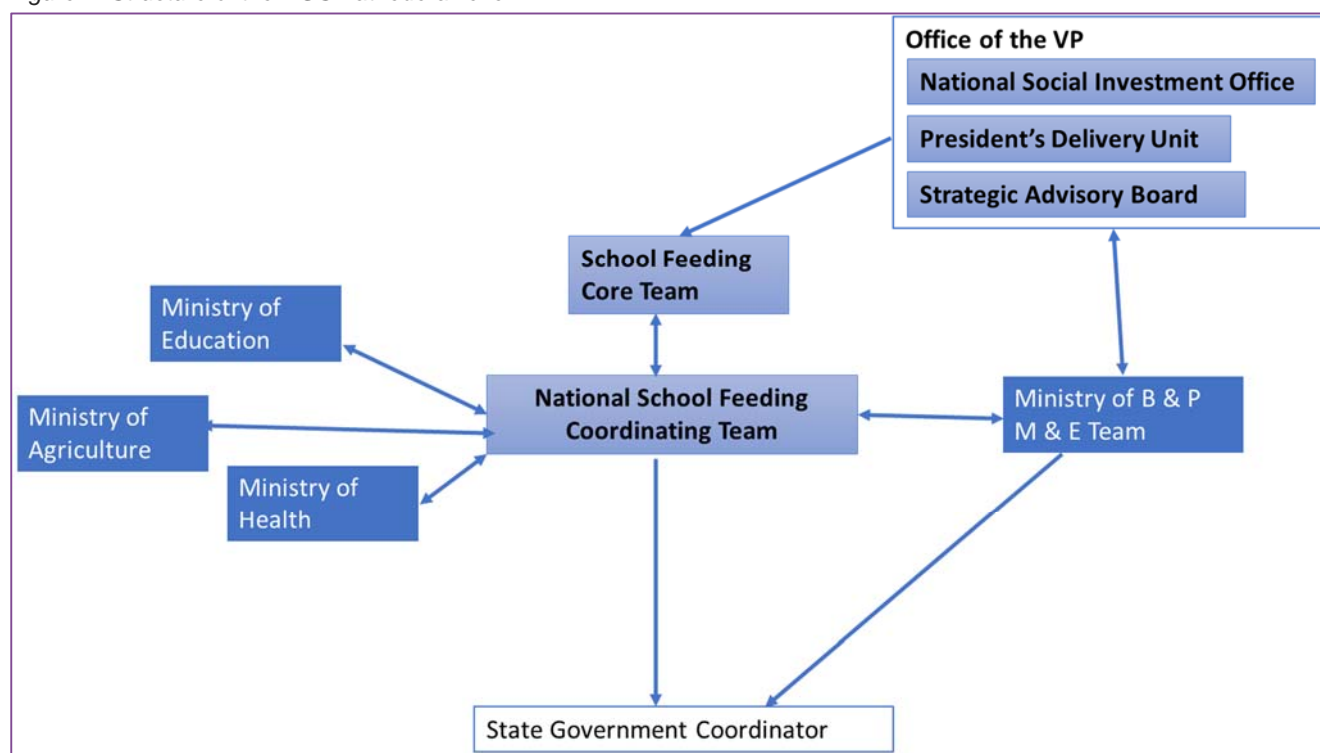
- Improve the enrolment of primary school children in Nigeria and reduce the current dropout rates from primary school which is estimated at 30%.
- Improve the nutrition and health status of many children and thereby also improve learning outcomes.
- Stimulate local agricultural production and boost the income of farmers by creating a viable and ready market via the school feeding programme.
- Create jobs along the value chain and provide a multiplier effect for economic growth and development.

The HGSF programme is a multi-sector coordination across various government ministries which include the Federal Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Health, Justices, and Budget and National Planning. However, the objectives of the school feeding programme focus on three major sectors: agriculture, health and education and the programme intends to generate a positive, integrated impact across all three. It aims to do this by employing local women to work as food vendors in schools, working with farmers so they can provide the necessary produce to local food vendors, involving health workers to monitor the health of school pupils and ensure they receive a nutritious meal prepared in a hygienic way each day. The programme is managed and funded by the federal government but should mainly be implemented by local school communities in every state.

The SIPs are overseen by the National Social Investment Office which is housed in the Office of the Vice-President. Each SIP has a specially appointed team to manage its implementation. The HGSF programme is run by the School Feeding Core Team which is supported by a larger National School Feeding Coordinating Team. Together, these teams coordinate the implementation of the programme. Guiding the programme is a Strategic Advisory Board and a Presidential Delivery Unit, which report to the Vice President on the programme's progress. A monitoring and evaluation team anchored in the Ministry of Budget and Planning is responsible for designing the monitoring framework, coordinating data collection from the states, and providing analysis to the Office of the Vice-President. The implementation structure of the HGSFP structure is depicted in the diagram below:

⁴ Government of Nigeria (2016) National Home Grown School Feeding Programme Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020

Figure 1: Structure of the HGSF at federal level



Source: Authors' own, drawn from the national HGSF Strategic Plan 2016-2020

According to the national HGSF Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the following teams and boards manage the programme at the federal level:

School Feeding Core Team: housed in the Presidency and responsible for scaling up the HGSF programme by working with partners and supporting State Governments to adopt and implement the programme.

National School Feeding Coordinating Team: this is the programme implementing team and is composed of representatives from the main stakeholder ministries and the core team.

M & E Team: charged with responsibility for guiding the implementation and monitoring of the programme. The membership of the team covers all relevant departments within stakeholder Ministries. This is also part of the national school feeding coordinating team.

Strategic Advisory Board: The Vice President of Nigeria chairs the Board which is responsible for providing independent advice on technical and strategic issues for the development of the programme. The Board includes representatives from all major stakeholder ministries.

Presidential Delivery Unit: This team is drawn from the Office of the Vice President and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the HGSF programme. They have a supervisory and quality assurance role.

National Social Investment Office: The Office coordinates all of the Social Investment Programmes and is led by the President's Special Advisor for Social Protection Plan, Mrs Maryam Uwais.

The HGSF programme is being implemented with technical support from the Partnership for Child Development (PCD). The PCD Country Director, Bimbo Adesanmi, is the team lead for the School Feeding Core Team.

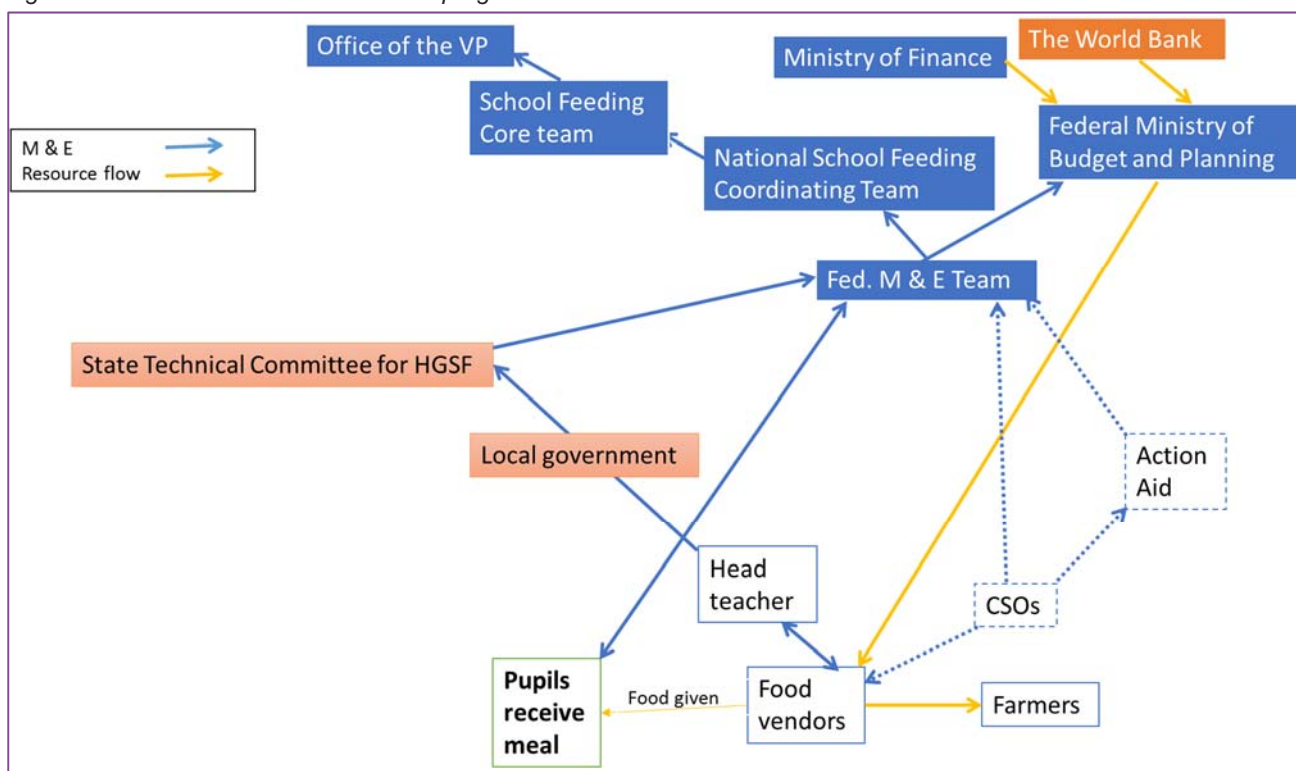
Finance for the HGSF is managed separately from the implementing and management teams. The funds are housed in the specially established Social Investment Account Unit in the Ministry of Budget and Planning. This unit manages the accounting for all of the Social Investment Programmes and is responsible for monitoring how funds are used and for disbursing funds accordingly.

