

RAPID RESULTS APPROACH / INITIATIVE

Institutionalization of Results Based Management in Kenya Public Service

By Obong'o Sylvester

The Rapid Results Approach (RRA) is a results-focused learning process aimed at jump-starting major change efforts and enhancing implementation capacity. It tackles large-scale medium and long term change efforts through a series of small-scale, results-producing and momentum-building initiatives. The premise of the Rapid-Results approach is to create a context for learning and for enhancing implementation capacity, by helping ministries work on sharply-defined initiatives that will ensure delivery of the Economic Recovery Strategy targets. The Government's adoption of the Rapid Results Approach (RRA) as one of the tools for implementing Results Based Management in the Public Service is therefore consistent with the focus on Results, Capacity enhancement and client ownership.

Rapid Results Initiatives taps into the human desire to succeed by creating real empowerment, motivation and innovation in working towards results. It strengthens accountability and commitment for Results and unleashes and enhances implementation capacity. It helps teams set challenging or stretching yet achievable, sharply defined, measurable and visible goals, using existing resources and capacities. This results into collaboration among team members, experimentation and discovery of new ideas. A rapid results goal must therefore in its definition have the following attributes (i) Action, (ii) Impact variable, (iii) Scope, (iv) Measurement, (v) Time Frame. For example a Rapid Results goal can be "To reduce processing business license in Nairobi by one week within 100 days" or "Reduce carjacking in Nairobi by 20% within 100-days".

The approach provides a structured methodology for building and practicing Results Based Management (RBM) that is required for successful implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS). Whereas the ERS include a number of elements such training, new policies and procedures, mission and vision of the Government and even a communication strategy to ensure involvement of all stakeholders, which promise to get the public service enhance performance, these in themselves although very useful, do not stimulate "group adrenalin" required to overcome inertia. They lack the urgency and excitement that comes from working on achievement of short-term goals whose results have an impact on development. Rapid Results on the other hand creates a sense of urgency, personal challenges clearly defines success and raises stakes and visibility for success or failure and therefore create a sense of excitement. It enables people to collaborate in a new team spirit and lets them tap into their full potential of energy and creativity

The RRA tool therefore:

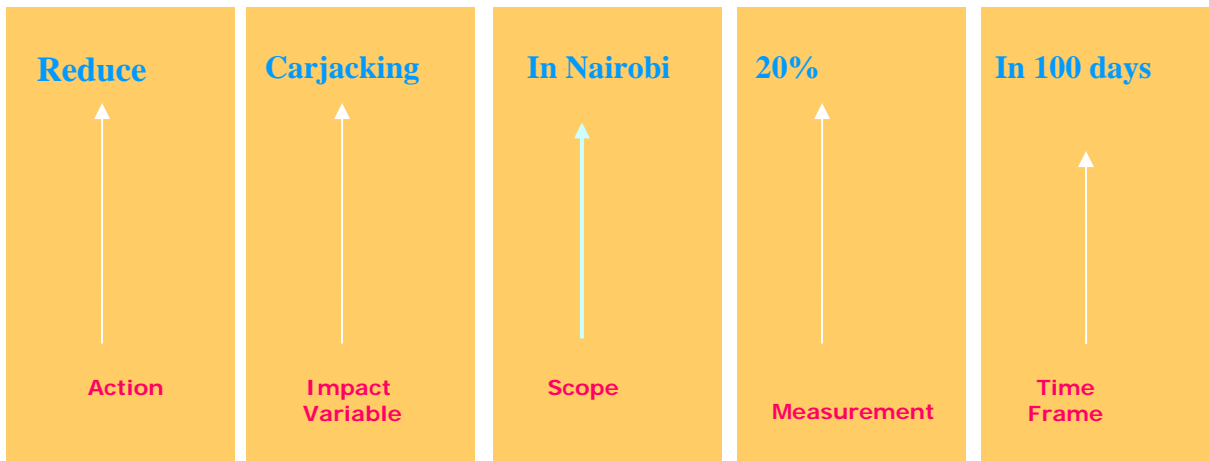
- Accelerates implementation of plans and priorities;
- Builds support for large-scale change efforts by overcoming inertia and resistance to change;

- Helps leaders adapt and refine implementation strategies;
- Accelerates learning and discovery
- Reduces hidden risks inherent in long-term strategies.

