

Making the education system inclusive for all children: ESSPIN's Inclusive Education approach, achievements and evidence 2010 – 2016

Practice Paper

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Introduction

Since 2010 ESSPIN has been supporting partners in Nigeria to work towards an inclusive education system. Inclusive education grew out of global disability rights movements, but is increasingly characterised as an education system which meets the needs of all learners. There is particular focus on addressing gender-based, economic and ethnolinguistic forms of exclusion. There is no single definition of inclusive education, but the global Enabling Education Network (EENET)'s definition is: 'Changing the education system so that it is flexible enough to accommodate any learner.'

ESSPIN (the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria), funded by UK's Department for International Development) has developed a strong focus on inclusive education. Since its inception in 2008, ESSPIN offered a range of approaches to partners to boost the educational participation of all children. Since 2010, the programme has piloted different strategies at different levels in the six ESSPIN-supported states, Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara and Lagos, to test which approaches are most relevant to local and state level capacities and attitudes.

This paper describes the inclusion interventions ESSPIN has developed and promoted. It outlines the basis and characteristics of each approach, and describes the results emerging from different approaches.

Exclusion in Nigeria

Ainscow's characterisation of 'Presence, Participation and Achievement' has guided ESSPIN's interconnected approach to inclusive education. Inclusive education efforts should look for whether all children are present in education; whether they are participating in learning and development activities with other children; and whether they are making progress in learning achievement. If these elements are in place, it is fair to describe the education system as inclusive.

Right
ESSPIN is ensuring that no school-aged child is excluded, breaching the barriers of gender, disability, poverty, geography, language, albinism and nomadism.



Presence is a major challenge in Nigeria. Many children remain out of school in spite of considerable government investments in access initiatives since the 1970s. Nigeria has 10 million out of school children (UNICEF, 2012). Children are excluded because of poverty, gender, disability, geography, language, albinism and nomadism. Issues of gender, child protection and increasingly conflict, throw up further barriers to the education of the poorest children.

Disability is a major issue. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that there are approximately 19 million disabled people living in Nigeria, (equivalent to 20% of the country's total population), although there is no robust data either way. It is estimated that 50% of out-of-school children in Nigeria are disabled .

Participation has been undermined by a 'one size fits all' approach to basic education, where teaching is not differentiated to support a diverse range of learners; community and teachers do not help children facing difficulties come to school; and widely condoned corporal punishment, conflict and sexual harassment present further barriers. In parts of the North, conflict and violence has heightened parents' concerns about secular education, and widespread family poverty has prevented many parents from bearing the opportunity costs and direct expenses of keeping children in school .

These weaknesses of access and engagement have contributed to extremely poor achievement: learning outcomes are extremely low, particularly for the most marginalised socio-economic groups . Achievement is undermined by frequent use of English-medium education, without widespread teaching capacity for supporting children who do not have English as a first language . Teachers have received generally weak professional development, and access to reading and learning materials is low both within and outside school .



Right
ESSPIN is empowering teachers to be able to support a diverse range of learners.

Nigeria recognises that the inclusive education principle should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society . If Nigeria’s education system is to leave no-one behind, it will need to do more to orient itself to the circumstances of excluded and marginalised children, overcoming the barriers they face to taking part in learning.

ESSPIN’s inclusive education approach

ESSPIN’s overall intended impact has been that more children—especially girls—attend school and learn more.

This Impact statement addresses three fundamental problems in Nigerian basic education:

Access: too many children are not enrolled in school or not attending regularly

Equity: too many disadvantaged children, especially girls, are unable to complete basic education

Quality: too many schools are unable to provide a safe and effective learning environment for children

The theme of inclusive education has been developed to unify ESSPIN’s strategy to address these three problems¹¹. The priority is on strengthening the capacity of education systems to proactively address barriers to inclusion through existing structures. ESSPIN has been targeting access and equity by supporting reforms aimed at meeting the learning needs of all children at a) policy level by supporting inclusive structures, b) school level, through inclusive teaching practices, and c) community level through promoting inclusive cultures (see diagram below):

