



SUPPORTING IMPROVED PUBLIC SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NIGERIA



FUNDED BY



The Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) is a UK aid funded programme working to improve the delivery of public services in Nigeria. Inclusivity is integral to all of PERL's work, and the programme aims to ensure even the most marginalised groups have better access to quality goods and services.

PERL takes a rights-based approach to disability, working on the fundamental principle that people living with a disability are fully entitled to the benefits of government policies and programmes. The programme has already contributed to changes that will improve service delivery to persons with disabilities.

About 25 million Nigerians, or 13% of the population, live with a disability. 3.6 million Nigerians have significant difficulties functioning.

Progress to date

Passage of disability laws in north-western states

In 2011, with the support of the UK aid funded SAVI programme, Lagos became the first state in Nigeria to pass a disability law. The UK aid M4D programme took the learning from this experience and supported the development of disability bills in Jigawa and Kano states. Since SAVI's and M4D's closure, PERL has been building on this work, taking on board lessons from the two programmes.

PERL has provided extensive, but behind-the-scenes, support to organisations and individuals working on the passage of the disability bills. The programme helped people with disabilities to have constructive engagement with the government, to demand more government accountability, and to advocate strategically for the passage of the bills. PERL mentored these individuals, built their capacity and brokered relationships with key actors, including government representatives.

PERL helped to get the bills passed in the state houses of assembly and, equally importantly, to get them assented by governors. To get the bills assented, PERL helped build a critical mass of advocates who argued for the importance of the bills, demonstrated the size of the persons with disability constituency, and put pressure on the government.

In January 2017, the disability bill became law in Jigawa State. The law prohibits discrimination based on disability, guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities and mandates public services for persons with disabilities, such as the provision of access ramps. The same month Jigawa's Executive Governor formally approved the establishment of the Jigawa State Disability Trust Fund, which would finance efforts at creating a more inclusive society.

In December 2018, the Government of Kano signed the state's disability bill into law, pursuing an approach to disability inclusion that aims to mainstream disability in government programmes and policies and to support disability-targeted programmes. The law guarantees the fundamental human rights of people living with disabilities, and enforces their rights in the areas of education, health, freedom of association and participation in political activities.

Seeing this progress, particularly in Jigawa, organisations of persons living with disability in Yobe increasingly felt they should work towards a disability law for the state. PERL linked these organisations with groups in Jigawa so that they could learn from the Jigawa example. In December 2018, PERL's disability partners submitted a draft Persons Living with Disability Bill to the State House of Assembly.

“

“My participation in the DFID-SAVI and PERL programmes... was significantly influential in helping me to build both foundational and advanced skills and capacity in disability rights advocacy and inclusive development. Support provided by DFID through the SAVI and PERL programmes enabled me to use these skills and capacity to work with other persons with disabilities, organisations of persons with disabilities, other CSOs and development partners, the media and relevant agencies of government at national and state levels to successfully influence the enactment of the first state-level disability law in Nigeria.”

- Dr Adebukola Adebayo

”

Implementation of the disability law in Jigawa

PERL is working with both citizens and the government on the implementation of Jigawa's disability law. In collaboration with Jigawa State Rehabilitation Board (which focuses on the protection, promotion and development of persons with disabilities) and a civil society initiative, the programme has established and inaugurated a Disability Law Implementation Committee. The committee has developed an action plan for the implementation of the disability law. It is also working to sensitise the public on the law's importance. With PERL's support, persons living with disability were able to influence the composition of the committee and were given representation.

PERL also developed an action and implementation plan that will facilitate the revitalisation and functionality of Jigawa's Disability Fund Establishment Committee and will help ensure the launch and timely contributions of the Jigawa State Disability Trust Fund.

Inputs to guide Nigeria's disability commitments

PERL supported the Ministry of Women Affairs to develop Nigeria's commitments on disability inclusion which were made at the Global Disability Summit in London in 2018. PERL brought together ministry officials and organisations representing persons with disabilities so they could agree on the commitments together. PERL then helped its disability partners to develop guidelines for the implementation of the commitments.

