

School Improvement and Teacher Professional Development

Introduction

The scope for improving the quality of education in Nigeria is enormous. Better school administration, good buildings and facilities, first-rate teaching standards, appropriate teacher training, fair salaries and clear career paths for education professionals would all contribute to giving Nigerian children better opportunities – to become literate, numerate and equipped with the skills to fully take part in Nigerian society.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

ESSPIN, recognising that there are no quick fixes, takes a radical approach that puts schools and teachers centre stage. This approach simultaneously supports change inside schools – by improving school management and the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom – and outside schools, by working with communities, state and local governments.

ESSPIN focuses on schools because schools are where children learn. ESSPIN's approach to school improvement takes into account all the factors affecting schools, both within and outside schools. Within schools this covers management, teaching and learning and the school environment. Outside schools it means helping decision-makers provide schools with the resources and services for schools to work better.

Strategy

ESSPIN starts by arranging meetings, workshops and seminars for key education policy and decision-makers in each state to discuss their particular needs and what can be done within the directions set by their Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs) (see also ESSPIN briefing note 1: Planning and Medium-Term Sector Strategy). These discussions give senior staff opportunities to seek support from ESSPIN in particular areas of need.

Improving learning outcomes means providing teachers with specific training focusing on literacy and numeracy and, at the same time, providing training for head teachers in school management. School improvement schemes may also build on existing initiatives, such as in Lagos where school improvement activities are being linked to a state school renovation programme.

In schools

School improvement is about supporting schools in order to improve student learning outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity to manage change. Support for school improvement at state level is the responsibility of a school advisory services unit within the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) School Services Directorate, newly created as a result of the organisational reform of SUBEBs. The advisory units are assisted by State School Improvement Teams (SSITs) who channel support to School Support Officers (SSOs) working directly with schools.