The HGSF programme structure at the federal level is meant to be replicated at the state level. States are expected to establish a small coordinating team under either the Deputy Governor or Governor's office and to assign representatives from the agriculture, health, and education ministries to this team.

There should also be a state-level monitoring and evaluation team. When the programme is set up in a new state, the federal government works with the state government to obtain a list of trained and health-screened food vendors and farmers, and a list of the pupils in grades 1 – 3 in each primary school. All food vendors and farmers must have their own bank account in order to participate in the programme. The federal government also works with the state Ministry of Health and of Agriculture to create a nutritious meal plan which uses locally available food sources.

Once established, the programme is implemented by the food vendors and farmers themselves with the state government having a small role in monitoring and evaluation (figure 2). Both head teachers and food vendors are responsible for independently recording how many pupils are fed each day and this information is submitted to local government, which collates the data and transmits it to the state level team, which in turn collates and transmits it to the federal level monitoring and evaluation team. At the federal level, the monitoring data is entered into a central dashboard which is accessible by the Vice President’s Office so that information on the progress on the programme is available at any time. The federal Ministry of Budget and Planning disburses funds to the food vendors according to the centrally collected data. At the community level, the school-based management committees and civil society organisations are also expected to monitor the quality and quantity of the meals being provided. At the national level, the social investment office has contracted Action Aid Nigeria to coordinate the participation of CSOs in monitoring and holding the programme to account.

Figure 2: Structure of the national HGSF programme at federal and state level



Source: Authors’ own, based on interview data

The history of the national school feeding programme in Nigeria

HGSF programme in Nigeria has passed through various phases in recent years. To understand the how and why the current programme has emerged in its existing structure, this section provides a brief overview of the programme's political history.

The first attempt

When the national HGSF programme was first launched in 2005 it was housed under the School Health Unit of the Ministry of Education. At this time, it was called the 'Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme'. It was managed by the Ministry of Education and was grounded in new federal government legislation and policy which aimed to improve education.

In 2004, the Nigerian federal government passed the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act which states that all basic education is compulsory and free of charge to children of school age in Nigeria. This Act provided the legislative backing for introducing a public programme on school feeding. Around this time, there was support from international development organisations to trial home-grown school feeding initiatives. For example, in 2003, African Governments included locally sourced school feeding programmes in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. That same year, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, together with the United Nations World Food Programme and the Millennium Hunger Task Force, launched a pilot Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme in twelve countries, one of which was Nigeria.⁵

The Nigerian National School Health Policy (NSHP) was introduced in 2006 and recognises the importance of nutrition and health for education goals.⁶ The NSHP requires all public primary schools to offer every pupil one meal per day and notes the role of other ministries in ensuring cost-effective and nutritious meals and good sanitation in schools.⁷ Together, the UBE Act and NSHP provide the policy and legislative framework for a national Home-Grown School Feeding Programme which was launched in 2005.⁸

A pilot of the first national HGSF programme involved 13 states and the Federal Capital Territory. However, the pilots did not last more than a year and only Osun and Kano states continued to run a school feeding programme independently. One reason for the failure of the pilots is said to be the inability of the Ministry of Education to persuade the other line ministries to support the programme. Government programmes which require the collaboration of multiple sectors commonly stall due to the inability of one ministry to oblige another to work with them on their programme (R15). Interviewees described how ministries are usually interested in a programme if there is a budget attached and otherwise are reluctant to engage in it. The new national HGSF Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identifies the following additional factors as reasons for why the pilot was not successful:

- "Failure of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to disburse funds to pilot States as well as non-remittance of counterpart funds from participating States."
- "Inadequate monitoring and evaluation."
- "Inadequate sensitization and advocacy of relevant stakeholders, resulting in low community involvement and participation."
- "Lack of supporting infrastructure such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities."
- "Institutional structure at Federal level was not made fully operational."

⁵ State of Osun (2012) *Elementary School Feeding and Health Programme Transition Strategy*, State of Osun, Nigeria. PCD; HGSF. http://hgsf-global.org/en/bank/downloads/doc_download/252-elementary-school-feeding-and-health-programme-transition-strategy-osun-state-nigeria

⁶ Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria (2006) *National School Health Policy*.

⁷ Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria (2006) *National School Health Policy*.

⁸ Taylor, A. D. and Ogbogu, C. O. (2016). 'The Effects of School Feeding Programme on Enrolment and Performance of Public Elementary School Pupils in Osun State, Nigeria', *World Journal of Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3

- “Inadequate policy and legal framework at the State and Federal level.”

In section five, this report examines the extent to which the new HGSF programme appears to have learnt from these problems experienced in the first pilot.

Attempted revival

During the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, the Agricultural Transformation Agenda rose to prominence and this led to renewed interest in home-grown school feeding as a way of promoting local consumption, creating local markets for agriculture, increasing farmers’ income and creating employment. In 2014, in response to signals of renewed federal political interest in the programme, the Ministry of Education convened a special high level inter-ministerial roundtable meeting in Abuja.⁹ The Minister of Education invited his counterparts from the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, as well as development partners from Partnership for Child Development, the World Bank, Vitol Foundation, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Representatives from the Osun and Kano state school feeding programmes were also invited to offer advice on how to develop a better policy and funding framework to enable a national HGSF programme to function.¹⁰

A further technical meeting was held in Osun State in order to learn from the Osun school feeding programme, which had been reviewed and judged an example of best practice in Nigeria’s education sector. The meeting resulted in a communique which included recommendations for the institutionalisation, funding and replication of Osun and Kano school feeding models across all Nigerian states.¹¹¹² However, by the end of President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration in 2015, a new national HGSF programme had still not been launched.

Despite the change in national government, the political interest in school feeding remained and during the national election campaign, the All Progressives Congress (APC) promised to invest in school feeding, along with the three other Social Investment Programmes. President Buhari made clear promises to reduce poverty and bring tangible benefits to the poorest Nigerians, and school feeding was one of the ways in which he claimed this would be done.¹³

Following electoral success, the Buhari administration announced the national Social Investment Programmes (SIP) which promised to generate more jobs, increase household incomes, improve school attendance and child health, and empower women. The four programmes are N-Power (addressing youth unemployment), Conditional Cash Transfer, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (micro financial support to individuals), and School feeding. The HGSF programme has been tagged as the “Buhari food for the children” which indicates the political significance attached to the programme.¹⁴

Official relaunch

In June 2016, the school feeding programme was officially re-launched, a strategic plan was presented and a federal coordinating team was inaugurated. The government announced that the programme, when fully operational, would feed at least 10 million primary school pupils in grades 1 to 3. It also predicted that with state government cooperation, a further five million pupils in grades 4 to 6 would be included.¹⁵

⁹ Government of Nigeria (2016) *National Home Grown School Feeding Programme Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020*

¹⁰ EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF.

¹¹ Partnership for Child Development. (2014). *Osun State Home Grown School Feeding Programme: Improving Sustainability through Increased Local Farmer Participation*. HGSF Working Papers Series No.12.

¹² Taylor, A. D. and Ogbogu, C. O. (2016). ‘The Effects of School Feeding Programme on Enrolment and Performance of Public Elementary School Pupils in Osun State, Nigeria’, *World Journal of Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3

¹³ Africa Check (2017) ‘Buhari & APC’s campaign promises: Appraising 9 pledges 2 years on’ 30th May 2017 <https://africacheck.org/reports/buhari-apcs-campaign-promises-appraising-9-pledges-2-years/>

¹⁴ Premium Time (2017) ‘SPECIAL REPORT: How Buhari administration’s school feeding programme increases pupil enrolment amidst challenges’ by Oluwole, J., 28/05/2017

¹⁵ Premium Time (2017) ‘SPECIAL REPORT: How Buhari administration’s school feeding programme increases pupil enrolment amidst challenges’ by Oluwole, J., 28/05/2017

The design of the programme's strategy, as well as the other SIPs, involved considerable participation of numerous donors and non-government organisations. This included the New Partnership for African Development, the WFP and the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF). Financial assistance was provided by the Gates Foundation, the World Bank and the Vitol Foundation. Following substantial involvement in the Osun State programme, Imperial College London's Partnership for Child Development provided technical assistance. The strategy development drew on the experience from Osun and Kano States and also involved the state governments from Enugu and Kaduna, in anticipation of their role in piloting the programme.

