

From Tabletop to Ta'anbu: The Journey of Mustapha's Rise



VOICES

For fifteen years, Mustapha Ilyasu was a fixture in Kano's bustling Kantin Kwari Market – one of West Africa's largest textile hubs. Yet, his success was modest. He sourced his fabrics on credit from large-scale traders but was limited to selling his wares from a small table on the margins of the market. This restricted his storage capacity and his ability to effectively promote his merchandise. Despite being in a thriving textile market, Mustapha's earnings remained constrained by the limitations of his setup.

With a wife and five children, Mustapha was determined to provide them the best life and education he could afford – he had dreams of a brighter future. His family was growing and he had financial obligations to his extended family. He was business savvy, trusted by his suppliers and yearned to expand

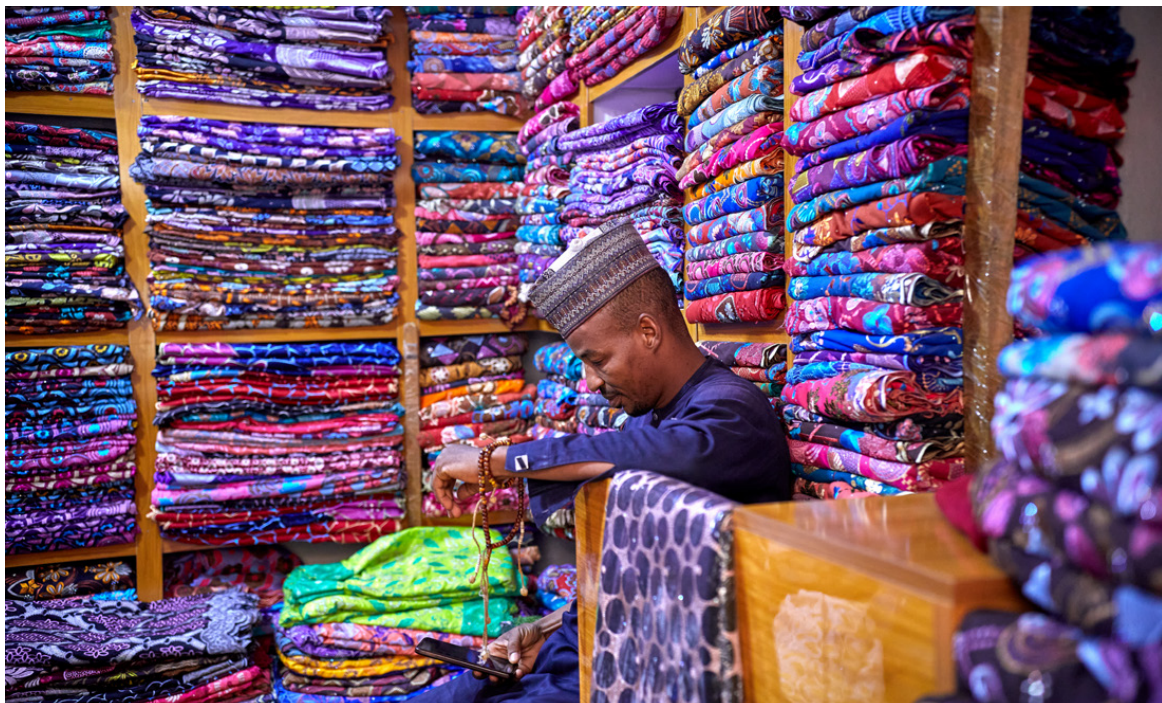
"It did not seem like there would be an opportunity for me to expand and own a shop where I could store and display more fabrics because the market was already congested. People come from far and wide to engage in one form of trading or activity to make ends meet" – Mal Mustapha

his small table, but that prospect was elusive in a crowded market, where more established, large-scale traders held sway. He longed for a proper shop, a space to showcase his textiles, build customer relationships, and finally break free from the limitations of petty trade.



Kantin Kwari market, Kano

He wasn't alone in this aspiration, many struggled alongside him, yearning to graduate to small businesses. This shared ambition led Mustapha to Muntaka Muhammadu Sa'eed, the Chairman of the Petty Traders' Association. Recognising their



Mustapha in his shop at Kantin Kwari market, Kano

collective voice, they organised the traders ensuring timely tax contributions, so they could demonstrate to the government their commitment and need for expanded opportunities, like a market extension.

The state government had continually embarked on awareness programmes to ensure more citizens in the state understood the importance of paying taxes when due. Supported by the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) programme, revenue mobilisation and administration was strengthened, and officials in the Kano Internal Revenue Service gained improved regulatory frameworks, training, and tools to enable a steady increase in internal revenue. The revenue generated has been channelled into public infrastructure and goods: building construction, renovation, rehabilitation, education supplies and health commodities to schools, and hospitals.

The Kano Medium Term Revenue Strategy supported by PERL increased collaboration among government entities and citizens to enhance local revenue. This approach involves active participation from the state governor to local tax collectors, ensuring the remittance of non-tax revenue and promoting tax compliance.

The infrastructural development possible through increase in local revenue extended to the expansion of the Kantin Kwari Market and through a public-private partnership a new block of shops was developed – the Ta’anbu building.

The Ta’anbu building houses 72 shops, allowing petty traders to expand their petty trades to small-scale businesses.

The newly built shops provide Mustapha and others like him a safe place to stock up on goods and showcase them beautifully. Many of them have gone on to employ an average of five apprentices – young adults, in their early years of family life or planning to start one. Some use their earnings to further their education and assist their family. The financial stability and growth Mustapha had long dreamed of is now his reality. *“Living in the same house, our lifestyle has improved. I supported my wife in starting her business and now, helps with household expenses. I provide for my family, assist neighbours in need and upgraded my children’s school. I am more confident in the quality of education they are getting. I now have seven apprentices manning my business both in-store and online.”* said Mustapha.

The increased incomes of traders in the Ta’anbu building and from seven other store buildings across major markets in the state, has impacted the lives of at least 16,000 citizens of Kano State. From his days as a humble trader, Mustapha is now on a journey to his desired future for his family and community. As his children flourish in a new school, and his apprentices diligently carry forward his legacy, Mustapha’s journey parallels Kano’s own change, as service delivery enhancements touch the lives of citizens.

Contact Address:

- 📍 10 Bobo Street
Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria
- ✉ info@perlnigeria.net
- 🌐 www.perlnigeria.net
- 📺 Find us on Facebook
- 📘 www.facebook.com/perlnigeria



The Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) is a five-year public sector accountability and governance programme, funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. The programme provides support to governments in the core areas of policy development and implementation towards delivering public goods and services; supports citizens to engage with these processes and facilitates evidence-based learning and advocacy.

The opinions expressed in this leaflet are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.