



Briefing Notes
To pull out,
copy and keep

1
News

2
About us
News

3
News

4
Impact

Centre page pull-out
ESSPIN Briefing Notes



5
Case study

6
Case study

7
Case study

8
Contact details

August 2011



Above
Increased enrolment of girls in schools is the aim of the Girls Education Initiative in Jigawa.

esspin express

Girls Education Initiative in Jigawa

A girl child education scheme aimed at increasing the enrolment of girls in school has been introduced in Jigawa State. With ESSPIN's support, 6,000 girls from Miga, Birniwa and Roni Local Government Areas of the state will benefit from the project.

The Girl Child Initiative Implementation Committee has drawn up a five-point agenda for the delivery of the project to provide training for gender co-ordinators and officers from the three LGAs, supply school uniforms, supply teaching aids, offer health support and promote media engagement. A radio campaign advising against early marriage and advocacy by School-Based Management Committees (SBMC) encouraging parents to send their girls to school have commenced.

Continued inside on page 2.

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Education Sector
Support Programme
in Nigeria



UKaid

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Organisational profile

ESSPIN is one of a set of State Level Programmes (SLPs), funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which work 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 DFID. The six-year programme (2008–2014) supports federal and state governments – in 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.

Continuation from cover Girls Education Initiative in Jigawa

The Jigawa State Universal Basic Education Board through its Executive Chairman, Alhaji Sani Abdullahi, has committed to a monthly contribution of N150, 000 for procurement of uniforms, sandals and school bags for girls whose families cannot afford to send them to school.

Tackling gaps in education data

Two important publications on data were launched by the Vice-President of Nigeria, Architect Namadi Sambo on 16 May 2011.

The Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2006–2010 is a summary of national education data from states of the federation and parastatals of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). It includes collated information from the Annual School Census carried out across states, senior secondary attainment levels and enrolment levels of college and university students.

The Nigeria Education Data Survey gives a state-by-state break down of critical issues in education such as literacy and numeracy levels amongst children. The survey was carried out by the National Population Commission with the support of DFID/UKaid and USAID.

UK Secretary of State for International Development visits a low cost private school in Lagos

The UK Secretary of State for International Development, Mr Andrew Mitchell, visited Ken-Ade Private School in the Maroko suburb of Lagos during his official visit to Nigeria in June, 2011.

The visit gave Mr Mitchell first-hand experience of efforts being made to help children from low income families and in communities with limited public schools to gain access to basic education.

He interacted with the pupils, teachers and proprietor of Ken-Ade Private School and helped some pupils with their spelling. He was happy to see pupils in the school being able to read and write even at age seven. He compared them with pupils of the same age in the UK who can also read and write but at a much higher cost.

Mr Mitchell also discussed private schooling issues with representatives of the Low Cost Private Schools Association in Lagos State. He offered to present their case to the State Governor and also suggested ways of improving the partnership between government and private school proprietors.

He commended ESSPIN/UKaid for providing the relevant data and evidence on private schools in the state, which he described as useful for taking decisions to improve access to quality basic education in the state.

Left
UK Secretary of State for International Development engages with children at Ken-Ade Private school.

Below
The cast of 'Hannu Da Yawa' performing in Jigawa State.

Right
Copies of lesson plans in literacy and numeracy on display at the launch in Kwara state.



Ukaid/ESSPIN campaign reaps rewards for Kano children

Within a month of taking office, Governor Kwankwaso of Kano State in northern Nigeria has reacted to ESSPIN lobbying by accessing N3.5bn (£14m) of untapped Nigerian federal government funds for education. Most of this money is additional to the state education budget so, for the first time in four years, planned school improvements can be fully funded.

Governor Kwankwaso has boldly embarked on a programme to provide free school meals and uniforms to get more children to go to school. But it was ESSPIN's evidence from the classroom that convinced the Governor of the scale of the challenge to raise the quality of teaching and learning in Kano schools. Prospects are now bright for Kano State Government to scale up a package of school improvement measures which ESSPIN is already introducing in 313 Kano schools serving 160,000 children.

The money accessed would be sufficient to repair all the illegible blackboards in Kano schools, provide the first toilets for boys and girls in over 2,800 primary schools, recruit enough teachers to make class sizes manageable (40 pupils in primary, 30 in secondary), and supply the on-the-job training that 62,000 teachers desperately need. Kano's 2,000,000 primary school children now have a better chance of a better education.



Community theatre in Jigawa

'No child of school age will remain at home in this community', promised Alhaji Haliru Bashari, the Dagaci of Chai Chai village after the performance of ESSPIN's community theatre play 'Hannu Da Yawa' in Chai Chai.