Following the announcement of the HGSF programme in 2015, the programme took more than a year to be established. The first funds were disbursed in January 2017 to five states: Anambra, Ebonyi, Ogun, Osun and Oyo. By August 2017, a total of 14 states had begun the national HGSF programme and the federal government had spent nearly 6,205 million Naira on implementation and claims that 51% of the targeted 5.5 million pupils are being fed.¹⁶

In August 2017, the breakdown of the progress of the programme in the 14 states was as follows:

Table 1: State-level implementation of the HGSF programme

State	Running expenditure (millions - N)	Cooks Engaged	No. of pupils being fed
Ogun	1,042	2,205	231,660
Osun	1,000	2,863	151,438
Anambra	693	1,009	103,742
Enugu	572	1,276	108,898
Kaduna	500	9,857	835,508
Oyo	490	1,372	107,983
Zamfara	402	1,127	107,347
Ebonyi	345	1,453	163,137
Benue	337	3,344	240,827
Delta	226	1,364	141,663
Bauchi	215	3,261	307,013
Plateau	133	1,418	95,134
Abia	129	750	61,316
Taraba	120	2,596	171,835
	6,205	33,895	2,827,501

Source: *The Guardian* (2017)¹⁷

There has been some confusion and criticism over the progress of the programme and how much spending has been disbursed. In response, the federal government team released figures to the media showing that funds are being used to employ cooks and feed children though the cost per child varies considerably across the states. There appears to be pressure on the government to implement the programme, as one media source described "The HGSF programme must not be allowed to fail as this is one of the projects this administration has always flaunted as one of its achievements".¹⁸

¹⁶ *The Guardian* (2017) 'School feeding programme takes N6.2b in 14 states', by Terhembra Daka, 14th August 2017, <https://t.guardian.ng/news/school-feeding-programme-takes-n6-2b-in-14-states/>

¹⁷ *The Guardian* (2017) 'School feeding programme takes N6.2b in 14 states', by Terhembra Daka, 14th August 2017, <https://t.guardian.ng/news/school-feeding-programme-takes-n6-2b-in-14-states/>

¹⁸ *The Telegraph* (2017) 'School feeding programme: How far can FG go?', by Taiwo Hassan, 26th May 2017, <https://newtelegraphonline.com/2017/05/school-feeding-programme-far-can-fg-go/>

How politics are shaping the school feeding programme

The national HGSF programme clearly stems from the electoral promises of the APC and its position in the Vice President's Office signals its political importance and visibility. The programme benefits from this high-level political commitment and the resources, attention and highly skilled personnel which are granted to an initiative with such political importance. The political drive which enabled and sustains the programme shapes it in a number of ways, which are discussed below.

Structure: Due to the political importance of the programme, it is housed under the Vice President's office with a dedicated team of senior technocrats to support it. Learning from the first national HGSF pilot, which was housed in the Ministry of Education but struggled to persuade other ministries to collaborate, this time the programme management is independent of a line ministry and line ministries do not have to contribute funds. Giving the programme the privileged central position means that coordination across line ministries is easier since they are obliged to cooperate and because there is not competition or resentment over which ministry has control of the budget.

Resourcing: The political significance of the SIPs has endowed the HGSF programme with a large budget but this has raised questions in the media as to whether it is a sustainable or justifiable use of funds. The government initially proudly announced that the budget for the SIPs would be N550bn but has since been reduced due to Nigeria's fiscal crisis.¹⁹ As one respondent described, "*there is a lot of distrust that such a budget can be effective [...] There is also a lot of attention because of the recession; we have to justify the presence of SIP in the budget and prove its worth*". The pressure which results from the public attention to the programme's budget appears to have a positive effect on how the programme spending is monitored and on its accountability to the general public via the media. For example, the same interviewee explained, "*The budget is so big that the government know they have to spend it well*". However, the large budget has drawn criticism from some international donors who argue that the programme is not effective enough at addressing some of Nigeria's most urgent problems and so the level of spending cannot be justified in the current economic crisis.

Sustainable impact: A common criticism of the programme is that it is unlikely to last beyond the current administration. Due to the clear political ownership of the programme by the APC administration, future administrations may be unlikely to maintain it. Nigeria's first National Social Protection Policy was published recently (July 19th 2017) and this includes school feeding as a requirement. However, government policies and laws are not necessarily implemented by subsequent administrations.

Regarding sustainability, the question is also whether the benefits the programme expects to deliver will have a lasting impact beyond the lifetime of the programme. Proponents of the programme argue that it will catalyse improvements in agricultural markets, household incomes, and children's health and education. One interviewee suggested, "*the programme will create a new reliable bigger market for small-scale farmers but also the chance for farmers to sell to the open market. This should help them increase incomes sustainably. They'll also pay taxes because they are being paid electronically and so government will increase its revenue and will have more data on the agriculture sector*". However, the evidence that the programme can trigger wider changes has yet to emerge, and others argue that if the programme ends, the agricultural market will shrink again and the number of children enrolled in school will drop.

Design: The political need to announce and begin the programme soon after the APC entered government created a pressure for the HGSF programme to start feeding children before a detailed design and strategy was in place. As one interviewee commented "*Everything the government does is politically motivated. They just run out and spend money to do things while monitoring and evaluation is not considered. They want to push money out before there's a plan or a design.*" Despite the programme pilots beginning in January 2017, the monitoring and evaluation framework is still being

¹⁹ The Guardian (2017) 'School Feeding Programme: Hobbled by litany of constraints in pilot states', 4th June 2017, <https://guardian.ng/saturday-magazine/cover/school-feeding-programme-hobbled-by-litany-of-constraints-in-pilot-states/>

developed and the National Social Protection Policy (which includes school feeding) was only passed in July 2017. This has caused frustration among donors working with the Nigerian Government. Some local and international development partners have argued that the programme is not addressing a clear problem in a strategic manner, and that it will not solve underlying problems if other issues, such as a lack of sanitation in schools, early years' nutrition and teacher quality are not also addressed. One respondent explained, *“There was the idea of doing school feeding but not a clear sense of what the problem being addressed was or the most intended outcome was but rather just to do school feeding”*.

The political desire for quick tangible and visible results may be the underlying cause for other technical criticisms of the programme's design. For example, respondents described how federal government procurement law is not appropriate for smallholder farmers and complained that funds are not always disbursed on time to vendors. It is also unclear if fluctuations in food prices can be accommodated in the budget. One media report commented *“Findings from three states – Osun, Anambra and Kaduna – showed that the general quality and quantity of the food served have been affected by the current economic downturn. The food vendors contracted to feed the children are calling for an increase in the amount earmarked for each child to at least N100, to enable them to provide enough and quality food for the children”*.²⁰ Likewise, given the recent reductions to the SIP budget, there are now new questions over the HGSF budget asking whether the HGSF budget will be able to grow to feed the expected increase in the number of pupils attending school.

Role of evidence and learning

The national HGSF programme is currently gathering basic data to ensure funds are being spent correctly but a more detailed monitoring and evaluation framework is being designed. According to the federal school feeding team, the framework will be used not just to monitor the programme inputs and immediate outputs but also gather data on intended programme outcomes, such as improved child nutrition. The data collected on the HGSF programme is shared with the National Economic Council and Federal Executive Council, as well as the Vice-President's Office and so all state governors and federal ministers have oversight of the programme's progress. This adds considerable political scrutiny of the programme by politicians from opposing parties as well as allies. This appears to be the first time that a federal government programme is investing in a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tool. The HGSF programme is also the most advanced of the SIPs in developing its monitoring and evaluation system. Members of the programme's Presidential Delivery Unit emphasised the need to use data to learn about how the programme is working, and how the programme can be improved.

The impetus for greater attention to monitoring and learning comes from the Vice President, according to the Presidential Delivery Unit, but it is also conceivable that the public scrutiny by the media of the SIPs may be a factor driving improved monitoring and reporting. Furthermore, the significant technical advice from donors and development partners on the design of the programme may also have driven improved standards in transparent monitoring and evaluation. The World Bank is providing considerable funding for the SIPs and is currently invested in improving data collection on social development outcomes in Nigeria.

In addition to careful monitoring for accountability, the programme is also demonstrating examples of using monitoring data for ongoing learning and subsequently adapting the programme design. This has occurred through the collection and analysis of basic monitoring data and informally through the experience of implementing the programme. One respondent described how by analysing the monitoring data they can identify an issue, investigate it and make a change. For example, in one school the data did not show an improvement in child weight so the federal team visited the school and observed that the portions of food were too small. They learnt from this that more attention must be paid to the quality and quantity of food being provided to each child. Another example of learning and adaptation was through experience. One respondent described how the federal government team may not always be aware of the realities in rural areas of Nigeria. The agricultural specialists thought that smallholder farmers would know how to open a bank account but when in one community the farmers

²⁰ *Premium Time* (2017) 'SPECIAL REPORT: How Buhari administration's school feeding programme increases pupil enrolment amidst challenges' by Oluwole, J., 28/05/2017

showed up for the registration process, they did not know what to do. Some farmers were illiterate and so could not sign an agreement. The federal team learnt that they had to train local intermediaries who could speak the local dialect and work with the farmers to find ways around these problems.

Finally, there has been inter-state learning. Osun State is frequently referred to for advice on good practice and has informed the design of the new national programme. Following the decision of Osun State to buy protein foods in bulk at a lower cost and then sell onto vendors has been copied by Rivers State and enabled the programme in Rivers to be more cost-efficient.

