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**Above**  
Professor Ruqayyatu  
Rufa'i with pupils  
during the ESSPIN  
China tour.

# esspinnews

## Professor Ruqayyatu Rufa'i, Minister of Education

Professor Ruqayyatu Rufa'i, former Commissioner for Education, Jigawa State, is now the Federal Minister of Education. She was among the new Ministers sworn in recently by Acting President Goodluck Jonathan. As Education Commissioner in Jigawa State, Professor Rufa'i worked closely with ESSPIN on the implementation of the State's education reform agenda. She participated in ESSPIN's study tour to China last year.

Softly spoken and unassuming, Ruqayyatu Rufa'i cuts a likeable figure whether chairing meetings with gentle authority and intelligence, greeting with a big smile endless throngs of visitors to her office, or agreeing, with infinite patience, to talk to ESSPIN's consultants. Professor Rufa'i's pleasant demeanour belies energy, drive and dedication, attributes that made her tenure as Jigawa's Education Commissioner a successful one.

Continued inside on page 6.

**esspin**

Education Sector  
Support Programme  
in Nigeria

**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development

A Programme funded by DFID

## Organisational Profile

ESSPIN is one of a set of DFID-funded State Level Programmes (SLPs), working on governance, accountability and the delivery of health and education services. ESSPIN supports Federal and State authorities as they work both to reform the governance of education and to improve the quality of education that children receive.

ESSPIN is a partnership between the Nigerian Government and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). The six-year programme (2008 – 2014) supports Federal and State governments – Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Lagos – in their efforts to develop effective planning, financing and delivery systems that will improve the quality of basic education.

ESSPIN supports simultaneous action on multiple fronts. Support for schools is accompanied by support for communities, support for State and Local government and support to develop Federal laws, policies and budgets.

ESSPIN is managed by a consortium of partners led by Cambridge Education, a member of the Mott MacDonald Group.

## ESSPIN gets New National Programme Manager

Ron Tuck has been appointed the new National Programme Manager for ESSPIN. Ron, who until his new appointment was the Deputy Programme Manager, replaces John Martin who will be supporting ESSPIN as UK-based Programme Director. Kayode Sanni, former State Team Leader of ESSPIN Jigawa, will take up the position of Deputy Programme Manager.

## Community and communications survey

ESSPIN has designed a community survey of a representative sample of 330 schools. The community survey is aimed at understanding the mechanisms through which schools receive support from the government and community. It will also be used to monitor the results of interventions to support community-based organisations as well as determine individual perceptions of the quality of basic education services.

A communications component has been added to the survey to investigate the reach of different media and learn more about their use by the community members.

The survey took place from 15 March – 15 April, 2010 and was conducted by the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) on behalf of ESSPIN.



**Above**  
A community discussion forum in Jigawa state.

## Partnership Strategy (CPS) II Dissemination workshop

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) hosted the Joint Country Partnership Strategy (JCPS) II dissemination workshop on 11 November 2009 in Lagos to showcase its various State Level Programmes (SLPs) and other partnerships. The JCPS II is a joint venture between international development partners (DFID, the World Bank, USAID and the African Development Bank) aimed at ensuring international assistance is focused on the right priorities, enhances co-ordination, avoids duplication and increases the impact of development aid in Nigeria. The workshop also provided participants with the opportunity to better understand the role of DFID in development work across different sectors in Nigeria. It was also a good forum for ESSPIN and other SLPs to share information and best practices.

**Right**  
Lagos SSIT members in a group work activity during their induction workshop.

**Below**  
Better Schools, Better Nigeria DVD cover.

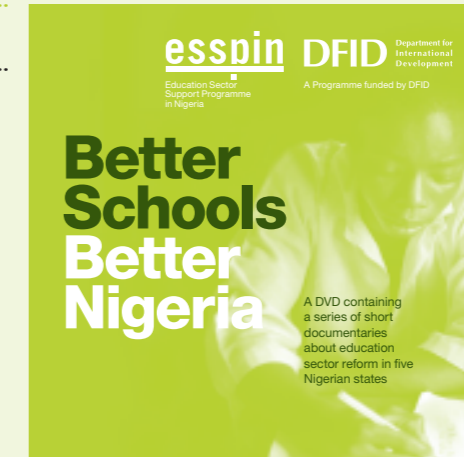


## Better Schools, Better Nigeria

The 15-minute documentary films about basic education in each of ESSPIN's five focal States have been released. These short films provide a snapshot of education today in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Lagos States, and a glimpse of a brighter future. There are many challenges to improving the management and funding of education and to providing quality basic education for all Nigeria's children.