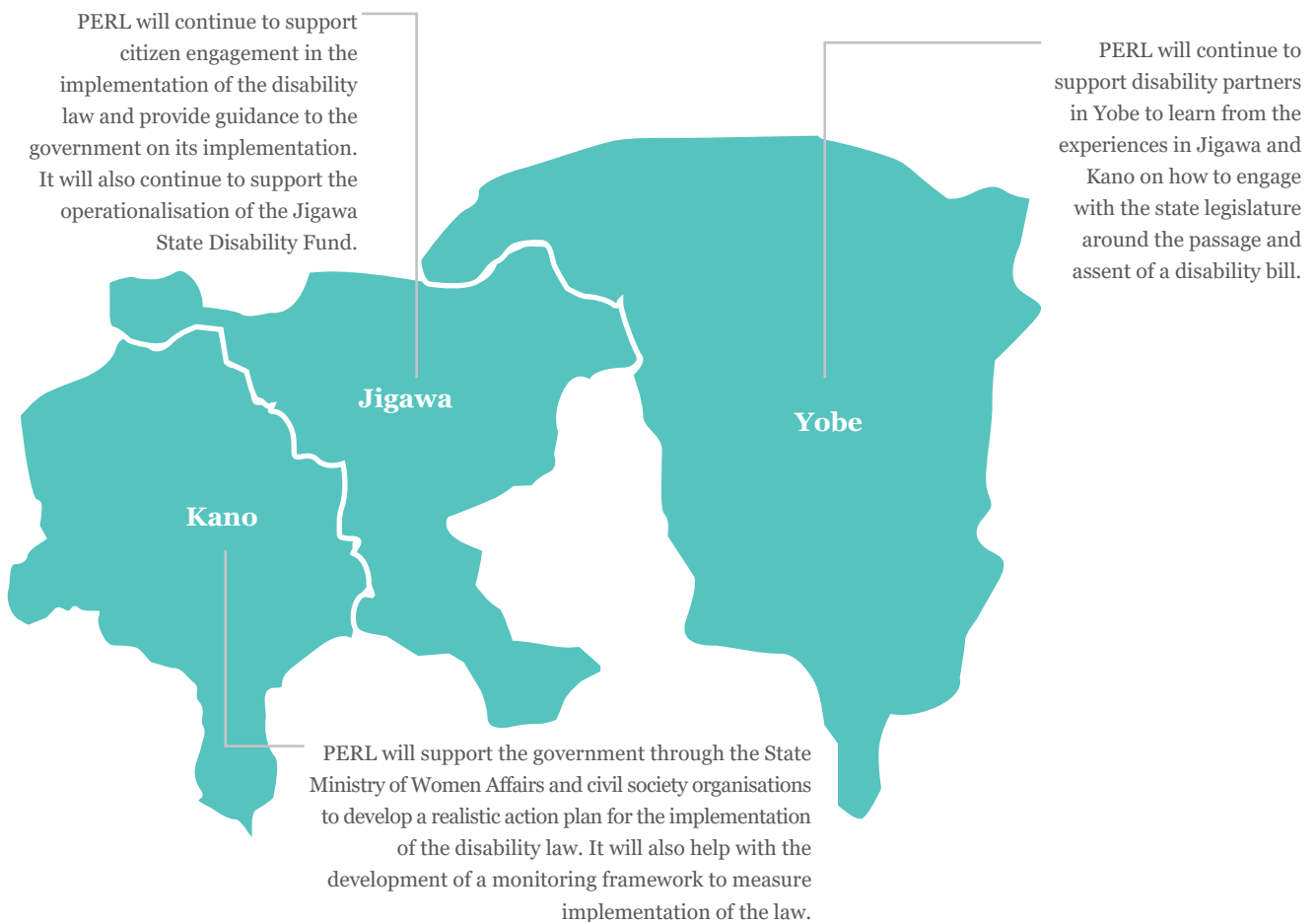
Nigeria's Commitments on Disability Inclusion

Commitments:

to eliminate stigma and discrimination,
for inclusive education,
for economic empowerment,
for technology and innovation,
for data disaggregation,
for women and girls with disabilities,
for people with disabilities in humanitarian contexts.

PERL's next steps

PERL will continue to facilitate constituencies to be more effective at engaging with government on disability issues and to improve government's capacity respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.



Lessons for programmes working to improve service delivery to persons with disabilities

Collective voice

Having a collective voice among partners to champion issues of persons living with disability is critical for effective strategic engagement with state government and legislatures. PERL helped bring together diverse groups of persons with disability – for example, organisations for the blind and for persons with spinal injuries - who did not always work together towards a common goal, and helped them speak with one voice.

Engaging the media

Synergies between disability partners and effective media partners ensures greater visibility of disability issues in the public. PERL's disability partners engaged with media personalities to create more visibility and debate around disability issues. Social media was also used to disseminate information on disability, both creating greater support for the movement and demonstrating how much support there was.

Diverse range of actors

Inclusion of a diverse range of actors, both within and beyond the disability communities, ensures a greater base of support and brings legitimacy to the demands for change. This was central to PERL's disability partners' approach and was critical in addressing resistance to the disability bills.

Contextual analysis

It is important to undertake a critical political economy analysis of the context before engaging with the government. PERL recognised the importance of doing an analysis of the context and past experiences at location to understand the players, their interests and the particular set of circumstances in each location. This showed what was working and what was not in a particular location and helped PERL to determine how to engage key influencers around disability issues and needs.

Using prior momentum

Using prior momentum around disability issues significantly increases the chance of success. PERL focused on disability bills in places where there was already momentum generated by years of advocacy.

Contact us

Adiya Ode
Team Leader, PERL - Engaged Citizens Pillar
Adiya.Ode@ecp-perlnigeria.net
www.perlnigeria.net



FUNDED BY