More broadly, there are signs of learning from other recent national public programmes. For example, it is notoriously difficult for the federal government to influence if and how state governments implement a federal government policy or programme. Learning from recent attempts to persuade states to match federal government funding and invest in a new programme (e.g. the Universal Basic Education Programme), the HGSP programme tries a new modality. Rather than requesting state governments to invest in the programme or allowing money to be channelled through their bureaucracies, the programme transfers money directly to the actors who require it to grow, buy and prepare the food. This modality intends to motivate states to implement the programme because it should directly and tangibly benefit their population without an obvious cost to the state government. According to the Presidential Delivery Unit, some states governments are disinterested because the programme does not provide additional funds but others recognise the benefits and are trying to claim political credit for it, while others fear losing political support if they do not replicate what other states are doing.

The current programme design has also learnt from the first national HGSP programme pilots. To enable better cross-sector collaboration, the programme has been domiciled in the Vice President's Office rather than a line ministry. As one respondent commented, *"We have learnt lots of lessons from [the first] experience. We learnt that you need an independent body for the programme rather than housing it in a line ministry"*. Acknowledging that previously, the programme had been motivated by potential for patronage and that getting line ministries to collaborate had failed, this programme works in a more controlled, focused project delivery silo which is not embroiled in the complexity of existing state and federal government sector service systems or finances. Importantly, in the new structure, funding is not used to incentivise states; this is closely controlled by the federal government. Instead, the expected impact on the programme is meant to motivate state level involvement.

From Federal design to state implementation

The National HGSP Core Team has the mandate to provide strategic guidance and facilitate coordination between the State and Federal Governments and to ensure that all partners commit to a common set of guidelines. However, how this is rolling out in practice differs from the formal structure.

Firstly, federal government officials in the HGSP programme emphasised that the programme is owned by the local community and that it is apolitical. However, it is difficult to find an example of how communities are participating in the design and ownership of the programme other than through receiving federal government funds and directly providing meals to pupils. Local communities are dependent upon federal funds to implement the programme and are not fully trusted to report on how the funds are being used. While the unprecedented attention of the federal government on ensuring transparent use of funds in the programme is important for accountability, there appears to be a trade-off in terms of real local ownership. As one interviewee described, *"the programme is proving difficult to run because the federal government has to check and verify what is happening in all the states"*. Finally, while the federal government expects state governments to recognise the benefits of the programme and so be motivated to also provide free meals to grades 4-6, it is far from clear if state governments will be willing or able to support this given the current fiscal crisis.²¹

The multiple issues regarding how the national HGSP programme translates into action at the state level are now explored in detail in the case of Kano State.

²¹ Premium Time (2017) 'SPECIAL REPORT: How Buhari administration's school feeding programme increases pupil enrolment amidst challenges' by Oluwale, J., 28/05/2017

State level implementation – Experience of Kano

In 2015, Kano State underwent a significant political change when a new Governor was elected. Former Deputy Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje succeeded Rabiw Kwankwaso. Since taking office, Governor Ganduje has faced strong political pressure from the former Governor's supporters. The two politicians are fighting for control of the grassroots constituencies and given that there is less than two years before the next elections in 2019, the Governor is likely to focus on short-term, visible improvements.²²

The fiscal situation in Kano is creating additional political pressure on the Governor. Like most other Nigerian states, the Kano State government revenue is falling far below expected levels and while the state has collected bailout funds and has not yet defaulted on salary payments, it is likely to be more difficult to reward political supporters using state funds. The recent focus of the administration on supporting agriculture and vulnerable groups may reflect the need of the Governor to secure political support in the grassroots, and find ways of increasing popularity.²³

Kano is a particularly large state. It has the highest number of local government areas (44 LGAs) and an estimated population of 13,076,892 in 2016.²⁴ The large population gives the state a strategic position in Nigeria politically and economically. A political appointment in the state is considered a stepping stone to a political career at the federal level and economically, Kano is a commercial centre in northern Nigeria. Despite its relative power, Kano State has poor levels of education and has a very high number of out of school children. Recently, Governor Ganduje and the Emir of Kano have publicly decried the high number of out-of-school children in the state. Media reports state that of the estimated 10 million Nigerian out-of-school children, three million are in Kano.²⁵ The Emir of Kano has spoken out against the 'ignorance' of parents in not educating their children and called for a shift in attitudes, especially in favour of educating girls.²⁶ The attention of high-level political and religious leaders to school attendance indicates the importance which this issue currently has in the public domain in Kano State.

School Feeding in Kano

Currently, in Kano State there is a state government school feeding programme which is structured and functions quite differently and independently to the new national HGSF programme. In Kano, the programme has a tripartite structure: the state government funds two days of feeding per week (Monday and Tuesday), local government funds two days (Wednesday and Thursday), and Fridays are the responsibility of local communities. The programme is delivered in the same way across all days of the week but interviewees reported that there are often no meals on Fridays as local communities rarely self-organise and self-fund this. Unlike the federal programme, the state based school feeding programme targets all public primary school pupils in grades 1 to 6 and in early child care development (ECCD).

The programme is managed by the Community Reorientation Council (CRC) which is a state level organisation that reports to the Governor's office. The funding for the school feeding programme is given to the CRC which disburses it to local government Community Reorientation Committee members, who are charged with purchasing food for their local schools and paying the cooks who

²² PERL (2016) *Macro Political Economy Analysis Summaries*, internal document submitted to DFID, written by the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL)

²³ PERL (2016) *Macro Political Economy Analysis Summaries*, internal document submitted to DFID, written by the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL)

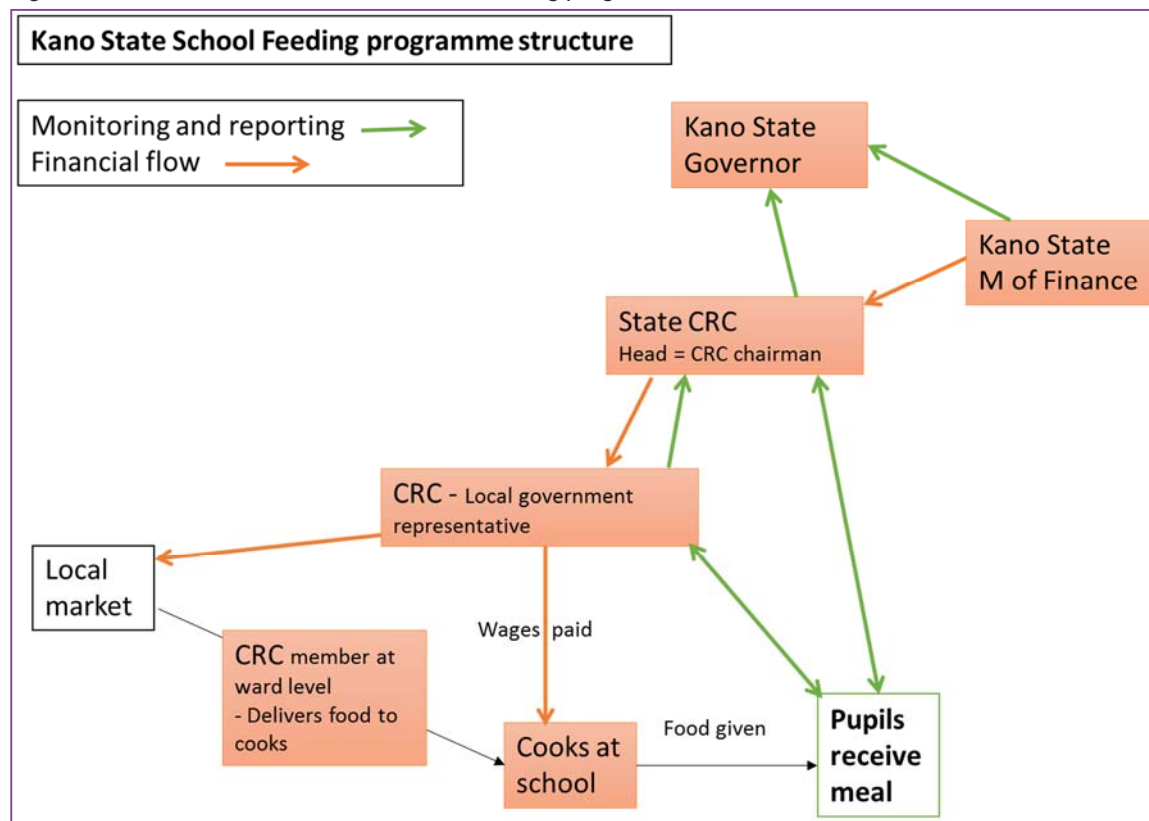
²⁴ Federal Government of Nigeria (2017) *Population statistics*. <http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/>

²⁵ Sahara Reporters (2017) 'Over 3 Million Children Roam the Street of Kano, says Gov. Ganduje', 07.04.2017, <http://saharareporters.com/2017/04/07/over-3-million-children-roam-street-kano-says-gov-ganduje-0>

²⁶ The Daily Trust (2017) 'There are about 3m out-of-school children in Kano — Emir Sanusi', by Ngbokai, R., 01/06/2017, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/general/there-are-about-3m-out-of-school-children-in-kano-emir-sanusi/200157.html>

prepare the food and serve the pupils. The local government members give the food to ward-level members who take it to the schools and may or may not involve the headteacher in the actual feeding. The CRC is responsible for monitoring and verification of how the programme is implemented and funds spent and has to answer to the Governor. The programme is managed entirely by the CRC with no involvement of other ministries. This structure is depicted below.