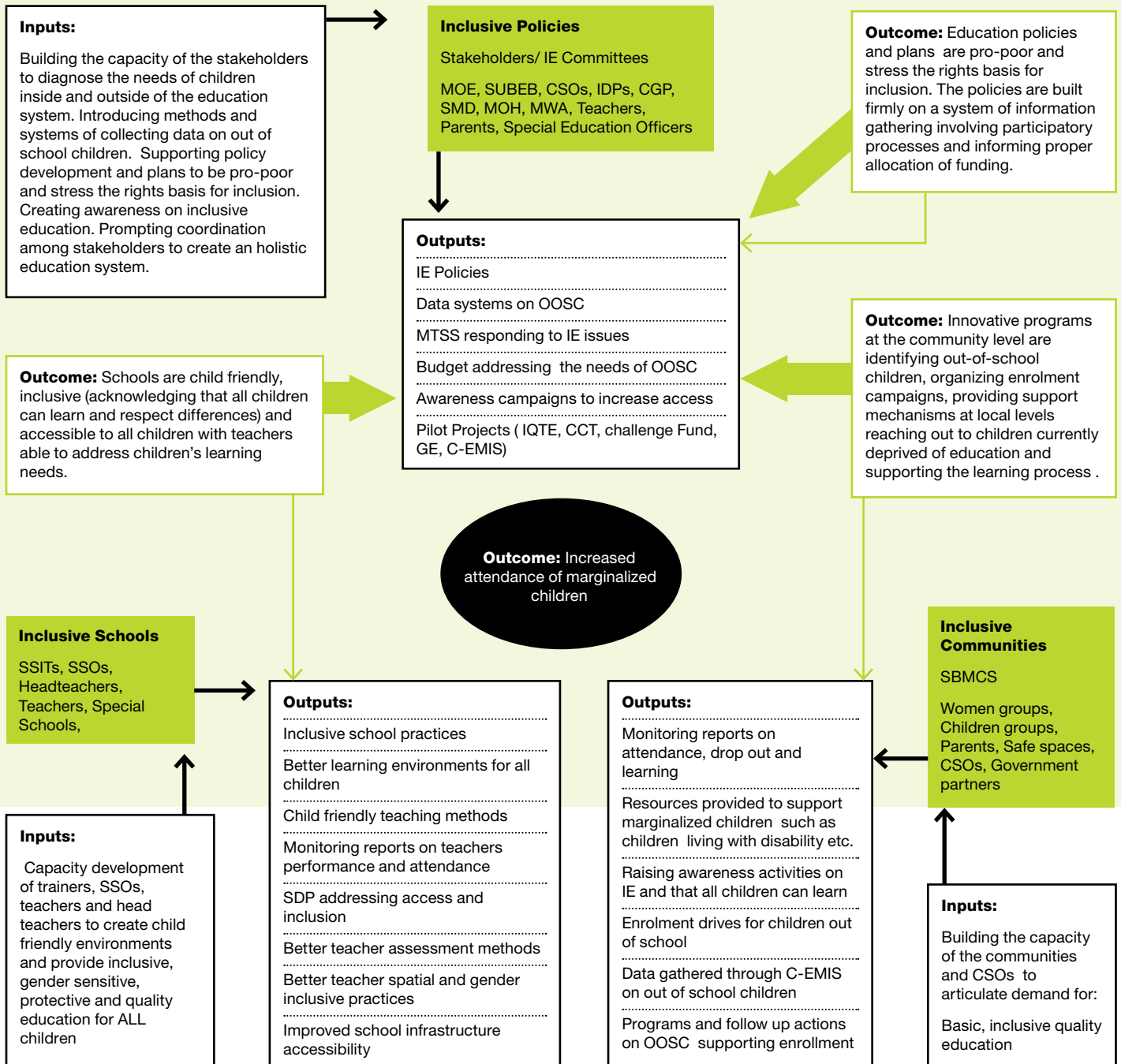
ESSPIN’s approach to boosting access has focused not just on entry to school, but on mobilising support to keep children coming to school regularly; engaging communities actively in education management so that their priorities are listened to; and improving teaching practice to respond to children’s learning needs.



¹¹ ESSPIN Inclusive Education Strategy Paper, 2015

Overview of ESSPIN interventions to boost inclusion and gender equity

Inclusive Education in ESSPIN



Community level: strengthening school based management committees and community action for inclusive education

A major focus of ESSPIN's inclusive education support to states has been its work to strengthen community participation in school governance through developing school based management committees (SBMCs). ESSPIN supported states to domesticate federal SBMC guidelines (2006) in each state through a state and community level visioning process, and then supported government to partner with civil society, developing their capacity to work together to activate, train, mentor and monitor SBMCs according to the state specific policies. ESSPIN supported states to pilot the SBMC development model initially in 1,151 schools, but between 2010 and 2016, 12,726 SBMCs have been supported, with states increasingly using their own funds to scale the model up, and independently contracting civil society to support the process.