The initiatives are structured in 100-day cycles from agreeing on goals to achieving results, with each goal directly connected to one or more of the overall objectives of the development effort. RRA achieves systematic change through a series of small-scale, results producing and momentum-building initiatives implemented within the 100 days or less. In doing so, it helps leaders to continually adapt and refine their overall implementation strategy based on what works and what does not work on the ground. The specific goal to be achieved within the 100-days is, therefore, what is commonly referred to as 100-day Rapid Results Initiative (RRI). RRA:-

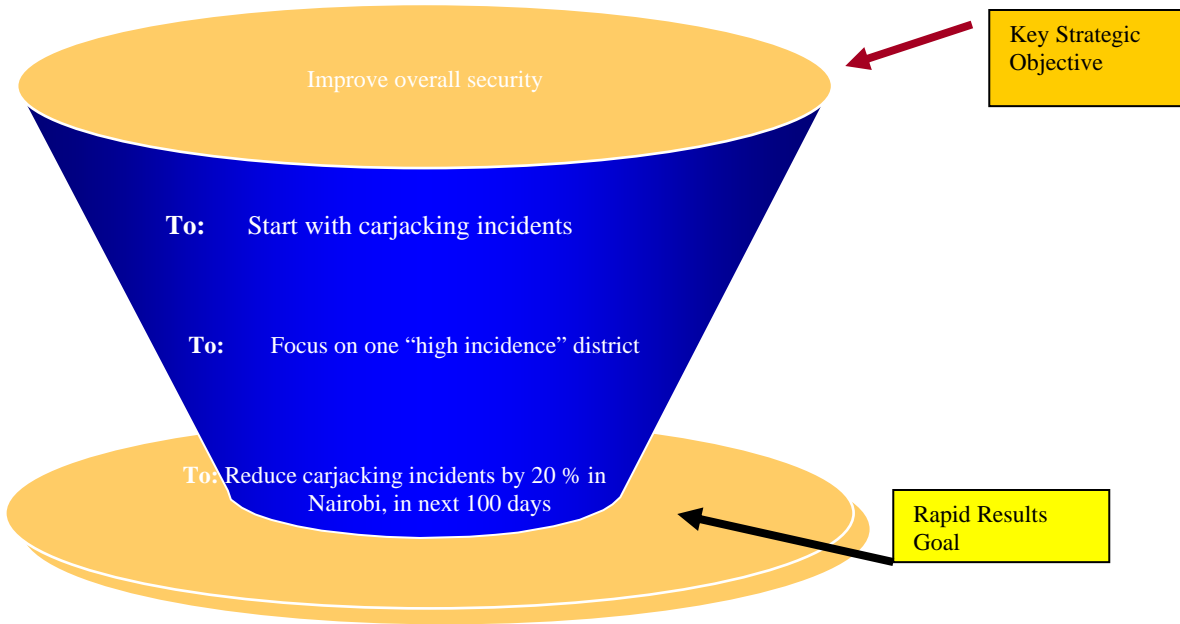
- Starts by focusing on a few RESULTS
- Challenges team to achieve 100-day Results goals
- Create temporary governance and support structure
- Reinforce basic management skills
- Manage the scale-up beyond the first 100 days.

Illustration of a Rapid Results Initiative



The specific Rapid Results Goal is usually derived from a broader strategic objective of the organization as demonstrated below:

Improving the Investment Climate

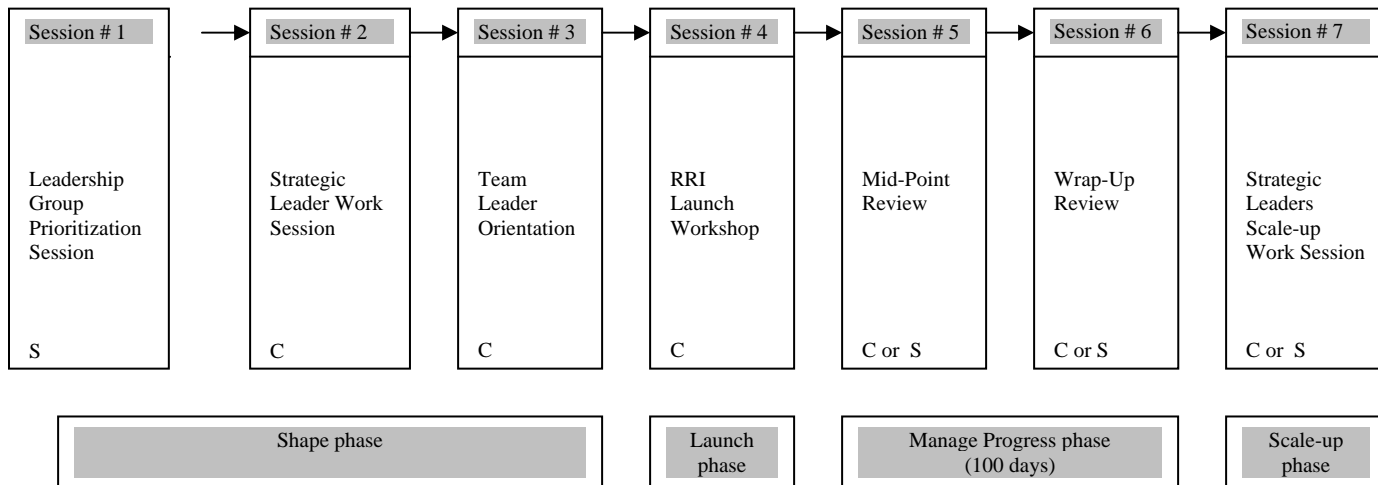


This exercise moves the processes from the abstract to the concrete—the inputs, outputs, and desired outcomes became very clear and focused. By unleashing existing creativity and capacity, it helps teams overcome the natural inertia that makes it difficult to get things done, and to make change happen within and across ministries, departments and units. Each one of the results is an indicator by itself. And each identified a result area establishes a set of activities that helps in achieving that result. Consequently, both activities and results are monitored. By implementing the initiatives over a shorter time period, project issues also surfaces faster and could be dealt with immediately in contrast to normal project cycles (4–5 yrs), where implementation issues may not surface until much later on.