Figure 3: Structure of the Kano State school feeding programme



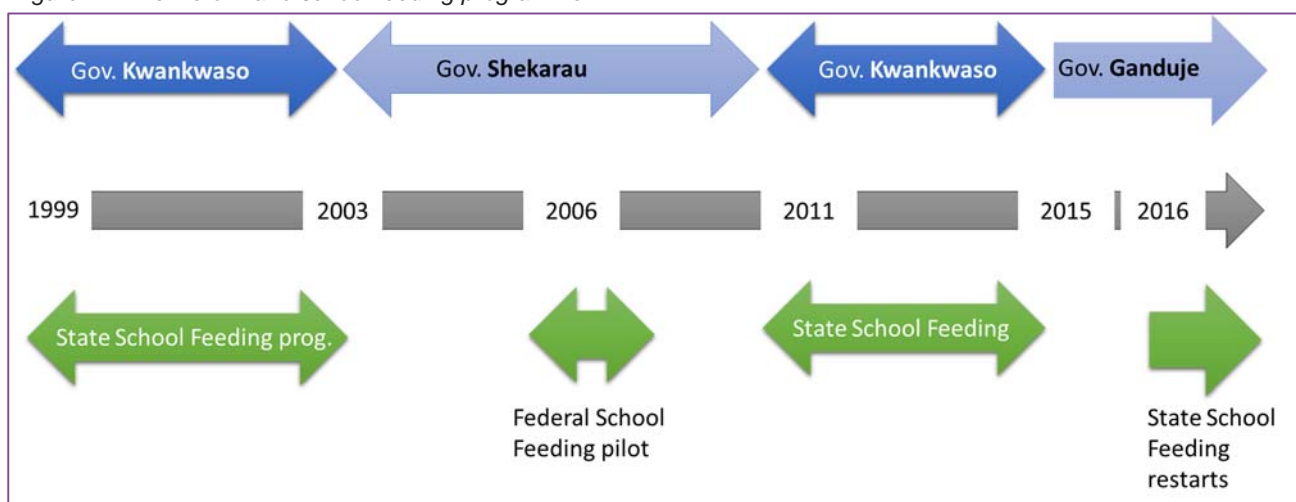
Source: Authors' own, based on interview data

Kano first began a school feeding programme in 1999 under Governor Kwankwaso. During this time, it was important to the Governor's political popularity; he was reported to visit schools and taste the food to check it was good enough. The programme received national acclaim and the federal Universal Basic Education programme allocated funds to it.²⁷ However, when there was a change in Governor in 2003, the programme stopped and was only briefly reintroduced as one of the federal government pilots for its first national school feeding programme in 2006. The pilot did not last more than a year. When Kwankwaso returned to power in 2011, the school feeding programme was reinitiated. In 2015, when Governor Ganduje replaced Kwankwaso, the programme ceased again but has recently (in 2016) been restarted in a number of schools in some local government areas. The revival of the programme may have been due to the federal government announcement that it is restarting funding for the national HGSF. One interviewee commented that school feeding is an important legacy of Kwankwaso and his supporters are demanding that the state restart the programme. Given the pressure which the current Governor is facing from the former governor's allies, one of whom is the current Commissioner for the Ministry of Education and the Deputy Governor, Governor Ganduje may have little option but to keep the programme in the budget.

The timeline below demonstrates how the Kano school feeding programme is associated directly with former Governor Kwankwaso, and how successive governors discontinued the programme upon entering office.

²⁷ EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF.

Figure 4: Timeline of Kano school feeding programme



Source: Authors' own, based on interview data

How politics are shaping the Kano State school feeding programme

Since the programme was launched in 1999, the structure has changed from being managed by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) under the Ministry of Education to being under the control of the Community Reorientation Council. When the programme was restarted in 2011, the programme was taken out of the SUBEB and handed to the CRC. The CRC was now mandated with running the programme and other ministries no longer had a role. In 2013, the CRC law was passed (changing the name from Community Re-orientation Committee to Community Re-orientation Council) and this gave the Council and its committees legal responsibility for the Kano school feeding programme.²⁸ The State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) had also previously been involved in collecting monitoring data on the programme but in 2011 this role also passed to the CRC.

The school feeding programme is clearly linked to Governor Kwankwaso who appears to have used it as a political hallmark and to gain popularity with vulnerable and rural communities. Transferring the management responsibility for the programme to the CRC is also seen as a political move. The CRC is widely acknowledged to be a political organisation and respondents repeatedly commented that the CRC functions as a way for the Governor to accommodate his supporters through positions in the organisation and management of its funding. The key positions in the organisation are political appointees of the Governor. The quiet dissolution of the CRC and the school feeding programme during the term of Governor Shekarau suggests that both the CRC and school feeding are linked primarily to the interests of Governor Kwankwaso. One interviewee commented, *“the CRC Chairman is a good friend of the Governor”*. The heavy politicisation of the programme appears to have sustained its existence and budget during each of Kwankwaso's terms in office. However, this politicisation also has other implications for how the programme functions, which are discussed in this section:

Financial management: The CRC receives and manages the funding from the state government for capital projects that cut across various sectors and this includes the school feeding programme. The CRC is also responsible for reporting on how the funds have been utilised. On the school feeding programme, there is little evidence that the CRC has been implementing a monitoring system or reporting basic data such as the number of children being fed and the cost per pupil. Given that there is also no independent mechanism for monitoring how the programme funds are used, or their impact, the programme is widely considered to be unaccountable. As one interviewee commented, *“There is some sensitivity around the programme, a sense that the governor is using it to reward political supporters and that there's money being spent on this”*.

The Ministry of Budget and Planning acknowledged that during the budgeting process, data on school feeding is used in preparing the CRC budget. However, interviewees suggested that the budget for school feeding has not changed overtime. Obtaining exact budget information on the programme

²⁸ EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF.

proved to be difficult. During the interviews, the amount reported to be spent per pupil ranged from N14 to N40 and there was no clear data on the number of pupils being fed in the state.

Competency of programme staff: the appointment of political supporters to the critical positions in the CRC means that those responsible for managing the programme do not necessarily have the necessary knowledge or skills to run the programme. Interviews with members of the CRC revealed conflicting understandings of how the programme was being run and the budget available for this. It was evident from discussion with CRC members that even those directly responsible for the management of the programme did not know how much the programme was spending per pupil or whether the budget could increase to match higher demand or provide better quality food. When the federal government HGSF team requested Kano State to provide a monitoring and evaluation framework, the CRC had to ask the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to provide one for them. Two respondents argued that it would be better if SUBEB did the monitoring instead. But, as one person explained, *“SUBEB were originally told they would do the monitoring and evaluation for the HGSF programme. The CRC now say that when the federal scheme is introduced they [CRC] will have less to do but that they [CRC] should still have a role so the CRC will do the monitoring and evaluation”*.

Cross-sector coordination: The CRC does not work with the state sector ministries to administer the programme. Since the CRC members, who are political allies of the current government, benefit from their role in managing the programme, there is little incentive or obligation for them to involve other sectors or organisations. The side-lining of other ministries limits the potential of the programme since it does not align complementary support, such as deworming for school pupils, linking to local agriculture, or improving the quality of teachers. This also limits the potential legacy of the programme since it is not promoting more sustained changes in education services, child health or agricultural markets. In anticipation of rolling out the national programme, Kano state government has set up a steering committee which includes the Commissioners of the State Ministries for Health, Education, and Agriculture. However, the CRC has been appointed to manage the national programme in Kano and it is unclear if the steering committee will have an active role once the programme has been established.

Quality assurance: The absence of accountability mechanisms for the Kano state programme has implications for the quality of the programme. Observations made during this study of the provision of school meals found multiple shortcomings, including: the portions of food were small and sometimes shared between three or four children; many pupils had to bring their own container to receive food and the cleanliness of their bowl was not checked; cooking staff were not trained and did not have a hygienic space for preparing food; and children were not required to wash their hands before eating despite many of them using their hands to eat. Under the current programme, headteachers, civil society organisations and school-based management committees are not involved or encouraged to participate in the programme. There is not an independent grievance mechanism which a member of the school community could use to report problems with the programme, such as a lack of food or poor-quality meals. One interviewee described how headteachers used to purchase food but that now all funds go through the CRC. *“There’s a lot of politics attached, no-one checks the quality or the quantity of the food anymore. Now that politicians have control, the quality has decreased”*. They went on to explain that CRC members at the LGA often receive the contract to supply the raw food to the schools. This prevents independent monitoring of the programme since those supplying the food are also supposed to monitor how this is done. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no report available on the progress of the school feeding programme in state.

A 2014 report on the Kano school feeding programme describes a substantial participatory monitoring process: *“The communities in the Kano HGSFHP are, by design, involved in all stages of the programme [...] Besides the Ward CRCs, parents of schoolchildren, teachers, and students are encouraged to participate in Food Committees, which act as an interface between the community and the school, and monitor the school feeding programme to guarantee quality and quantity of the food served in school. Taste Committees, comprised of representatives from the PTA, the Ward CRC, and teachers, monitor and evaluate the quality of the food. Monthly meetings with core members are organised by the PTA to discuss M&E results and any potential issues, and a larger PTA meeting is held twice annually.”*²⁹ However, the field visits and interviews for this report found no evidence of this

²⁹ Atta, A. (2014). *Kano State School Feeding Programme; A Case Study*. London: PCD, cited in EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF, p.30

existing in practice now, which suggests that if this did take place in 2014, there is no longer demand from the state government for the CRC to follow formal policy or for independent monitoring by the community.

