A Think Tank Model

For Evidence Informed Policymaking in Nigeria

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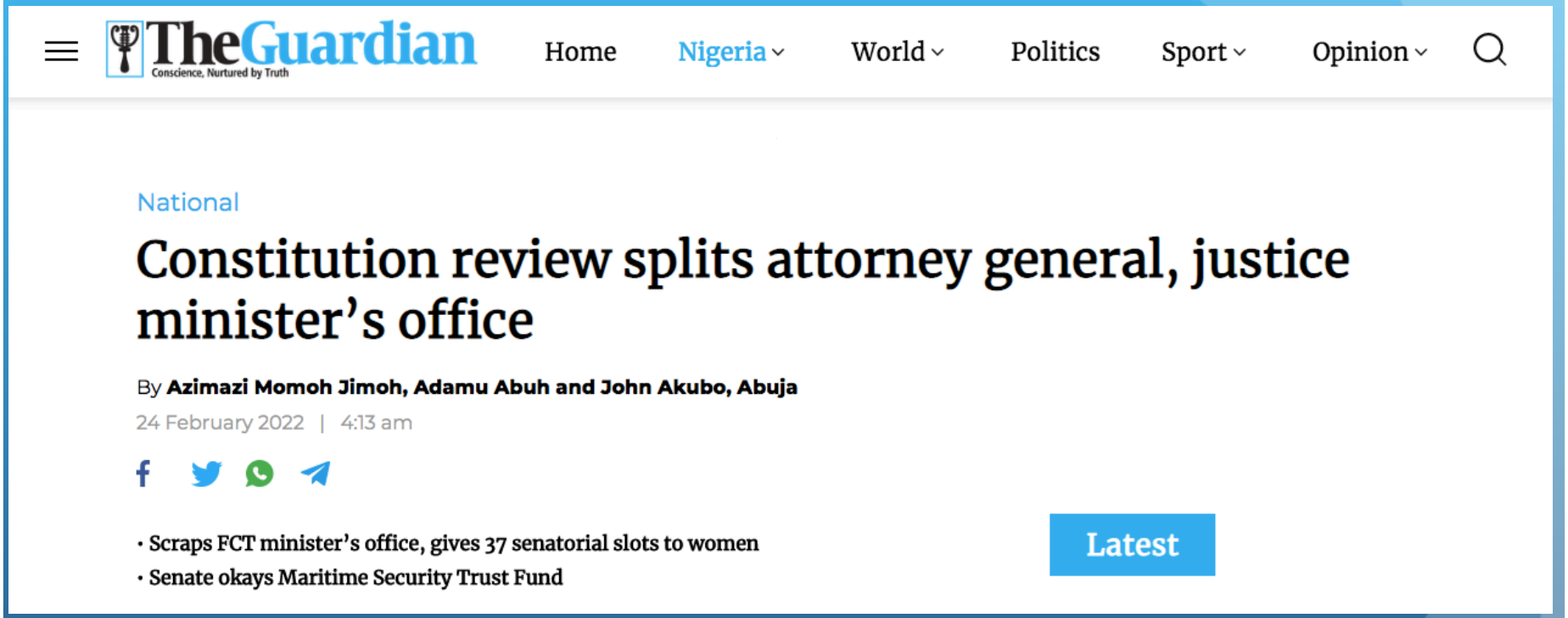
Constitution-making Background

1st Republic 1963 – 1966	2nd Republic 1979 – 1983	3rd Republic 1992 – 1993	4th Republic 1999 –Date
First indigenous constitution motivated by selfish ethnic and political interests. The constitutional-making process was elitist driven. The result was a Civil War	The constitution was drafted by a 49-member Constitution Drafting under the supervision of the Supreme Military Council (SMC).	The Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) commissioned a constituent assembly to draft	The Provisional Ruling Council (PRC), set up a 25-member Constitutional Debate Coordinating Committee .

In Nigeria, "***We the people***" is simply a false claim on which successive governments and institutions - military and otherwise have existed.

Context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By Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Adamu Abuh and John Akubo, Abuja
24 February 2022 | 4:13 am
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Context

- A constitution is important because it establishes a state's framework, its principle institutions and the interrelationships between these institutions.
- Democratic institutions are mechanisms for the facilitation of a democratic process, and should incorporate the voices of informed citizens and evidence in public decision-making.
- Think Tanks exist to fill institutional gaps and are critical actors to help boost government capacity.

Our Aim

To strengthen Nigeria's democratic institutions through evidence informed policymaking.

The Problem

- Policymakers are not evidence literate.
- Policy proposals do not effectively incorporate constituency support.
- Institutions do not have the capacity to actually use policy proposals.

Capacity development

- A capacity needs assessment carried out by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) revealed a huge skills gap in evidence informed decision-making (EIDM) among civil servants in African countries.
- The Nigerian federal civil service and other institutions generally operate to serve a spoils system.
- “Only 13% were graduates of universities” and “just 8% had degrees related to accounting or economics” - Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Minister of Finance on the human capacity of the institution she headed.

Political incentive

- AFIDEP's evaluations have pointed to the fact that the failure by policymaking interventions to undertake political economy analyses to inform policy design and implementation, has limited their impact and sustainability.
- Research indicates, "political manipulation and ambition are among the strongest determinants of factors influencing policy development process" in Nigeria (Onukwube, 2011).

Solution

- The U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) provides an exemplary framework to build on. At every juncture, these young people have the opportunity to learn while doing. Like a Think Tank, they achieve their objectives through research and communication - educating the public.
- More importantly, PIRG's have an advocacy element. They are able to mobilize and engage in community organizing towards garnering support for a particular policy idea.