How is it implemented?

To identify the first wave of RRIs, the organizational leadership group, identifies a set of strategic priorities from the Strategic Plan, Annual Work Plan or the Performance Contract that would benefit from RRA. A result leader, strategic leader and team leader is then appointed for each focus or Strategic Challenge Area. The portfolio of focal areas then moves into the RRI cycle-Shape, Launch, Implement and Scale-up. As the RRIs move through this cycle the results advance the achievement of the organizational overall strategy.

Key Events in the RRI Process



Benefits of Rapid Results Approach

Rapid Results Approach has the following distinct benefits among others:

- It generates progress and creates momentum in a critical area of overall strategic objective;
- It stimulates new insights on implementation challenges and risks
- It achieves within 100-days or less
- It is challenging but achievable.

Implementation in Kenya to date

To-date over 58 Public Sector institutions, thus central government ministries, local authorities, state corporations and regional authorities have implemented Rapid Results Approach. The central government ministries include all ministries and departments under the Office of the President, state corporations, local authorities launched so far include Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu among others, while all the six regional authorities have launched.

The turning point of adaptation of the RRI methodology in the entire public service however came with its launch and implementation in the entire Office the President, Ministries and Department in September 2006. It not only gave Rapid Results Approach, visibility and publicity, it also stamped a mark of approval and authority of the highest office in the land. The subsequent success manifested during the celebration of the 100-days was therefore just a confirmation that for effective and efficient results the entire public services needed to adapt Rapid Results Approach.

RRI - an RBM Tool

Results Based Management was introduced in 2004 out of the need to improve service delivery and demonstrate reform gains from the implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy. The main elements of Results Based Management framework include a culture of focusing on results rather than process. Rapid Results Approach as

an RBM tool was therefore both enriched and enhanced. Like other management concepts its application in the public sector necessitated slight modifications from its original concept, the basic principle of results focus has however remained.

Lessons Learned

Taking an average of about 10 RRI per institutions it means that over 580 Rapid Results teams have so far been constituted to deliver sharply defined results and impacts to the citizens. In the process the management skills of these team members have been enhanced, they have learned new ways of accomplishing and sustaining the results as well as team work.

There are a number of lessons that can be drawn from the experience of implementing of Rapid Results Approach in the public service; these include enhancing achievement of performance targets, change from business as usual and of attitude towards results, team-work orientation to implementation of plans and strategies.

In addition emerging good practices from the RRIs launched is feeding into the scale-up phases undertaken or being undertaken. Key components that have been emphasized during this period are:

- ***Monitoring and Evaluation & Performance management for results:*** this is in line with the National Performance Management Framework (NPMF) and the National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES). To this end the Ministerial Management Units (MMUs) and the Ministerial Reform Units have played a heightened roll in the initiation of RRIs and in their management during the implementation process.
- ***Transformative leadership and Capacity Building:*** with the increased demand for roll out of RRI during this period, the coaches leveraged increased emphasis on the leadership group to drive and manage the initiatives. This has created RRI champions within the ministries and institutions.
- ***Information Education and Communication (IEC):*** increasingly a thematic area in IEC has been created. This focuses on enhancing both internal (within the institution) and external (from stakeholders e.g. customers) interaction and feedback.

RRI becomes a way of working in Government

The initiatives have no doubt created a buzz in the Ministries where they are being implemented and anxiety in other ministries where they have not been launched. Their impact has therefore so far only touched a few Kenyans. The scale of impact is definitely set to increase with the release of the Circular from the Permanent Secretary, Head of Public Service and Secretary to the Cabinet requiring all public sector institutions to be put on Rapid Results Approach. With this, the depth and breadth of involvement of all institutions across the Public Sector the impact of Rapid Results Approach will be felt.

RRI 2007 and Beyond

Originally conceived as a project management tool, Rapid Results Initiatives is now being applied widely in various areas of service delivery in the public sector. The tool is extremely robust and versatile and has been proven to lead to improved performance in service delivery, skills and confidence building in ability to achieve results, as well as enhancing creativity.

RRI has laid bare the great potential that lies within public servants hence fulfilled the words said by Goethe: *“Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.*

Sylvester Odhiambo Obong’o,
Programme Coordinator- Rapid Results Approach
Public Service Reform and Development,
Cabinet Office- Office of the President,
Government of Kenya