Few interviewees in Kano State were aware of the current status of the national HGSF programme in Kano or the Kano State own programme. Some CSOs knew that the Kano State programme was only functioning in a few schools in the state while other CSOs and most government officials either did not know this, or chose not to mention it during interviews. In particular, senior government officers in the Ministry for Budget and Planning did not seem to know whether or how the Kano State programme was currently being funded despite their role in managing the state budget. Likewise, a senior figure in the Kano State steering committee for the national HGSF programme was under the false impression that SUBEB would monitor and evaluate the programme. The lack of knowledge of how the state school feeding programme functions, and how the national programme will function indicates the opaque manner in which school feeding is managed in Kano. While one officer in SUBEB commented that, “SUBEB could scrutinise any CRC data and if there are discrepancies, we could investigate and report to federal government”, SUBEB does not currently have the mandate to do this, and may not have sufficient political independence from state government to play a whistle-blower role.

Role of evidence and learning?

There is conflicting information on how evidence is informing the Kano school feeding programme or enabling learning. Officials from the CRC described how they follow a monitoring process and conduct a series of visits to verify the quality of the programme in individual schools. The formal programme design also describes “a comprehensive M&E plan that involves various levels of programme implementers and collects data on a regular basis”.³⁰ However, there was no evidence of this data being collected by the CRC and a 2016 report commissioned by UNICEF,³¹ notes that M&E activities are irregular, that “financial and logistical constraints impair programme staff from carrying out the full range of M&E activities”³² and that school enrolment rates are not currently being recorded.³³ Not only does it appear that the CRC are not held to account by the state government for how they manage the programme, neither do they have the political independence to voice criticisms. For example, a CRC member commented that the budget was too small to buy enough food for all the pupils but that they could not tell the Governor this. Given that the members of the state level CRC are appointed on the basis of political allegiance, they may jeopardise their own interests by reporting problems to the Governor. The use of the programme for political patronage evidently limits the potential for formal or informal data to result in learning and improvements to how the programme is run.

Despite the absence of data recording outputs or outcomes of the programme, public opinion in Kano is strongly in favour of school feeding. Headteachers, CSOs and state government officials all argued that school feeding is important for attendance and pupil concentration in class, especially in Kano where some cultural attitudes oppose western schooling and where there are very high numbers of out-of-school children. Interviewees emphasised that the number of out of school pupils in Kano State is a serious problem and that parents have to be incentivised to send children to school. These opinions are based on their personal observations and experience. For example, “one child doesn’t have a textbook but they still come to school with a bowl” and that “for two sessions [school years], there was no feeding and fewer children came to school”.

There is data collected on school attendance in Kano State and this shows a considerable increase in numbers over the past decade. However, there is no evidence to show if the increase is due to the rapidly growing population in Kano or to attribute this increase in attendance to the school feeding programme since the programme has stopped and started three times, and there have been several other large donor and federal government funded programmes³⁴ which have or are trying to incentivise school attendance. Despite this, the strong public belief that school feeding is important for increasing

³⁰ EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF.

³¹ UNICEF is not involved in school feeding in Nigeria but commissioned a study of the programme to find out how the programme was functioning.

³² EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF. P.33

³³ EPRI (2016) *School Feeding in Nigeria: Rapid Assessment*. Economic Policy Research Institute and UNICEF.

³⁴ E.g. Global Partnership for Education, Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria and Conditional Cash Transfer

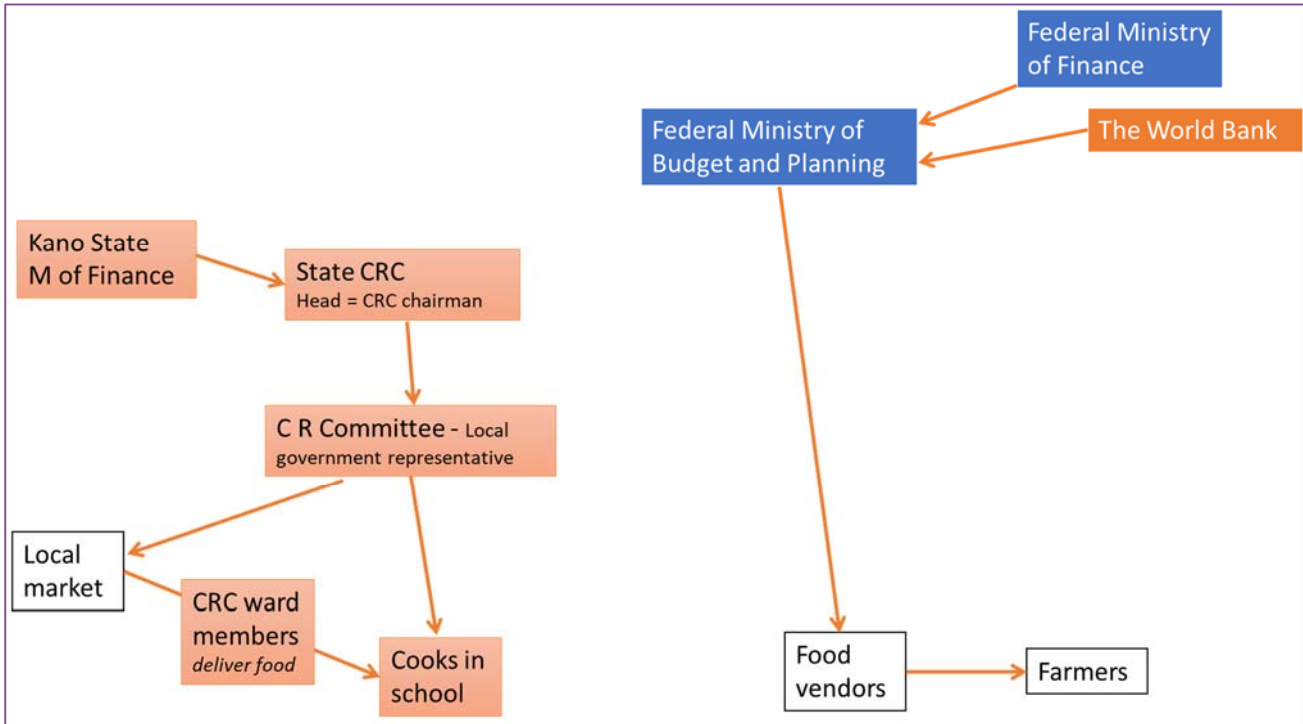
and maintaining school attendance demonstrates that there is little political pressure on the State Governor to prove or justify the use of funds for the programme. Unlike at the federal level, where there is greater media, public and donor scrutiny of the effectiveness of the programme, in Kano the programme can be funded without providing evidence of its impact or cost-effectiveness.

Integration of the national HGSF in Kano

At the time of writing (October 2017), the national HGSF programme had not yet started in Kano despite initial steps being taken in January 2017. The federal government school feeding team had begun working with the Kano State government to establish the necessary structures and gather the required information for the programme to begin. This has involved the establishment of a state steering committee for the HGSF programme and submitting data on all the pupils enrolled in grades 1 -3 in public primary schools. The federal government programme, when implemented, will feed pupils in grades 1-3, while the state programme will continue to feed grades 4-6 and those in Early Child Care Development. According to one interviewee, this equates to 3.2 million pupils being fed by the state programme and a further 1.5 million pupils being fed by the federal programme. The CRC has been mandated to manage the national HGSF programme in addition to the state programme and the CRC Chairman has been appointed the state-level programme manager. Food vendors have been recruited (13,000 vendors), the bank account number of each vendor has been recorded and the vendors have undergone health screening. About 100 farmers have been registered in each of the 44 LGAs in the state. The Commissioners for the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture are all involved in the steering committee and a menu for the school meals is being developed. SUBEB have provided the steering committee with a monitoring and evaluation template for the programme. But, the federal government team still have not released funding for the programme.

The delay to starting the programme in Kano may be attributed to various factors. Some interviewees suggested that one reason may simply be due to the size of Kano's population. At over 13 million it is much bigger than the other states, such as Kaduna (8.3 million) which have already begun the national HGSF programme. However, it seems likely that an additional significant reason for the programme's delay is the existence of the state's own school feeding programme structure which is significantly different to that of the national programme. The diagram below depicts how the monitoring and financing of the two programmes differ considerably. As diagram 6 shows, finance for the national programme passes directly to the food vendors who are responsible for purchasing food and providing meals to school pupils. In contrast, the state programme channels funding through the CRC at the state and local government levels, and the cooks who are responsible for feeding the pupils do not have control over how the budget is used to purchase food.