The play inspired such comments throughout its tour of Jigawa state from 23 May to 17 June 2011. Twenty-five performances of 'Hannu Da Yawa' were given in Dutse, Kafin Hausa, Malamadori, Ringim, Gumel Buji, Miga and Chai Chai local government areas of Jigawa to a diverse audience of pupils, teachers, parents and community leaders. In Miga over twenty children re-attended school as an immediate result. In Chai Chai, girls were especially responsive to the character of Halima and asked to go to school.

The community theatre project is being implemented by the Youth, Adolescence, Reflection and Action Centre (YARAC) with state-based artistes. It raises awareness of quality basic education issues such as poor infrastructure and girl-child education and challenges communities to get involved with their schools.

Kwara State commissions lesson plans for primary 1-3 teachers

'The Kwara State government is committed to supporting teachers to make teaching and learning more meaningful', said Chief Ayo Ogundeji, former Deputy Governor at the launch of lesson plans for literacy and numeracy for primary 1-3 teachers on Friday, 27 May 2011.

He said the delivery of the 20,000 lesson plan books is another step towards improving the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools in the state.

Alhaji Bolaji Abdullahi, former Honourable Commissioner of Education, Science and Technology said the development of the lesson plans is part of the strategy to correct the poor results recorded after Kwara's first Teacher Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) and the low levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy among pupils. He expressed the confidence that the use of the lesson plans will give Kwara pupils a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, which will benefit every aspect of their lives both now and in the future.

ESSPIN supported the development, design and quality assurance of the lesson plans.

In schools

Lagos State

The State School Improvement Team continues to yield results as monthly reports by the SSIT members in Lagos show an overall 8% increase in enrolment rate in ESSPIN-supported schools from 55,921 (in early 2010) to 60,393 (in 2011). As a result of ESSPIN-supported SSIT intervention, at Ilogbo-Elegba Community Primary School, the enrolment rate increased from 1,181 to 1,391 pupils. The local community responded by constructing a temporary shed for the school to accommodate the increased pupil population.

Kaduna State

ESSPIN's water and sanitation programme was implemented in selected pilot schools in Kaduna State to help improve the school environment, in particular for girls. So far, 21 bore-holes have been dug across the 7 LGEAs where ESSPIN is operating and work is about to begin on a further 40. Jemila Bello, a pupil of LGEA Gwari Road Primary School in Kaduna North, says her parents now allow her to go to school because of the provision of water on the school premises: 'I no longer have to carry water when I am going to school and we do not go out into houses to look for drinking water during break time'.

Kwara State

Along with the commissioning of 20,000 copies of literacy and numeracy lesson plans for use by Primary 1–3 teachers, the learning and classroom environments have changed for 104,954 Primary 1–3 pupils. In Ausar-Ur-Deen II Primary School in Offa, classroom displays reflect the literacy and numeracy work being taught that week. Seating arrangements in most schools have moved from traditional rows into a 'u' shape which has encouraged more pupil participation. The amount of pupil talk has increased.

In communities

Kano State

The SBMC Chairman of Itiqanul Qur'an Islamiyya School in Fagge LGEA has found that with the establishment of SBMCs and their training sessions, he is able to lead and manage people and resources in a much more effective way than he was previously able to with PTAs alone. The SBMC Co-ordinator of Kano SUBEB notes, 'Indeed, ESSPIN has helped us expand and understand our functions. We are now finding it easier to get support from community members because they have been sensitised by ESSPIN. Previously, SUBEB did not have the resources to plan and implement this.'

Enugu State

A large group of stakeholders including officials of education MDAs, traditional rulers, representatives of community associations and civil society endorsed a State Learning Outcome Benchmark for pupils in primary schools. They also set up a working group to develop policy guidelines for SBMC reform in Enugu State.

Jigawa State

In the past, the enrolment of Karnaya Primary School in Dutse LGEA was 122 pupils (87 boys and 35 girls). Although the school had good school buildings, a playground and water, it lacked any toilet facilities. It also lacked effective leadership. With the support of the SSIT, the Head Teacher, Isa Abdullahi, conducted a School Self Evaluation and discovered how to improve his pupils' performance, motivate his teachers, and raise community support. The community was happy with the immediately improved performance of the school and donated books and games facilities and contributed money to build a much needed toilet block. The school enrolment has since increased to 209 students (159 boys and 50 girls).

Quality Assurance

Introduction

School inspections provide crucial information for improving schools. Reports on what happens in schools call those providing education to account. This feeds demand for better education and strengthens backing for efforts to improve.

