Why Focus on Delivery?


Development organizations and governments deploy substantial resources and sophisticated technical solutions. Yet, interventions don’t always have the intended impacts on people’s lives.

What gets in the way? Interventions often encounter difficulties during implementation—capacity shortfalls, misaligned incentives or lack of coordination among stakeholders, to name but a few. Technical solutions alone are not enough to navigate these complexities.

Whether supporting a health reform or building public infrastructure, the international development community must be able to achieve transformational impacts—kids learning, people getting healthier—in a more consistent and timely manner. Getting to this next level of impact requires better integration of the right technical “what” with the right delivery “how.”

To that end, a partnership of international development institutions, practitioners, implementing agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector has created the Global Delivery Initiative.
Five Emerging Approaches

Relentless focus on citizen outcomes
- Identify the nature of the problem based on a thorough understanding of citizens’ demands and the local context.
- Design a context-sensitive strategy to relentlessly focus on outcomes, defined as measurable welfare gains of citizens.
- Pay attention to other factors, beyond the project, that influence citizen outcomes.

Multi-dimensional response
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder coalitions and multisectoral perspectives to identify problems and solutions.
- Convene development partners and build on their comparative advantages.

Evidence to achieve results
- Use the best available evidence to identify the nature of problems and to develop solutions.
- Develop local evidence, through experimentation and other strategies, to refine solutions.
- Collect, throughout the project cycle, evidence of results to enable course correction.
- Contribute to the global body of knowledge with the evidence accumulated during implementation.

Leadership for change
- Identify the incentives that motivate individual behavior change and integrate them in solution design.
- Understand the political economy and drivers of change to determine how and when to best engage with the client.
- Ensure leadership support and facilitate coalition building among different stakeholders.

Adaptive implementation
- Develop an adaptive implementation strategy that allows for iterative experimentation, feedback loops, and course correction.
- Build a committed multidisciplinary team with the right skills, experience, and muscle memory.
- Maintain the capacity for reflection and a diagnostic mindset. Take action, step back, and assess the results of the action.
The Global Delivery Initiative is a collaboration across the international development community to forge a new frontier in development efforts worldwide: improving the outcomes by leveraging the delivery know-how.

The initiative’s goal is to bring together the existing, but fragmented, knowledge of what works in international development—why and most importantly how—and to support practitioners in using these insights to deliver consistent results on the ground. By connecting perspectives, people and organizations across sectors and regions, the initiative supports the co-creation of an evidence base of delivery know-how: a science of delivery for development.

Building on the wealth of experience of its partners, the initiative will unlock the potential of this cumulative delivery know-how. With ready access to these insights, practitioners everywhere can make better-informed decisions systematically, every time and in every country.
THE GLOBAL DELIVERY LIBRARY

The Global Delivery Library is an open access space that will house delivery case studies, multimedia materials, and other publications on implementation experiences contributed by GDI partners and teams across the WBG. It will deploy a variety of forms to capture a range of experiences and help drive discussion around delivery challenges. By highlighting practitioners’ varied experiences, including around themes such as adaptive implementation, the Global Delivery Library will inform practitioner decision making. As a whole, the Global Delivery Library will help to connect practitioners around implementation experiences and delivery challenges, enabling an exchange of know-how across the GDI.

Delivery Case Studies are one type of publication that will be housed in the Global Delivery Library. The GDI has co-created a methodology to explore complex delivery problems and processes that development stakeholders grapple with—what they are, when they arise and how they might be addressed – and produce Delivery Case Studies. Delivery Case Studies explore interventions in their contexts, tracing the process of what was done, how, and why implementation either succeeded or failed. Practitioners will find details about delivery strategies and their fellow practitioners’ experiences during the twists and turns of implementation, as illustrated in the case study snapshot on the following pages.
How to Achieve Sustainable Water Service Delivery in Urban Nigeria

What is the problem?
In Nigeria, half of the population living in urban areas did not have piped water access, and for those who did, water taps flowed only a few hours per day. The problem to solve is the provision of reliable, potable and affordable water today while ensuring its availability to populations in the future by setting accountable and viable water utilities that deliver.

What question is the case trying to answer?
In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria joined hands with the World Bank to address the institutional weaknesses related to the urban water utilities under the National Urban Water Sector Reform Project (NUWSRP) in Enugu, Kaduna and Ogun states. While the project has achieved targets for investments in rehabilitation and expansion of waterworks, it did not perform as strongly on the institutional reforms needed to ensure sustainability. The fundamental question that this case study explores, then, is this: Why did the NUWSRP not fully attain the essential objective of sustainable water service delivery?
What were the delivery challenges encountered?