The CSOs and Department of Social Mobilisation in each state's Universal Basic Education Bureau (SUBEB) work together in an innovative partnership to build collaboration between civil society and government, but keeping CSOs' independent voice.

Most SBMCs have between 10 and 17 members, 30-40% of whom are women.

167,000 SBMC members are being reached through continuous follow up trainings and regular monitoring visits in ESSPIN states covering 5,268,444 school children, 2,548,180 of whom are girls .

SBMCs have been particularly active in mobilising resources to provide direct support to marginalised children to attend and stay in school, in developing inclusive school development plans, and in advocating to government for resources needed to improve schools for all children.

SBMCs improving school access and retention for marginalised children

From the beginning of ESSPIN's SBMC training, (which included sessions on inclusive education, disability, gender and ethnicity), feedback quickly came back that communities were enthusiastic about their role in making sure that all children were included.

Actions that SBMCs are taking include helping to develop inclusive school communities, bringing in the poorest children, disabled children, girls and ethnic minorities, and working with schools to improve the learning and retention of all children regardless of their background. SBMCs are finding ways to assist less privileged pupils, mainly from poorer families and minority ethnic groups. At HayimBanke LGEA School in Kaduna State, the SBMC reported:

Right
SBMCs have been trained and supported by ESSPIN to effectively manage schools.



“Through the SBMC we have achieved a lot and the school is now in good shape. Based on our understanding of our role, we succeeded in bringing 22 out-of-school children back and provided school uniform for them.”

Accounts of SBMC members supporting inclusive education are drawn from the regular reporting of Social Mobilisation Officers who visit schools to mentor and monitor SBMCs, and CSO reports written by the CSOs who partner with and support them. There are many examples and case studies which describe SBMCs bringing girls, disabled and poorer children back into school.

The SMO reports which ESSPIN supported states to develop to track SBMC development have been adopted by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) at Federal Level and slightly revised with input from UNICEF, ESSPIN and UBEC. More recent enrolment campaigns in states have focused successfully on girls' education and on disabled children's education.

In Albasu LGEA of Kano State, local CSO officers reported: “there is also an increase in the number of girls coming to schools – as a result of the intervention of traditional leaders, some schools which had no girl pupils now have half of some classes made up on girls. Teachers who were not attending have now returned to school because they know that the traditional leader is coming and that he will be reporting directly to the LG Chairman – Head Teachers are now afraid”.

Women's and children's SBMC Committees

Special emphasis is given to the participation of women and children in SBMCs, as initial research¹⁵ (2009) highlighted women's and children's participation in school decision-making to be highly constrained. ESSPIN's support to SBMCs has resulted in communities playing a strong supporting role on inclusive education and inclusive school governance, making sure that all children, including those commonly excluded, are in school and learning and that women's and children's voices are heard on issues of school improvement. According to SMO reports 7,959 SBMCs out of a total of 12,726 are taking measurable actions based on concerns raised by women and children (63%).



Right
A typical SBMC meeting setting in a school community.

¹⁵ Poulsen H (2009)

Findings on Women's and Children's Committees from ESSPIN Inclusive Education Review 2016:

A relatively new development has been providing support to these committees through capacity development workshops to support women and children to articulate their concerns for the education of children and for improvement in their schools. While the 2014 SBMC review indicated variable levels of confidence and remit among women's committees, all the women's committees visited during ESSPIN's 2016 inclusive education review exhibited strong confidence and a clear mission on inclusive education¹⁶. At SBMC forums organised at local government level, both women's and children's voices are now heard on how all children can be supported to attend school and learn, and how the system must adapt to include all.

Community members reported to the women's committee in Ojuwoye School, Lagos, that a single mother was physically abusing her children. She was called to the women's meeting and asked to change. The committee found some money to help her and she has reportedly stopped treating her children badly.

Initially, there had been concerns about whether women's committees in more conservative areas like Kano and Jigawa could take on the dynamic role envisaged for them (SBMC Review 2014). However, the women's committees visited in Kano for the inclusive education review were extremely confident and active in community advocacy for school improvement and for marginalised children.

"We go round to the communities and their houses to find the problems, we talk and sit with the parents, ask them what problems they are finding. We come back and sit down to find solutions."..."Over a hundred children have been brought back to school."