ESSPIN supports states in reforming fragmented and disjointed school inspection services. These reforms aim to avoid duplication and waste, and complement reforms in federal quality assurance.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

ESSPIN's approach is to introduce radical changes to help states move from inspection systems that check whether schools comply with laws, regulations and procedures to quality assurance systems that support schools in their efforts to deliver quality education and learning opportunities.

A three-pronged approach targets quality assurance at federal, state and institutional levels. The goal is to put in place quality assurance processes, at each level and in each institution, that complement each other.

Strategy

ESSPIN's strategy is to help states work within the framework of the new law transforming the Federal Inspection Service into the National Commission for Education Quality Assurance. ESSPIN helped draft the legislation setting up the Commission and is supporting the new Commission as it develops its strategic plan and trains inspectors. A quality assurance handbook, produced with ESSPIN's help, provides a solid foundation for reforming education inspection systems in states.

ESSPIN helps states put in place a single body responsible for quality assurance that complies with the new law. This may take the form of an educational quality assurance bureau or department. The aim is to ensure consistency in quality assurance inspections and reports, and capture data for education management information systems. The quality assurance bodies will also make sure stakeholders are fully informed of reports and recommendations.

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Support to state quality assurance

ESSPIN helps states set up committees to draft legislation and operational guidelines for new or reorganised education quality assurance services. The committees align quality assurance inspection practices in their respective states with federal systems. Exchange visits between states encourage this.

As well as understanding the principles of quality assurance, those tasked with carrying out evaluations need operating guidelines and appropriate institutional frameworks in which to work. ESSPIN helps states to separate the responsibility for quality assurance and the responsibility for supporting schools. Quality assurance teams make recommendations for schools to improve and school support services help schools carry out the recommendations.

ESSPIN helps strengthen the quality assurance skills of state inspectors through learning-by-doing tasks, mentoring and helping them develop work routines. This goes hand-in-hand with training for school inspectors, State Universal Basic Education Boards and State Ministries of Education in self evaluation and school development planning.

ESSPIN runs training courses for inspectors in writing reports. Short, clear reports in plain language help stakeholders – head teachers, teachers, School-Based Management Committees, parents, Local Government Education Authorities, State Universal Basic Education Boards and others with an interest in education – understand what is needed to improve schools and foster accountability.

Future challenges

The federal law establishing a National Agency for Educational Quality Assurance consolidates reforms and paves the way for strategic planning and training for quality assurance in education. The challenge is to maintain the momentum and act on strategies and plans.

The challenges vary from state to state depending on political support. They include overcoming passivity and dependency, changing mindsets that regard inspection as a low-status function, putting in place quality assurance systems, and helping organisations strengthen their skills in preparing and distributing reports.

ESSPIN builds on progress by leading discussions on how information from inspections can best be used to drive school improvement, by feeding data into education management information systems where it can be used by school advisory services for example.

ESSPIN guiding principles for quality assurance in education

Establish a single quality standard

Make standards, indicators and processes open and transparent

Combine school self evaluations with external evaluation

Include all learners

Ensure findings are valid, reliable and consistent

Ensure findings contribute to school improvement

Make quality assurance reports publicly available

Use evaluations to develop state policy, plans and training programmes to improve schools

Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education

Introduction

In northern Nigeria, Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools are important because, in some states, they account for over four-fifths of all schools. Many of their pupils come from poor families. In Islamiyya schools, two-thirds of the pupils are girls. Communities value these schools and many parents prefer them. Like state schools, many of the Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools are demanding more and better teachers, better facilities and buildings, and better supplies of textbooks and teaching materials.

Both state governments and communities appreciate the value of integrating non-religious and religious subjects into the curricula of Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools. This integration is regarded as essential for children to succeed in modern society. ESSPIN supports this aspiration for integration by helping deepen understanding of the issues and needs, and by developing and testing ways to integrate religious and non-religious subjects in primary school curricula.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

ESSPIN's approach is based on two premises. Firstly, that with a small stimulus from states, rural communities can mobilise themselves and move towards meeting the Education For All targets. Secondly, that dialogue can build trust and groups that have traditionally been inclined to oppose change can become active actors in implementing the very initiatives that they resisted.

Strategy

In the three northern states, ESSPIN consults with state, civil society and religious leaders to develop a strategy that integrates religious and non-religious curricula. The strategy has three elements:

Improving understanding and develop options for integrating religious and non-religious curricula through studies and data collection

Developing guidelines for regulating and monitoring schools to improve the quality of education

Trialling new ways to integrate religious curricula with non-religious curricula.