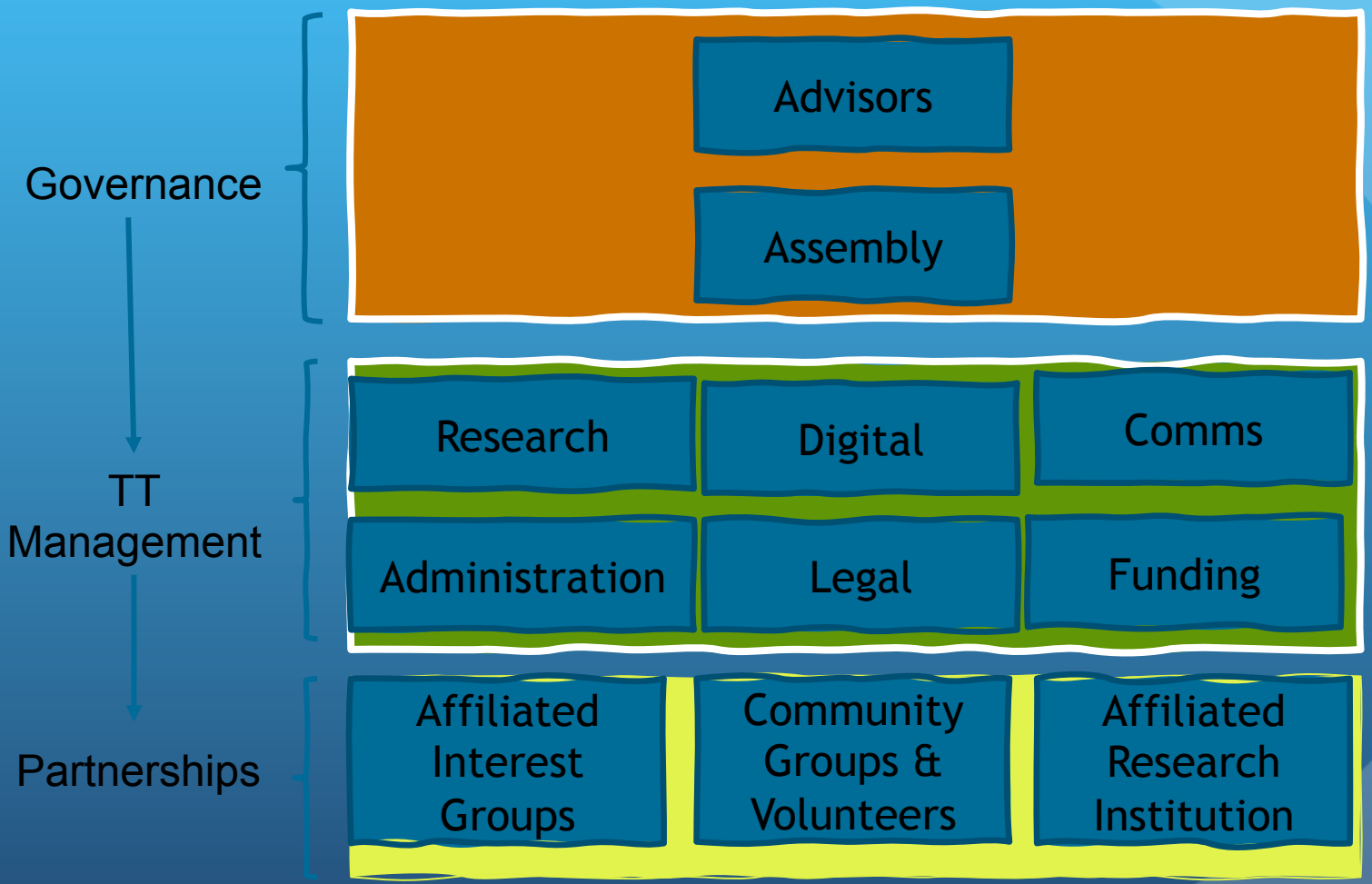
A community based research group (CBRG)

- A direct form of public participation generates legitimacy for policy ideas. and increases public knowledge of evidence informed policy making.
- Mobilizing constituencies via CBRGs could provide the think tank with the institutional legitimacy to enter into strategic partnership with government administrations and institutions.

Think Tank Hub

- Unlike students in the U.S., Nigerian counterparts aren't financially autonomous.
- The need for communication professionals, legal practitioners, researchers and policy experts sums up the rational for a hub that brings together various public interest groups to collaborate towards policy development and advocacy.

Organizational layout



Assumptions

- Young citizens want to “do good” and are in search of a platform to channel their passion and energy towards impactful citizen action.
- Various interest groups would collaborate towards long-lasting institutional reform for access in government administrations.
- Researchers and experts are in search of a platform that could transform their policy expertise to impactful career within governments and policy.

Going forward

- One-year to promote dialogue between various public interest groups.
- Develop a roadmap for action-oriented research that highlight the need for the proposed Think Tank and publish.
- Establish the organization
- Secure funding
- Staff the organization

Potential outcome

- Give young citizens the information and skills needed to function effectively in a democratic society by combining solid research with organized actions.
- Support grassroots ownership of the policymaking process and the resulting policy recommendations.
- Empower the people to monitor implementation of policy proposals and hold policymakers to account.
- Prepare young citizens for a career in evidence informed policymaking.
- This institutional framework could provide political leverage for the think tank to recommend top policy expert members for public appointments within various government administrations.

Research Questions

- How evidence literate are policymakers?
- How well connected are policymakers and researchers?
- What are the existing strategies for capacity building of policymakers?
- How is public policy research currently communicated to policymakers and the public?
- What incentives drive policy makers to use research?
- How do policy makers choose between competing values/issues?
- What is policymakers capacity to actually use research evidence?

Discussions