The films show good work is underway to tackle these challenges, and there is a strong commitment to further reform amongst those working in government, schools and communities in the five States. The crisis in education across the country may be shocking but the films portray real determination by all stakeholders to create Better Schools and a Better Nigeria.

The five films were produced by ESSPIN in collaboration with State Ministries of Education and other partners. Filmed on location during October and November 2009, the films present the unique context and priorities of each State. However, many of the issues raised are common to all and viewers across the country will be better informed, and as a result, influenced and inspired to address them.



## Lagos State Government approves budget for TDNA

Mr Babatunde Raji Fashola, Executive Governor of Lagos State has approved the sum of N24.4 million for the administration and logistics of the Teachers Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) exercise soon to commence in the State.

The TDNA exercise is being supported by ESSPIN, and is expected to cover 25,253 school teachers across 952 Primary and 314 JSS public schools in the State. The exercise will take place concurrently in 120 centres across the State. All necessary arrangements to ensure the successful implementation of the exercise are being put in place by the Education Quality Team (EQT) pending the release of funds.

## Lagos State School Improvement Team (LASSIT) Induction

An induction exercise was concluded for 22 members of the Lagos State School Improvement Team (SSIT) on 13 January, 2010. The induction exercise was one of a series of events designed to prepare the SSIT for the implementation phase of the School Improvement Plans. The inauguration of the SSIT members was held during the induction programme in collaboration with the State government.

The team has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the development of in-school support by School Supervisors as well as improving management by head teachers and the teaching skills of class teachers. A programme of workshops, follow-up visits to schools and LGEAs, preparation of complementary materials and other professional development activities is planned. The SSIT will be deployed for two years and is instituted within the SUBEB and managed by the State School Improvement Co-ordinating Team.

The School Improvement programme will begin with 100 pilot schools from 20 LGAs in the State over a period of two years.

## Jigawa Holds Journalists Symposium on Education

The Nigeria Union of Journalists, Jigawa State chapter, in collaboration with the State Education Technical Committee, organised a one-day Education Journalism Symposium on 21 January, 2010 with the support of ESSPIN.

The Symposium was geared towards improving mutual understanding between education sector stakeholders and mass media organisations in Jigawa. It focused on effective educational planning, implementation and budget monitoring through the use of the Medium Term Sector Strategy (MTSS) as a new planning process. The Secretary of the State Education Communications Committee, Babandi Saleh acknowledged that the MTSS is a necessary tool to enable budget tracking. He said that with the support from ESSPIN towards its development, the State has been able to project the annual total revenue and expenditure using the Education Policy and Strategic Simulation Model (EPSSIM) for 2010.



**Right**  
A representative of Local Government chairmen signing the MOU in Kwara.



**Below right**  
Participants at the journalism symposium in Jigawa.

## ESSPIN opens Enugu office

ESSPIN Enugu office commenced operations with a formal presentation to the Enugu State Government on Monday 29 March, 2010. The presentation was made by Ron Tuck, National Programme Manager ESSPIN supported by Pius Elumeze, newly appointed ESSPIN Enugu State Team Leader, during a meeting of the State Executive Council. Governor Sullivan Chime, the Deputy Governor, the Secretary to the State Government, the Head of Service and all Commissioners were in attendance. Ian Attfield, DFID Education Adviser, and the State Team Leaders of other DFID SLPs – SPARC, SAVI and PATHS 2 were also present.

Pius is now busy building his team and working with education sector stakeholders to get the programme underway. Work has begun to help develop the Enugu Education Management Information System (EMIS) and enter data for the 2009 School Census.

## Kwara MDAs sign MOU

The Kwara State's Ministry of Education Science and Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its agencies and parastatals on 21 January 2010. The signing ceremony was attended by Alhaji Bolaji Abdullahi, Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology; Suleiman Sunoboro, Chairman, Kwara State House of Assembly Committee on Education; and the Chairman and board members of the State Universal Basic Education Board. Senior officials of education agencies and parastatals, Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) secretaries and representatives of the LGA Chairmen and key politicians who are committed to the administration of education in the State were also present.