Qur'anic schools

Tahfeez primary – follow state approved curriculum

Modern Qur'anic day schools

Tahfeez general – do not follow state approved curriculum

Tsangaya boarding schools

bush – pupils work on farms, communities provide food

suburb – pupils do tailoring and other work

urban – pupils often survive by begging

Islamiyya schools

Islamiyya primary – follow state approved curriculum

Islamiyya general

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Bridging gaps

ESSPIN works with education authorities and communities to help develop ways to bridge gaps between religious and non-religious school curricula. This involves arranging dialogues between traditional elders, religious elders, local government education authority staff, head teachers, teachers, malams, parents and pupils. ESSPIN also undertakes research and surveys to gain a better understanding of issues and attitudes.

Establishing systems

Taking public perceptions into account, ESSPIN is helping the states develop supervisory boards for Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya education to develop state management capacity and establish school regulations.

Introducing best practices

ESSPIN also introduces best practices, for example in community participation, enrolment of girls and motivating teachers, and helps states pilot practices they think are appropriate to their situation.

Future challenges

Malams normally avoid getting involved in the development programmes of agencies such as DFID but have responded very positively to ESSPIN's initiatives. Retaining the trust built in the pilot phase will be a major challenge if states are to adopt the models piloted.

ESSPIN will continue to promote better understanding of Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya education. Particular issues to tackle are the place of girls and women in Islamiyya schools, and the Almajari system in Tsangaya schools where students beg to support themselves and the malam.

Another significant challenge is to find funds to roll out integration beyond the pilot schools. To address this, ESSPIN helps states seek funds from federal government, such as the Universal Basic Education Commission. A further way of raising support is by sharing best practices and lessons learnt from ESSPIN's experience at conferences and through a range of other communications.

Common perceptions of Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya education in northern Nigeria:

Quality of education is better in Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools than in state schools

Administrators and teachers are more committed in Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools than in state schools

Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools build the child's moral character

Community ownership makes Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools more efficient than state schools

Parents and communities prefer schools that integrate religious subjects into the curriculum

Traditional elders and religious leaders are concerned about the poor quality of education in state schools

Supervisory boards for Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya education:

Coordinate data collection, policy and planning

Improve the quality of education and introduce integrated curricula

Introduce innovative ways to integrate curricula

Networking and fundraising

Trials of best practices Tsangaya cluster pilot:

Community school complements cluster of Tsangaya schools

The community provides a one-room building for the community school

Children released from Tsangaya school for agreed hours to attend community school

Well trained motivated teachers from the community

Intensive teacher training

Master trainers and supervisors

School support committees

Islamiyya pilot:

Provides good integrated education and satisfies community and parent demands for provision of good quality secular and religious education under one roof

Rural Islamiyya pilot:

Trains female teachers for rural Islamiyya schools where the majority of students are female

Increased numbers of Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education schools and their students are important to government plans for meeting the Education For All (EFA) targets in northern Nigeria.



Writer
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Best of both worlds – Integrating traditional Islamic and modern secular education in northern Nigeria

‘I come to this school for life success’, says twelve year old Nura at the recently established Faragia Model School in Kano State, Northern Nigeria. Nura and his classmates crowd the small classroom provided by the local community, all eager to share in a basic education that provides literacy and numeracy, Hausa (the local language) and Social Studies. This is a first for Nura, who has never attended a government primary school.

For most of the week Nura and his friends attend a Tsangaya school, one of the 23,000 schools in Kano State (over 75% of all schools) that provide an Islamic education. Students in the Tsangaya schools traditionally move away from home to study the holy Qur’an with a Malam (religious leader).

‘I like to learn religion’, says Nura. But many malams and traditional rulers across the North are also conscious of the benefits of a modern, secular education – especially in the job market. They also recognise that with even basic literacy and numeracy a child is more likely to thrive and contribute to society. ‘I want to learn so I can help my parents and my village and the country’, declares Nura.

UKaid’s Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) is working with government and communities to integrate modern secular and traditional Islamic education in northern Nigeria. Ideological resistance to ‘westernisation’ is being reconsidered as a result of an innovative approach that combines thorough analysis with dialogue and growing mutual trust.

Above
Twelve year old Nura (far left and top) at school in Faragia Model School in Kano State.

Under this experimental engagement, Faragia Model School and Daho Community School are two of 28 schools set up to offer part-time modern basic education to children from four or five local Tsangaya schools – nearly 1,000 children in all. ESSPIN supports the training of the community teachers and supervisory and support teachers, and provided initial resources to establish the schools.