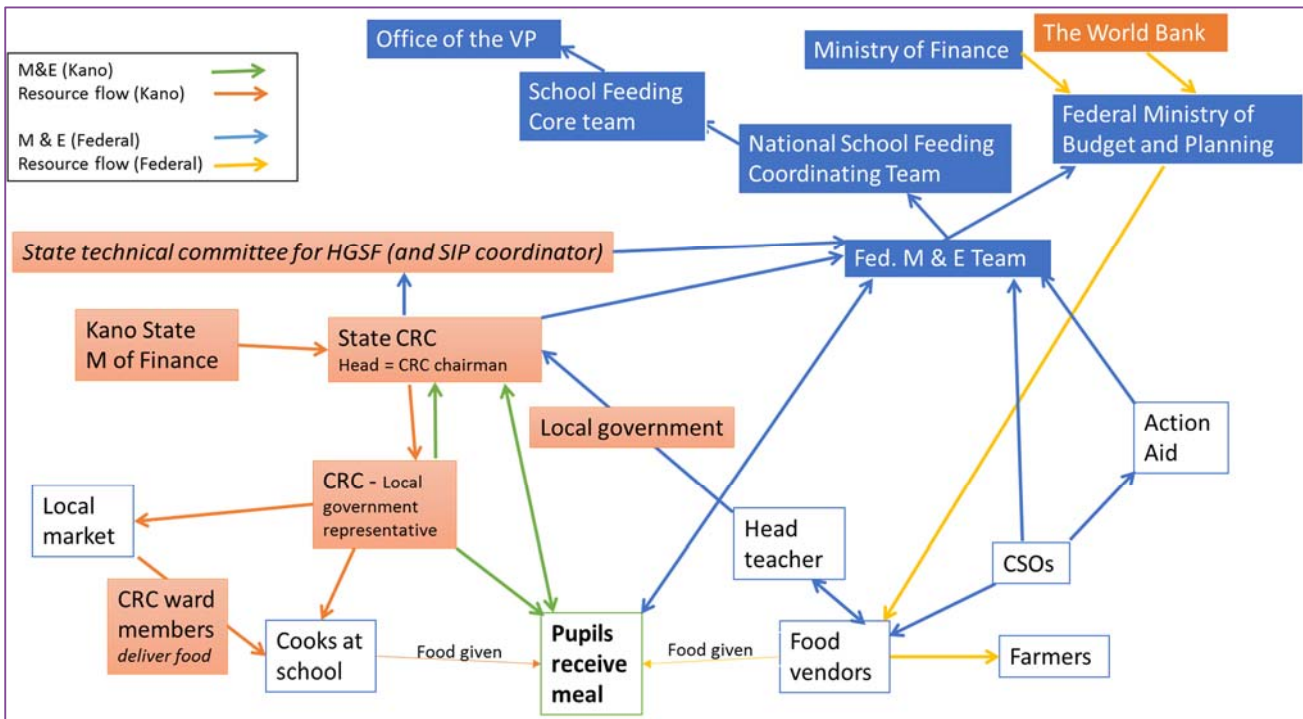
Figure 5: Resource flows in national HGSF programme compared to the Kano State programme



Source: Authors' own, based on interview data

Importantly, when comparing the channels for monitoring and evaluation to those for resource distribution (as diagram 7 shows), it is clear that in the national programme there are multiple channels for monitoring and accountability, some which are independent from those who benefit from the funds. The state programme, however, does not have a structure for independent monitoring. Instead, those who manage the funding are also responsible for reporting on how it has been used which inevitably limits its transparency and accountability.

Figure 6: Comparing the resources flows and M&E channels in the national HGSF programme and Kano State programme



Source: Authors' own, based on interview data

Considering the limited provisions for monitoring and accountability in the current state programme and the lack of technical expertise in the CRC, it may be unsurprising that the federal government school feeding team are reluctant to disburse payment in Kano. Although the national programme money will not pass through the CRC, it is the CRC which has responsibility for monitoring and evaluation and managing the national as well as state programme. The national programme has a team of monitoring and evaluation specialists responsible for data collection and verification but the CRC do not have training nor demonstrable experience in this. Moreover, it was evident to many interviewees that the CRC are primarily interested in directly managing the school feeding programme in order to justify their own position and budget. Finally, the Kano State Coordinator for the SIPs has recently been appointed as Commissioner for the Ministry of Budget and Planning and a replacement has not yet been recruited. The absence of an SIP Coordinator may also limit the confidence of the federal school feeding team that the HGSF programme will have sufficient oversight at the state level to ensure correct and effective implementation. While the Governor and Deputy Governor are reportedly in support of the introduction of the national programme in Kano, there appears to be a process of negotiation over how this will integrate with and affect the existing structure for school feeding. These assumptions have not been verified with the federal team and would merit further research.

What impact may the national HGSF have on Kano State school feeding?

It is generally expected among the key stakeholders in Kano State that the national programme will eventually be implemented in their state. What impact this may have on the state's own school feeding programme is far from certain. Here, we discuss a number of possible changes:

Finance: If the federal government takes over the responsibility for funding meals for grades 1-3 from the state government, there will, in theory, be surplus money in the Kano school feeding budget. Several interviewees suggested that this surplus will be used to improve the quality and quantity of food provided by the state to ECCD children and grades 4-6. One interviewee stated that the money saved could be used to increase the amount spent per meal by the state programme from N40 to N70, matching the federal spending per meal. But it is not certain from the interviews if the budget calculations have been done and if the CRC will in fact use the surplus in this way given the current lack of incentives to use funds effectively and their lack of skills and collaboration with other ministries.

Furthermore, it is probable that the salary received by the cooks under the federal programme will be higher than those working on the state level programme given the large difference in the programmes' budgets. Currently, few schools are running the school feeding programme in Kano and it is unclear whether these cooks have been enrolled in the national programme or whether there will be two separate groups of cooks in each school. Either way, if the national programme offers a higher salary to cooks than the state programme, this is likely to pose an additional challenge to the state programme's viability.

Quality: The federal school feeding programme allows a much larger budget per child. This would, in theory, mean that there would be a notable difference in the quality and quantity of food which children in grades 1-3 (the federal scheme) would receive compared to those in ECCD and grades 4-6 (state scheme). Would this difference drive public demand for higher quality and larger portions of school meals for those in the state feeding programme? Some interviewees believed this would push the State government to invest more funds in the school feeding programme but school communities currently have little power to make such a demand of the CRC or state government.

The federal scheme would also involve the State Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture. Their participation in the federal scheme could benefit both programmes. For example, support to local agriculture markets or de-worming for primary school children could contribute to the effectiveness of both the federal and state school feeding programme.

Accountability: If the federal government programme system for monitoring and evaluation is implemented for grades 1-3 in Kano, CSOs and the school based management committees should become involved in monitoring school feeding. As they become more aware of how the federal scheme is run, these community organisations may also notice irregularities in the state-run school feeding programme. This could trigger some CSOs to contest the lack of transparency in how the CRC manages the state school feeding programme.

Less optimistically, however, the introduction of the federal programme in Kano may simply mean that the CRC would have surplus budget but have no obligation, nor be under sustained public pressure, to improve their performance or accountability if CSOs and other line ministries continue to be kept at a distance.

Conclusions and lessons?

In Kano it is clear that the existence of the school feeding programme is highly dependent on the political interest of the Governor. Governor Kwankwaso used school feeding as a hallmark of his leadership and to channel political patronage which appears to have led other governors to overturn the programme. The personal political ‘badging’ of the programme means that its actual impact appears to have no relevance to whether a future governor supports it. Similarly, the political ownership of the national school feeding programme may also jeopardise its sustainability as it is closely associated with Buhari’s administration.

In Kano, the state school feeding programme provides opportunities for the Governor to reward his patrons through the CRC. This model of delivery ensures a steady flow of funds to the programme, despite fiscal constraints but inevitably means that there is very limited public accountability for how the funds are used. Programme staff are not appointed on the basis of their skills to run the programme, and there is barely any monitoring of the programme or mechanisms for learning and increasing its effectiveness. CSOs in Kano are not currently engaged in the school feeding programme and while the SBMC are aware of some of the problems, they lack authority and power to influence how it is managed by the CRC. The CRC are very close to the Governor and so difficult to hold to account.

In comparison to the state programme, the federal school feeding programme demonstrates a more transparent structure for delivering school meals. While the political ownership of the federal programme resulted in a rushed programme design as the new President and Vice-President wanted to demonstrate their commitment, the involvement of development partners may have motivated investment in systems for monitoring how funds are managed and for capturing results. Furthermore, the federal government does not appear to be using the programme to reward political supporters in the way that the Kano State government is using its school feeding programme to channel resources to supporters. It seems that those directing the national HGSF programme are more concerned with finding ways to persuade state governments to implement the programme while still being able to control how the programme funds are spent. It is unclear if this desire for effective programming is driven by an ambition to achieve the programme’s aims and/or is motivated by the prospect of generating tangible benefits for many potential supporters but the political and technical commitment to M&E at the federal level is strong.

The emphasis of the federal government on careful monitoring of how the programme’s resources are used suggests a lack of trust of state governments and contracted programme staff to use the funds efficiently and transparently. The apparent, and perhaps understandable, desire of the federal to ensure transparent and accountable use of funds at all levels and stages of the programme’s implementation does encounter difficulties in Kano. There are strong vested interests in the CRC which oppose a more transparent, strategically planned and monitored form of delivering school feeding. In this way, the federal programme may reduce the ability of Ganduje’s government to use the state school feeding programme as a patronage instrument. Yet, there may also be political gains for Ganduje since the national HGSF programme would bring more funds into Kano and leave the CRC with surplus budget. Overall, the Governor and Deputy Governor are reported to be in favour of the national programme being introduced. What remains to be seen is whether the federal government programme team can establish robust-enough monitoring mechanisms to roll out the programme confidently in Kano, and whether this will have positive effects on the state’s own school feeding programme.