The MOU outlined the various responsibilities for State education sector management and service delivery and the specific roles of the major organisations in the sector. The document, which was signed by all organisations and agencies responsible for planning the implementation and delivery of education services in the State, is expected to eliminate duplication of roles and responsibilities. The MOU is also expected to encourage co-operation, participation, efficiency and transparency among all the stakeholders in the sector, including the State Universal Education Board, the Agency for Mass Education, the Teaching Service Commission, and the Teachers' Recruitment Board.

**Writer**  
Sulleiman Adediran/  
Mohammed Bawa  
National Consultants,  
SBMC Development



**Right**  
Stakeholders at the SBMC visioning session in Kano.

## School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) visioning process in ESSPIN supported States

The purpose of the 3-Phase SBMC Visioning Process in the five ESSPIN-supported States is to involve all stakeholders in discussion about the design of the School-Based Management (SBM) structure and its policy formulation. The overall goal is to ensure that the emerging SBMCs are functional and contributing to school improvements through effective school governance.

### State Level Visioning Process (SLVP-1): Policy Makers' perspectives of SBMC

The discussions at the first phase of the workshops, the State Level Visioning Process (SLVP-1), were very productive, particularly with the presence and participation of the major State policy makers on education. In all, 239 people took part in the discussions on SBMC at SLVP-1

Some of the roles and responsibilities which the policy makers would like SBMCs to take include: (a) holding head teachers and teachers to account for pupils' performance, (b) improving attendance and achievement, (c) partaking in school planning and ensuring school infrastructure is maintained, (d) monitoring on-going construction in schools and (e) holding service providers accountable for delivering quality education.

## Community Level Visioning Process (CLVP): What kind of SBMC do communities want in schools?

Seven hundred and three (703) people took part in the second phase of the SBMC Visioning Process across the five States. Participants at the CLVP workshops discussed and presented their views on the kind of SBMC that they would like to see; its composition, tenure and roles and responsibilities.

Community-level participation at the SBMC Visioning workshop also enabled the participants to voice their feelings on the state of education. Their concerns included: (i) non-conducive environment for teaching and learning process in schools, (ii) insufficient teachers for rural schools compared to the overpopulation of teachers in urban schools, (iii) teachers not dedicated to their duties, (iv) poor supervision of teachers by LGEA offices and SUBEB, (v) inadequate government motivation for teachers, particularly those in rural schools.

## State Level Visioning Process (SLVP-2): Harmonising views at SLVP-1 and CLVP

The two-day State Level Visioning Process (SLVP-2) was designed to harmonise the views expressed by stakeholders at SLVP-1 and CLVP in order to produce State-specific policies on SBMCs.

A major consensus is that SBMCs should be involved in monitoring, advising and influencing those who directly manage services ie governance rather than management role. The roles and responsibilities of the SBMCs should be clearly stated and there is the need to build their capacity to effectively perform such roles.

### What next after the SBMC visioning process?

The harmonised positions of the stakeholders on the structure, composition, tenure, role and responsibilities of SBMCs, etc, will inform the draft policy on SBMC which will facilitate the establishment of functional SBMCs across the five States. In due course, the SBMC policy may be incorporated into existing education laws of the States. Alternatively, State governments could initiate new legislation on school-based management as part of the decentralisation of the educational management in the State.



**Left**  
Professor Ruquayyatu Ahmed Rufa'i (OON), looking at pupils' lesson notes in China.



**Above**  
Delegates observing pupils at work in a classroom during the tour.

**Professor Junaid, Executive Secretary, NCCE:** 'The Nigerian education sector has a lot to learn from China, especially in the areas of training for teachers and teaching methodology. The reform and the Roadmap, if fully implemented, will take us close to what is obtainable in China if the key players and teachers are committed to it. The Gansu Project succeeded because of the capacity building for teachers. Here (in Nigeria) we have laudable ideas but the concentration is more on the school rather than on the teachers, while in actual sense, it is the teachers who deliver what they have to the pupils. If you want an education project to succeed, focus on the teachers and build their capacity'.