Civil society and government working in partnership for inclusive education

ESSPIN has supported CSOs to partner with State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Departments of Social Mobilisation at LGA and state level to develop SBMCs and implement state specific SBMC policies. This support has taken the shape of activation of SBMCs, then much capacity development including training at cluster level, followed by regular mentoring and monitoring of SBMCs in the longer term by teams of CSO and local Social Mobilisation staff. This partnership is known as the CGP – Community-Government Partnership (CGP). Inclusive Education has been a core component of capacity development for CSOs, for SMOs, for SBMCs and for women's and children's SBMC Committees since the inception of ESSPIN.

¹⁶ ESSPIN Inclusive Education Review, 2016

The support was process driven, with regular ESSPIN and partner review meetings to chart progress and adjust support as necessary.

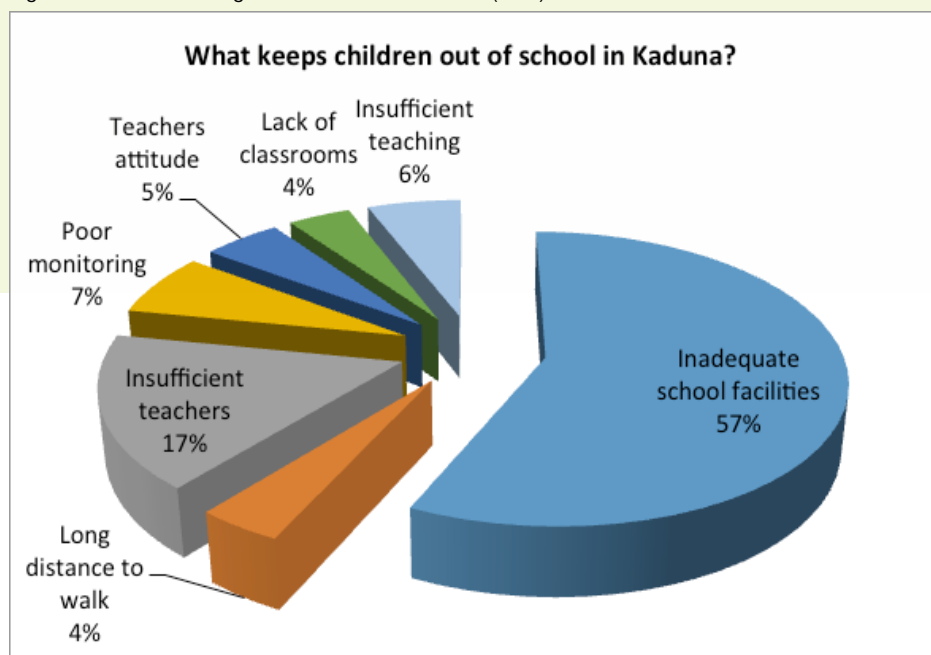
With the ESSPIN extension agreed for two additional years (2014-16), more emphasis was placed on community voice and accountability and ESSPIN provided technical support to a selected 60 CSOs to conduct participatory research for advocacy on identified issues of access, quality and equity.

CSOs in all states selected inclusive education as one of their two advocacy issues and went ahead to develop research tools to use in selected schools and conduct the joint research. In Kwara State the inclusive education research focus was more targeted – on the issue of language of instruction in schools.

This was due to the CGPs observing that children from some communities struggled more than others with English as the medium for instruction and were dropping out of school or attending irregularly as a result. Another three states' CSOs selected teacher deployment for their research and advocacy, and in their final advocacy report linked the uneven deployment of teachers to schools, and the lack of female teachers in some states to inclusive education. Lagos State CSOs chose school infrastructure alongside inclusive education as an advocacy issue, and Kano State CSOs selected child protection and linked this to their findings on IE.

Based on their research, the CSOs, working together as a platform in each state, conducted advocacy events with key state government decision-makers in May/June 2016 based on the research findings and analysis. Many commitments and promises were made and agreements reached on making schools more inclusive across all six states, and as ESSPIN closes, the CSOs have action plans in place to follow up on all commitments in the short and longer term.

Figure 2. Research findings from Kaduna State CSOs (2016)



Building from inclusive cultures to inclusive policies

The ‘inclusive cultures’ aspect of ESSPIN’s inclusion framework was intended to build on existing priorities and values. Having been given a clear mandate from ESSPIN-supported efforts to generate state SBMC policies, SBMCs understood that their role was to protect and support all the children in their community. CSOs recording SBMC priorities were soon able to generate reports for SUBEB which showed communities bringing in more marginalised children and demanding support for them to continue in education.