Challenges appeared at different levels of implementation. At the state level, the management system was unable to implement an effective, results-driven strategy, which created a climate that encouraged neither performance nor accountability around the operation of state water agencies (SWAs). At the federal level, communication problems between the World Bank, the SWAs and the government contributed to setting unrealistic expectations while peeling out layers of ownership, which further affected agencies’ accountability and the project’s disbursement pace. At the donor level, internal incentives to disburse quickly further challenged attempts to set up a system based on results. Finally, at the citizen or user level, water provision and access remained a strong campaign card for many politicians, which made the question of increasing water tariffs a difficult topic (especially in light of the poor services received).

WHAT ARE THE DELIVERY INSIGHTS?

This case study brings to light valuable lessons on how to shape an enabling environment for sustainable water service delivery:

- Political incentives combined with the need for rapid short-term results may play against long-term commitment to change—overvaluing short-run returns and inducing a low-level equilibrium trap that prevents scaling to sustainable outcomes.

- Investing in capacity building without changing the mindsets of agents to value (long-term) outcomes may jeopardize projects that aim for institutional reforms.

- Evidence-based discussions with political leadership at the state level can spur more-productive discussions on sustainability and give state managers greater credibility. Managers used data as an ally to change the minds of policy makers and their own internal staffs to support institutional changes.

- Disbursement systems can be effective tools to ensure greater accountability, as a system based on results and performance sends strong signals to stakeholders about the project’s commitment to achieve results.
How to Expand Access to Sustainable Water and Sanitation at Scale for the Urban Poor in Kenya

What is the problem?

In Kenya, strong population growth is coupled with a high urbanization rate. Now, about 8 million people live in more than 2,000 urban low-income areas countrywide. Most of the urban poor lack access to safe water and adequate sanitation—with serious implications for health, economic opportunities and the quality of life. Although funding in the sector is increasing and reforms are under way, the prevailing approach of development partners and government—to increase coverage through household connections and investments in large infrastructure—has not delivered in the past in rapidly growing urban low-income areas in Kenya.

What question is the case trying to answer?

The case study explores how implementers (about 70 utilities and Kenya’s Water Services Trust Fund, or WSTF) were able to expand access to sustainable water and sanitation services to almost 2 million people within six years in a cost-efficient way. It also discusses the roles of technical and financial cooperation in this successful outcome.
What were the delivery challenges encountered?

Until recently, utilities were not subject to robust incentives, political direction and standards to deliver services in urban low-income areas. They did not develop technologies and business models to deliver services at scale to poor urban citizens. Information on service coverage was lacking, leading to limited accountability to improve the situation for the urban poor.

WHAT ARE THE DELIVERY INSIGHTS?

This case study provides several insights for scaling up sustainable water and sanitation delivery for the urban poor:

- A paradigm shift was possible because of changes of perception among decision makers and implementers on how to reach the urban poor at scale in a reasonable time, namely that
  - Scaling-up requires a mix of access solutions, including low-cost technologies; and
  - Scaling-up requires substantial technical assistance from an “intermediary,” such as WSTF, that finances the scaling-up and, equally important, supports utilities in a comprehensive and hands-on way to implement and operate last-mile infrastructure.
- Building momentum for scaling-up was necessary to secure the sustainability of infrastructure and to gradually build pro-poor delivery and absorption capacities in utilities.
- A long-term, embedded team worked with stakeholders over a period of 11 years to build trust relationships with partners, support change agents, coach professionals at WSTF and strengthen the confidence of financing partners.
- A competitive, performance-based “call for proposals” procedure was critical to identify the small investments with the highest cost efficiency and to maximize access outcomes.
- WSTF developed detailed implementation toolkits for water supply and sanitation that more than 70 utilities now use. They contain technical standards, social marketing concepts and business models, and are updated based on implementation experience.
“WE ARE HAPPY WITH THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE CASE WRITER TRAINING AND NOW LOOK FORWARD TO SHARING CHINA’S KNOWLEDGE WITH THE WORLD THROUGH CASE STUDIES.”