'The way teachers conducted their teaching (in China) was informative. The teachers used Powerpoint to teach in the classrooms. There was practical education; students at JSS level were assembling robots by themselves. You could see a high level of active participation by the pupils. The students sat round tables and carried out exercises by themselves. We need to induct our teachers into the use of such methodology'.

**Below**  
Professor Junaid trying his hand at painting in a school in China.



**Sani Abdullahi Gumel, Chairman SUBEB, Jigawa:** 'I was fascinated by the facilities provided for children from very poor backgrounds and the way that China supplemented the finances by giving stipends to encourage their schooling. The pupils are also given time off from the school on weekends to refresh and spend time with their parents. I hope to replicate this child-centred approach in my State'. He also advocated the decentralisation of the education financial system in the country to the lower levels.

**Bashir Balarabe, Chairman SUBEB, Kaduna:** 'I was impressed by the participatory aspect of teaching in the classrooms – the child-centered approach of teaching, where the pupils carry out more of the classroom activities than the teacher. The children do 90% of the activities and the teacher only provides the guidance and facilitation materials for learning'.

**'Apart from motivation of teachers and implementation of a pupil-centered approach to teaching, a replication of the provision of basic education to all children of all social classes by Chinese Universal Basic Education is in the offing in Jigawa State'.**

**Sani Abdullahi Gumel**  
Chairman SUBEB Jigawa

'We are trying to apply the child-centred learning approach in our schools. Although some of our schools practise this method, we want to see how we can make it more comprehensive in all schools in Kaduna State. We will apply it on a pilot basis in SESP LGEA schools and later replicate it in other schools'.

**Alhaji Musa Salihu, Kano State Commissioner for Education:** 'Serious efforts should be made to control the number of children per class in Nigerian schools. In most of the schools we visited there were not more than 30 children per class, irrespective of the population of China. I think that is a very good achievement because for learning to take place, the contact between the teacher and the children has to be there. And where you have not more than 30 children per class you find that there is great interaction and supervision by the teacher. I think that must have greatly influenced the level of performance of the children because we could all see that they are keen and very alert. I think this has to do with the intervention that has been made possible by the level of control in the classroom. It is something we should be aiming at if we really want to improve the level of education in our own schools'.

**Below**  
Dr Saadu Alanamu driving a simulator while a pupil looks on.



**Dr Saadu Alanamu, Chairman SUBEB Kwara:** 'It was interesting to note that Basic Education in all its aspects is being carried to the door step of every family. It is apparent that the management and funding of education is superb. Looking at the way education is managed in China, it seems all stakeholders know their responsibilities and their capacities are well developed. The relevance of the study tour cannot be over-emphasised but the State governments with delegates on the tour need to commit to replication. A major step can be taken towards achieving this through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between key education sector agencies in order to harmonise the reform process'.

**'The relevance of the study tour cannot be over-emphasised'.**

**Dr Saadu Alanamu,**  
Chairman  
SUBEB Kwara



**Left**  
Community support for School Improvement is vital.

**Writer**  
**John Martin**  
Programme Director

## School Improvement and Community Support

The Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) is a multi-faceted programme of support to basic education in six Nigerian States. A major area of ESSPIN activity involves collaboration with the States to build an integrated approach to School Improvement. This includes work with head teachers, teachers and advisory services and enlists the help and support of communities and Civil Society. Central elements of this initiative are the School Development Plans (SDP), which will eventually be prepared by every school in the States, and School Based Management Committees (SBMCs). The two main objectives are to:

Improve the performance of schools in all aspects

Involve community much more closely with the governance and performance of schools

Each school will be helped to develop an SDP, which identifies the issues and problems that they face, sets priorities and plans activities to tackle them.

Examples of issues to be addressed will include enrolment and attendance, pupil and teacher performance, resourcing, school maintenance and management and administration. Schools will be encouraged to take on these problems themselves, but with community support through SBMCs and Local Government support through advisory services (Local School supervisors – LSS). They will also receive small grants of funds, which they can spend on their most pressing priorities.

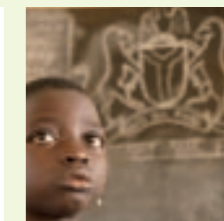
The creation of effective SBMCs will leverage greater community involvement. Each State will develop a policy to govern the roles and responsibilities of these bodies, including their role in the governance of schools. Head Teachers will report to SBMCs on school progress and can expect assistance in return, both for development of the SDP and for its implementation. SBMCs will be able to mobilise the wider community to support the schools targets, and should also be able to make school needs known to education administrators and politicians.