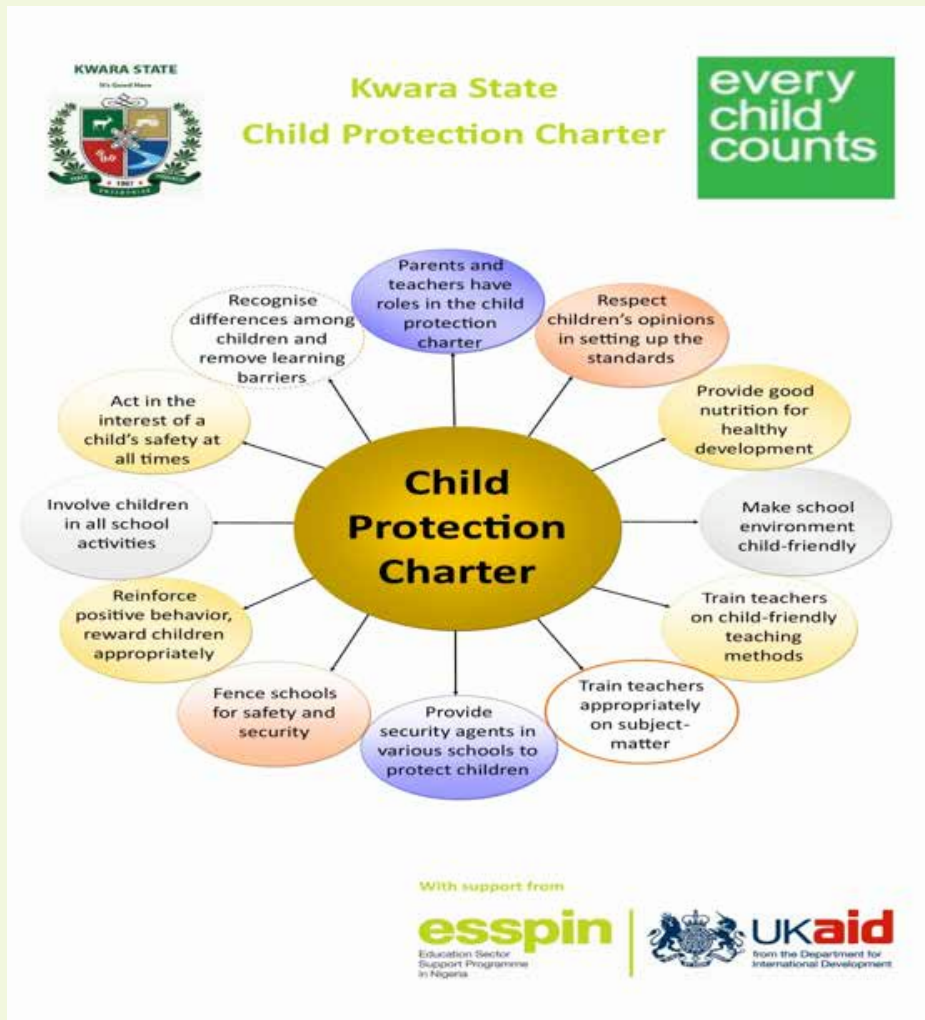
Joint action to improve protection for marginalised children

SBMCs, particularly Women’s Committees, also intervene in child protection situations in and around the school. Over the last few months Civil Society and Government Partners (CGPs) have helped more than 6,000 schools and communities to put in place child protection charters. They have also been involved in the development of reporting mechanisms and referral pathways for protection incidents which occur in and around schools. Below is an example of a child protection charter from Kwara State, produced by the CGP, which highlights what children should expect from their school with regard to safety and protection.

Below
The civil society is working in partnership and the government supported by ESSPIN, to put together a child protection charter to protect and support all children in their community.



Policy level: advocating for inclusive policies



Prior to ESSPIN's focus on inclusive education, there was little serious policy or governance attention to the inclusion of excluded groups, or to reworking the education system to become inclusive in line with Nigeria's commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. While Nigeria signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the country has not provided reports against its commitments. The 1993 Disability Decree had strong budget allocation rules for disabled learners, but no efforts have been made to implement it. Legislation on disability rights has been stuck in federal processes for several years. A UBEC Intervention Fund for Special Needs Education was available for states to draw on, but efforts were often sporadic and not based on strategic state-wide priorities to develop an inclusive education system.