– Ying Wang (Director of Knowledge Sharing and Technical Assistance, MoF China)
Training in Adaptive Implementation

To familiarize GDI partners with methodologies for adaptive implementation, as well as methodologies for capturing and sharing implementation experiences, including through writing case studies and other products, the GDI has developed a comprehensive capacity development program.

The training program follows a blended learning approach: It combines face-to-face interaction (through trainings delivered onsite) with online training (through a MOOC developed together with Princeton University). This ensures a demand-oriented, flexible, modular, and effective way of learning.

Training in Adaptive Implementation seeks to build and enhance trust and relationships among GDI partners so they can engage in sharing knowledge and expertise that increases the impact of development interventions and the quality of the evidence captured.

The training program also includes coaching and mentoring of GDI partners through the process of writing case studies (e.g., through joint clinics) in an effort to create a peer network of practitioners.

Upon completion of the training, participants will understand the framework to think differently about implementation of projects, focusing on problems (development challenges), delivery challenges, and contextual conditions. They will also be able to capture implementation processes through case studies using the GDI methodology.

Trainings have been provided to the Ministry of Finance of the People’s Republic of China, the Brookings Institution (Millions Learning Program), the MasterCard Foundation, and the Korean Development Institute (KDIS).
DeCODE
(DELIVERY CHALLENGES IN OPERATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS)

DeCODE is an evidence-based system that uses historical data to help anticipate delivery challenges based on previous occurrences. DeCODE also provides additional resources, such as identifying practitioners who have faced specific delivery challenges, and filtering relevant knowledge products such as Delivery Case Studies to help teams solve complex implementation problems. Once DeCODE is launched, it will help practitioners in five key ways:

- **First, DeCODE** will help bring the conversation about implementation problems to a granular level and into concrete terms by building a taxonomy of delivery challenges from the ground up. DeCODE helps identify the most common delivery challenges that are faced by frontline staff.

- **Second, DeCODE** makes use of historical data to calculate the probability that a particular delivery challenge might occur in a specific country and sector. By using data from previous projects, the system will help teams anticipate potential issues that might arise during implementation and take preemptive action.

- **Third, DeCODE** will help build networks of problem solvers by identifying who has faced particular delivery challenges in a specific sector and country. This feature provides frontline staff with a salient filter for connecting with people who have experienced similar issues and might be able to help come up with a solution.

- **Fourth, DeCODE** will filter resources from the GDI, such as Delivery Case Studies, which illustrate how teams have navigated complex implementation processes. Based on the delivery challenge that a team is facing or could face, DeCODE will identify relevant case studies and other knowledge products.

- **Fifth, DeCODE** will draw on data from GDI partners to ensure that this expertise is shared across the GDI.
DeCODE filters challenges and resources based on the project context, determined by Sector & Country.

DeCODE computes the likelihood that a challenge will occur in the context selected.

DeCODE identifies a list of Delivery Case Studies and other knowledge products relevant to the challenge.

DeCODE filters a list of practitioners who have experience dealing with the challenge in a closely related context.
THE ACTION LEARNING PROGRAM FOR MULTISECTORAL WORK

The Action Learning Program (ALP) is a methodology to bring a variety of actors together to solve complex and multisectoral problems related to a development challenge. The ALP provides a structured, but flexible, mechanism to promote dialogue among distinct stakeholders and lead to straightforward identification of delivery challenges and solutions, and a set of agreed upon actionable indicators. The goal of the ALP is to generate actions that are agreed upon and motivated by stakeholders to address shared delivery and development challenges.

The main objectives of the ALP are:

■ Creating a space for exchanging evidence, knowledge, and experiences to construct a shared evidence base.

■ Facilitating the identification of priorities through joint design and implementation of diagnostic tools.

■ Bringing stakeholders from different sector, countries and disciplines together through participatory linked activities.

■ Strengthening capacity for groups of stakeholders to act to address shared problems and challenges.
By sharing experiences, stakeholders are able to better understand one another’s perspectives on problems, to develop a more complete understanding of gaps and challenges, and to identify and discuss a variety of potential solutions. In cases where different stakeholders may have divergent interests, this discussion of experiences and perspectives helps to identify such differences, as well as ways to mitigate these issues.

Listening to stakeholders, and providing a participatory framework in which the perspectives of all stakeholders can be discussed and can contribute to action, is another important aspect of the ALP. Dialogue is key when first preparing to tackle a shared challenge, and remains so throughout the course of a given action, when joint indicators allow stakeholders to correct course if necessary.