As a precursor to the development of SDPs, training will be given to LSS and head teachers, through the State School Improvement Team (SSIT) and to the SMBC representatives by combined teams drawn from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Social Mobilisation Units (SMU). These activities are co-ordinated at State level by task teams of senior officials.

In the first instance ESSPIN is assisting each State to pilot this approach in 200–300 schools, but the intention is to eventually reach every school in each of these States. In order for the States to scale up this initiative to every school, a roll out plan and budget will be developed by the State task teams, who will also be responsible for securing the necessary resources in the State's Mid-term Sector Strategy (MTSS).

This initiative will be the foundation for a wider platform of school improvement, quality assurance and accountability. Schools will eventually be given the means to improve themselves but their performance will be monitored and they will be held responsible by their communities.

**Writer**  
**John Gray**  
Public Finance Specialist



**Left**  
Children rely on funding reaching schools.

## Public Financial Management and the Central Challenge of Corruption in Basic Education Delivery

### The Issue

Progress in Universal Basic Education requires the most effective use of education sector resources available. This can be achieved in several ways – through clearer outcome-driven planning, through stronger budget cycle management systems, through capacity building in the organisations responsible for service delivery in the sector, for example. It is essential money allocated for State education budgets is requested to be released and then spent for the purposes intended.

It is also critical that the huge funds available to the sector are not simply stolen. There are various opportunities for theft, whether it is skimming hundreds of millions of naira a year off teachers' salaries; or embezzling hundreds of millions of naira from capital projects; or through corrupt procurement practices etc. As a result, the losses to corruption may constitute a significant proportion of the total annual flow of funds from the UBEC Intervention Fund (IF).

There is little chance of meeting the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education without improving fund utilisation. To have a good chance of overall success an essential requirement is a plausible strategy which brings the available instruments to bear (eg UBEC rules on accountability) and concentrates on the larger funding flows.

### Tackling Corruption in the provision of Basic Education

There are several potential elements of a strategy for States to address the problem of corruption in education:

#### 1 Constrain the opportunities for graft through strengthened financial management systems in MDAs

Several States are pushing ahead with reforms in their central agencies which will limit the opportunities for corruption in the State governments. The main instruments being applied include: cash and payments management (reducing the number of bank accounts controlled by MDAs with the eventual aim of passing all payments (except petty cash payments) for all MDAs through a single account using electronic payments); development or strengthening of Integrated Financial Management Information Systems (IFMIS) with built-in checks to ensure payments are only possible for budgeted items and in favour of registered contractors; strengthening of procurement (due process) through enforcement of existing federal and State laws and regulations; and routine budget monitoring and bank reconciliation to identify irregularities quickly. Reforms in these areas are already having some effect, but it will, in general, take 2–3 years to put the full set of instruments and controls in place, and this will still only be successful where they enjoy strong support from the central agencies (Accountant-General/Ministry of Finance/Ministry of Planning and Budgets). This is the correct approach for long-term and sustainable control over corruption in the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

#### 2 Use MDA activity planning to ensure funds are applied to the correct purposes

Strengthen the planning, preparation and execution of budgets in terms of the mandatory activity plans for all interventions to be funded by the budgets of the sector MDAs. The task involves enhancing the awareness of the responsibility of MDA managers (especially at Permanent Secretary and Head of Department level) to have clear plans for the use of budgeted funds, to monitor the implementation of those plans and to report on the results achieved. One reason why it is possible for large parts of an MDA's funds to be stolen is that there is no accountability for the use of funds. The Finance Committees of the State Houses of Assembly potentially have an important role here in terms of holding MDA PSs to account for the use of funds and the results achieved.



**Above**  
Madabe Primary School, Jigawa.



**3**  
**Strengthen UBEC support for accountability in SUBEBs**

Under the existing system for the management of the UBE Intervention Funds, UBEC has responsibility for ensuring that each SUBEB submits an Action Plan (for each annual tranche of IF funding), that the required matching grants have been deposited by the State Government, and for releasing funds only as previous period releases have been accounted for. Clearly if the UBEC oversight function was working effectively there would be no scope for irregularities in the SUBEBs.