Empowering communities with the choice of an education system that best meets their needs has brought support for changes to which they may have been traditionally opposed. It has also brought extra resources with the classroom and new teachers provided by the community and funds found for maintenance. Malams, teachers, parents and community members form School Support Committees to monitor progress and performance.

A robust advisory and support system is essential for improving learning outcomes.

Improving teaching and learning through quality assurance

‘We now have a new way of inspecting and evaluating schools. It is a paradigm shift from the old system of inspection, which wasn’t friendly to schools.’

Tunde Siddiq is the Director of the Quality Assurance Bureau (QAB) in the Kwara State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. He has been the head of the Bureau since it was established in 2009 to monitor the standards of teaching and school management in the state.

‘Before quality assurance was introduced, our focus was on school infrastructure and facilities. We were busy counting the number of chairs and desks. We didn’t care much about classroom activities. Even when we did, we were always looking out for mistakes by teachers’, Siddiq explains. He said this practice placed emphasis away from the most important thing – the pupils.



ESSPIN supported the harmonisation of the Inspectorate Departments in the state education sector, development of an evaluation instrument, recruitment of bureau staff, and their training to re-orientate and build their capacity for the new task.

‘I gained first-hand experience of global trends and best practice in school evaluation when ESSPIN funded our study tour to China and Thailand’, recalls the Director.

Now Siddiq and his team of evaluators working at the head office and six zonal offices see their roles from a different angle. ‘Now we evaluate teaching and learning. Our concern is simply to ensure that learning is taking place in schools’, says Siddiq, himself a former classroom teacher.

VO Adewuyi of the Ilorin Zone corroborates the Director. ‘Now we don’t look for faults. Whatever we do is in collaboration with the teachers to support them to improve their teaching.’

However, the Bureau faces a big challenge, which has seriously hindered its performance.

Siddiq says ruefully, ‘The QAB is grossly underfunded. We should evaluate teaching in all schools in the state. For a long time, we have not even gone to a single school. We have no money to go to the field. Since inception, we have only received N1.5 million. This is very insufficient. We have the skills to do the right thing now but no funds to do it.’

He attributed the situation to poor perception of the role of quality assurance in the education sector by government planners who allocate and approve budget to MDAs. He however expresses the hope that the perception will change and adequate funding will be provided to the Bureau in the near future.

Writer
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Left
Mohammad Adumu,
the father who
was keen to share
his appreciation of
the Tsangaya Cluster
Pilot, with his son.

Parents and communities can support integrated education in Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education schools.

An enthusiastic parent

'In just the two months he has spent attending the new school, my son Abubakar can now read and write alphabets, tell the time and even write his own name. He spent two years attending a public primary school without being able to do any of these,' said Mohammed Adamu, a farmer and father of five in Albasu village.

Schooling options are limited for boys like ten-year-old Abubakar living in Albasu, a remote rural community in Kano State, Northern Nigeria. There are a few public primary schools scattered across the expansive arid land and several Tsangaya schools where young boys are taught to recite the Quran.

Many of the students in Tsangaya schools have to leave home to live at a school far away and support themselves either through street begging or menial jobs after school. Abubakar is fortunate to live close to his local Tsangaya school and to now also go part-time to the new Daho Community School nearby.

Daho Community School is different. Albasu is one of three focal Local Government Areas (LGAs) where ESSPIN is working with government and communities to pilot the integration of traditional Islamic, Quranic and Tsangaya Education (IQTE) with elements of a modern, secular curriculum. Basic Maths, English, Social Studies and Hausa (the local language) are taught in addition to the Islamic subjects of the Tsangaya schools so that every child can get a more complete education.

Abubakar's teacher has undergone a series of ESSPIN supported training courses to deliver child-centred learning and teach the children in an interactive way. With 28 new community-supported schools established in 2010, the objective of this innovative approach is to bring a broader basic education to the grassroots, in a way that respects the local culture. Nearly 1,000 children and over 30 teachers have already benefited.

The advantages of this pilot are many. The communities have been carefully consulted as to the education choices they want to make for their boys and girls and have responded positively in supporting the initiative and providing resources. Beneficiaries are equipped with a modern education which is recognised by many local religious and traditional leaders as being an essential complement to Islamic study in a modern society.

Mohammed Adamu has strong views on education. 'I have been around in my years as a nomad and I have seen what people with an education can do. I have no money but I will try to the best of my ability to see that my children get an education. If communities and governments work together, it can be done. We built this school with our bare hands and this land, on which it stands, was donated by the village head.'

With rising community demand for integrated IQTE schools in Kano state, ESSPIN is working with the local education authorities to ensure that communities and schools can provide broader educational opportunities for their children.

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