Lessons for Federal government?

Analysis of the Kano school feeding programme suggests that the federal government team needs to have a detailed understanding of each state’s current political context before attempting to introduce

the national programme. It is important to understand each governor's immediate priorities and political pressures as well as to identify existing programmes working on school attendance, child nutrition or local agriculture, and ascertain who they benefit and why they are being implemented. Careful scoping of if or why a state government would be interested in implementing the programme would be important so that the federal government team can develop an effective approach to working there.

In Kano specifically, the federal government is facing a challenge. The federal school feeding team cannot make direct demands of the state government but does need the state government to establish a robust monitoring system, managed by capable government employees to ensure funds are spent effectively. To achieve this, the federal government team may have to invest more heavily in their own direct monitoring in Kano. The team could also work with Action Aid Nigeria to mobilise and coordinate local state CSOs and SBMCs to participate in the federal government monitoring system. The federal team could also involve Kano State SUBEB to monitor how funds are spent and capture results, negotiating with the CRC to collaborate with SUBEB to ensure high quality data gathering. This is likely to be a slow negotiating process, whereby the federal government team may need to find opportunities for the CRC to gain public credibility in exchange for greater transparency.

Lessons for State actors?

To improve the transparency and effectiveness of the Kano State school feeding programme, local state actors could engage in monitoring the programme at the school level. In Kano, there is already a body recognised by law in charge of monitoring and evaluation; the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (PMED). This directorate could be strategically incorporated into the programme since it has the mandate for monitoring and evaluation in the state. Pro-reform actors such as donor-funded programmes operating in Kano could support CSOs and SBMCs to understand how the school feeding programme works, support them to monitor how it is implemented in individual schools, and use this information to engage with the state government and draw public attention to the programme via local media. These actors could also work with the federal government team to support independent monitoring of the implementation of the federal school feeding programme in Kano.

Other Nigerian state governments could learn from the Kano experience. To avoid heavy politicisation of school feeding, a coordinating body which is able to bring line ministries together is necessary. This body needs to sit under the governor or deputy governor and be trusted by other ministries and staffed with technical experts seconded from other ministries, not merely drawn from the governor's political supporters. School attendance is likely to increase as a result of school feeding and so a state programme budget will need to be able to increase accordingly. Finally, to monitor how funds are spent and to measure the effectiveness of the programme, a monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be designed by those with technical expertise in this area. Monitoring and evaluation needs to involve independent CSOs which report their findings to the Ministry of Budget and Planning as well as the programme management team. To encourage public interest in the programme, the results could be made available to the school communities as well as the general public via popular media.

Lessons for the national HGSF programme?

A number of learning points for the national HGSF programme have emerged from this study:

- The current programme is heavily tied to the current President and Vice-President which makes its sustainability beyond the current administration unlikely. Whether integrating the programme into existing work of other line ministries and creating legislation for free school meals would support the longevity of programme is far from clear.
- State governments are adapting the programme to find ways of reducing the cost so they can still meet increasing demand. Mechanisms could be created to enable state government school feeding programmes to share their difficulties and solutions, both with other states and the federal team. This could enable technical adjustments to be made to the national and state-level programmes and also encourage other state governments to implement the programme.
- It is important for the national programme team to understand the existing interests in each state government regarding the school feeding programme. It is also important to identify a priority problem in each state which the programme can focus upon. For example, the priority in Kano may be encouraging parents to send their children to secular school, in addition to

Islamic school. Identifying a target problem could enable the programme design to be focused on one challenge rather than risking efforts being diluted across.

- For the national HGSP programme to generate sustained improvements in school attendance, child nutrition, learning outcomes and local agricultural markets, other challenges faced by the education, health and agriculture sectors need to be addressed. This could mean that the national HGSP should try to act as a catalyst and as an entry point for cross-sector collaboration and problem-solving within line ministries to address some of the underlying issues preventing better education, health and economic outcomes.
- To be able to assess the programme's value for money, effectiveness and relevance, the programme needs to be addressing a clearly identified problem and its design needs to draw on evidence on how to tackle the causes of the problem. Currently, this is not well defined and so the justification for the programme, especially in the face of high government borrowing, is weak.
- Even where the programme continues without such a clear problem definition, a monitoring and evaluation framework still needs to be in place which is capable of both monitoring how funds are spent but also, importantly, measuring the on-going impact (however construed) of the programme on the problem it aims to address (however such a problem is framed). At a minimum, this should help towards accountable resource use.

Further research

Finally, this study has examined the challenge of implementing a national programme in a state where a local equivalent already exists. The report will be expanded to compare the Kano experience with the case of Osun (and possibly also Kaduna) where existing school feeding programmes have been integrated with the new national HGSP programme. This comparison should provide a more balanced understanding of the factors which shape how the national programme is received by states with an existing programme or a history of running a similar programme.

In most Nigerian states, however, there is not an existing school feeding programme. Expanding this research to other states, such as Anambra and Enugu which have no experience of school feeding could generate additional information about how the programme is evolving. This could provide further insight into how the federal government team can encourage state governments to implement the programme, what motivates state governments to do so, the likely longevity of the programme and its impact, and findings on how states are adapting the programme to their priorities.

The scope of this study has generated many more questions which merit further research. These include:

1. How federal-state relationships can be effectively managed to enable nationwide uptake of a federal government initiative. The national HGSP programme provides a new approach to managing a national programme and encouraging state government uptake while still retaining control over how funds are used. Further research to explore the effectiveness of different models which the federal government has trialled could provide useful insight into how and why state governments respond to federal government programmes and policies.
2. The national HGSP programme benefits from its central position in the Office of the Vice-President but the implications of this for its sustainability into the next administration are unknown. While placing a cross-sector programme in a line ministry has not been successful in the past, further research is needed to understand if such a programme could become a permanent entity under the Presidency or under a central ministry instead, such as Budget and Planning, and what advantages or challenges this could bring.
3. There appear to be examples of state governments learning from each other's experiences in implementing school feeding programmes. This research has not uncovered how and why some states seek to learn from others and when success in one state does or does not transfer to others. Exploring these inter-state government relations could provide useful insight into how, and under what circumstances, effective governance practice can be shared between states.

For PERL/DFID Follow-up

It would be useful for LEAP to discuss the findings of this study with the national school feeding programme core team and SIP national office to challenge the report's assumptions and findings and discuss the recommendations. In this light, it would also be useful for LEAP to discuss the study's findings and recommendations with ARC and ECP as well as with DFID and other donors involved in the national HGSF programme. Further insights into the challenges and success factors of the programme would benefit the continuation of this study. Moreover, LEAP seeks to tailor the next stage of this research to the interest of the policy community engaged in school feeding, in particular regarding which states and what questions are of most interest.



ANNEX

Research approach

This research used qualitative research methods to gather and analyse primary and secondary data. The first stage of the research was a preliminary literature review of the national HGSF programme which informed the development of the research question. The researchers then conducted further desk-based research to develop the research plan, interview guides and identify potential interviewees. To gather primary data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with government and non-government stakeholders at the federal level and in Kano state. The researchers analysed the interview data and literature review against the research questions to generate the report findings.

We acknowledge that the time spent gathering primary data was limited and that there is relatively little secondary data which can be relied upon. The report findings serve as an initial analysis of how the national HGSF programme is developing and offers further opportunities for more research which could provide a more representative understanding of how the programme is working across different Nigerian states.

Kano was selected as a state-level case study because it provided an interesting example of how and why a state government has been running its own school feeding programme independently of the federal government. The Kano case offers an example of how a federal government programme has to adapt and integrate into a similar existing state government initiative and so provides an example of what happens when differing political priorities and powers need to find ways of collaborating.

Literature review

The function of the review was to inform the research approach and tools and to refine the research questions.

Materials reviewed included Nigerian media, academic journal articles, NGO reports, government documents and other commissioned reports where available.

Key informant interviews

Respondents were selected based on the literature review, recommendations by the LEAP team and through snowball sampling. Interviews took place face-to-face and included representatives from the federal government and Kano State government, as well as INGOs, donors, civil society organisations, participating schools and programme beneficiaries. Please see annex one for the list of organisations consulted. The interviews were carried out from 6th to 14th October 2017 at the federal level and from 16th to 21st October 2017 in Kano State.

Federal level: 15 interviewees

Kano State: 17 interviewees

One or more members from the following organisations were consulted during the case study research:

At national level:

- Presidential Delivery Unit for the National HGSF programme
- National HGSF programme core team
- Ministry of Education – secondee to the national HGSF programme
- Ministry of Health, School Health Unit – secondee to the national HGSF programme
- Ministry of Agriculture – consultant working on the HGSF programme
- Former aide to the Social Investment Programme Special Advisor
- Monitoring and Evaluation team for National HGSF programme, Ministry of Budget and Planning
- Social Policy Unit, UNICEF
- National Social Safety Net Project
- Centre for Democracy and Development
- Action Aid Nigeria
- DFID Nigeria

In Kano State:

- Primary Schools; 3 urban and one rural
- Community Reorientation Council
- Ministry of Budget and Planning
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Office of the Deputy Governor
- Civil society organisations: one from health sector, one from agricultural sector
- School Based Management Committee
- State Universal Basic Education Board



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