However there is a need to transform UBEC from an essentially policing body which controls the flow of funds to SUBEBs and takes direct control of transactions where there is evidence of poor accountability by SUBEBs. It should become an organisation which fundamentally helps the SUBEBs to conduct their affairs transparently and accountably in the context of greater flexibility in the purposes to which IF money can be used to support Basic Education. UBEC does not have the capacity to act as policemen over all the UBE transactions of 36 States. It must shift towards delegated responsibility and a leaner oversight role.

**4**  
**Increased accountability through greater transparency**

There is currently almost no transparency in the allocation and application of resources to schools and communities, even in those States/SUBEBs which have progressive senior sector managers. In planning a shift to greater transparency, it is useful to distinguish 'ex ante transparency' from 'ex post transparency'.

Ex ante transparency aims to inform stakeholders and the public in advance that specific resources are to be applied (eg in the coming year) in support of particular schools, communities, LGEAs etc. The purpose of ex ante transparency is to create an expectation that funds or resources are on their way, thereby empowering the relevant stakeholders to press to ensure that the resources are, indeed, made available and are delivered efficiently and on a timely basis.

Ex post transparency provides information after expenditures have been incurred and is aimed at empowering stakeholders to confirm that their entitlements have actually been delivered. Both types of transparency can be useful in combating corruption, and ideally they should be used in combination.

There is great scope for increased transparency especially at the SUBEBs. Through the process of the detailing of the SUBEB Action Plans, which are a requirement for the release of UBEC IF funds, the SUBEBs already have a very detailed view, well in advance of expenditure, of the anticipated beneficiaries of their expenditures (which schools, or at least which LGAs, will benefit from new construction, rehabilitated facilities, delivery of textbooks etc). Similarly the cost of almost all civil works is known in advance, since the SUBEBs apply standard costings (eg per classroom) in the allocation of contracts. There is, accordingly, a very great scope for the routine publication, in advance of expenditure, of the details of beneficiary schools and communities.

However, at present, there is no guidance from UBEC to the SUBEBs on minimum standards of transparency on resource allocation and application. This is an area where rapid gains could be achieved quite easily.



**5**  
**Decentralise funds to the school level with local safeguards**

The decentralisation of funds down to school level, apart from being a shift which is desirable in its own right as a part of the empowerment of schools and communities, is a potentially powerful mechanism for reducing the opportunities for organised corruption in the central agencies. Direct funding to schools will break down the large blocks of funds which form a target for organised corruption in the MDAs through, eg, the allocation of civil works contracts. It must be recognised, of course, that decentralisation of fund management, while reducing the accountability problems at the centre, creates new problems at the school community and possibly LGEA level, so decentralisation is not necessarily a panacea for corruption. This threat must be addressed by timely and adequate establishment of financial management capability at devolved levels, notably in School-Based Management Committees.

To move forwards on this issue there is a need:

(i) to adopt a clear strategy on funding for schools, detailed on the basis of lessons learnt from the major piloting exercises carried out in recent years.

(ii) for stakeholders to develop an advocacy approach to persuading the high level decision-makers in the States to adopt direct funding as a major principle in their application of both their own funds and funds derived from the UBE IF. The response to such advocacy will provide a useful litmus test of commitment to cleaning up the sector.

**7**  
**Encourage a policy of name, shame and fire**

There continues to be a culture of impunity for embezzlement of public funds earmarked for education with culprits going unpunished. At some point this needs to change. One approach may be to encourage the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between all major stakeholders in the education sector to mark a common commitment to transparency and accountability and to provide a framework within which decisions could be taken and recommendations made to strengthen the sanctions against corruption.

**6**  
**Break up the large tempting blocks of funding**

Apart from direct funding to schools, there is the possibility of devolution of responsibility for funds management to LGEA level. This would have the advantage, once more, of breaking up the current very large blocks of funds held at the disposal of SUBEBs. Progress in this area will be, however, contingent on a major advance in terms of LGEA capacity-building and organisational development to ensure LGEAs are part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Progress will be dependent on formulation of a clearer policy towards the role of LGEAs in funds management for basic education.



Above  
Ajegunle Primary  
School, Lagos

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