Several legal instruments in states existed to protect the rights of people with disabilities, but not to promote full inclusive education. Kaduna State's Universal Basic Education law (2005, amended 2007), provides for all children, including those with disabilities, to access public schools. Lagos State Special People's Law (LSSPL), 2011 was seen as the most advanced in Nigeria, as it specifies in detail the steps needed to bring people with disabilities into education. Several local and international NGOs had collaborated on relatively small-scale programmes to promote inclusive education models, and in Kaduna Sightsavers had helped to set up an inclusive education forum to promote wider change.

ESSPIN's SBMC and CSO work showed that there was strong interest and demand among both communities and education authorities for more practical ways to include marginalised groups in education. Children with disabilities were increasingly being brought into schools by SBMCs, but there was little sense of what support was available to help them attend and participate in education. Many state governments were enthusiastic about the 'no child left behind' agenda linked to the Millennium Development Goals, but had not been supported to look at what changes would be needed for them to deliver in the long term.

While several major donor programmes were engaged in demonstrating good practice on the inclusion of girls and nomadic children, there was little response to demand for better ways to make the education system inclusive of learners with disabilities.

The positive grassroots commitment to inclusion and equity, which had already been demonstrated, underpinned ESSPIN's inclusive education policy work. With ESSPIN's support to bring people together, organise meetings and fund research, CSOs were able to ask Ministries of Education for new inclusive education policies. To support these requests, CSOs were able to bring in SBMCs who could state directly why inclusive education was a priority for them and their communities.

¹The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was set up the 2004 UBE Act to manage disbursement of special Intervention Funds for basic education sourced from an annual retention of 2% of the Consolidated Federal Revenue. UBEC monitors utilisation of Intervention Funds through SUBEBs at State level.

ESSPIN's inclusion team aimed to create more opportunities for civil society and government to identify, plan and monitor their own priorities in building inclusive education. ESSPIN has built on the Kaduna forum model, bringing stakeholders together to create practical and comprehensive inclusive education policies and strategies, from state to federal level.

State level policy development

In all ESSPIN supported states, inclusion is being implemented as part of basic education sector planning rather than a separate program or a secondary concern. ESSPIN conducted advocacy activities via workshops, conferences and trainings involving education stakeholders, communities and local leaders aiming to increase awareness around inclusive education and identify strategies to reach out to children deprived of education.

Key policy milestones include:

- Awareness creation on inclusive education in all the six ESSPIN supported states
- Integrated approach to programming and based on evidence
- Constituency building and partnership for inclusive education in Nigeria
- State level inclusive education policy in place with ownership and state commitment
- IE desk officers and committee in place and strengthened
- Sustained capacity development of LGEA staff with clear job description
- National IE policy supported and presented at the Joint Consultative Committee on Education
- National dialogue on IE lead by the Federal Ministry of Education
- Surveys/quantitative data on out of school children in Kaduna, Jigawa and Enugu
- Community EMMIS and small scale surveys in Kwara, Lagos and Jigawa
- Promote a twin – track approach to inclusive education in Lagos, Kaduna and Kwara

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Teachers are specially trained to deliver competent lessons to all types of learners.



ESSPIN initially supported states in the formation of Inclusive Education Committees in all six states to:

lead inclusion work

take decisions through active participation from SMoE, SUBEB, Education Stakeholders, a wide range of civil society organisations and international development partners

develop inclusive education policy and implementation strategies

guide and support the implementation of inclusion in the state

lobby for funding at national and state Level

ESSPIN team efforts in close cooperation with the IE committees have taken place at several levels – with MoE/SUBEB (policy, reforms and planning) and with local authorities at Local Government level (strengthening systems, building capacity and targeting planning). The emphasis placed on each of these levels always depended on the local political, social, economic and cultural context. Regular meetings have taken place in every state since 2012 with Inclusive Education Committees. The aim of these meetings has been to first increase awareness and advocate for inclusive education, then formulate policies, and later on to lobby on implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy Frameworks. Committee members and ESSPIN team have conducted regular meetings and workshops to raise awareness on inclusive education especially at the SUBEB, MOE and LGEA level.

As a result, all ESSPIN-supported states have in place an inclusive education policy and/or a strategy with actions targeting disadvantaged children and reaching out to all marginalised groups. The policies developed by State Ministries of Education and IE Committees with support from ESSPIN involve clear objectives and strategies with a set of planned activities to respond to diversity and the education needs of all children. These state policies developed are generally practical and outline clear responsibilities for schools, SUBEB departments and SMoE, as well as other ministries and departments. Different emphases are found in different states: for example, in Kaduna, State IE policy now mandates that Albino children should be exempted from school uniform rules to allow covering up to protect themselves from the sun.

Some conclusions

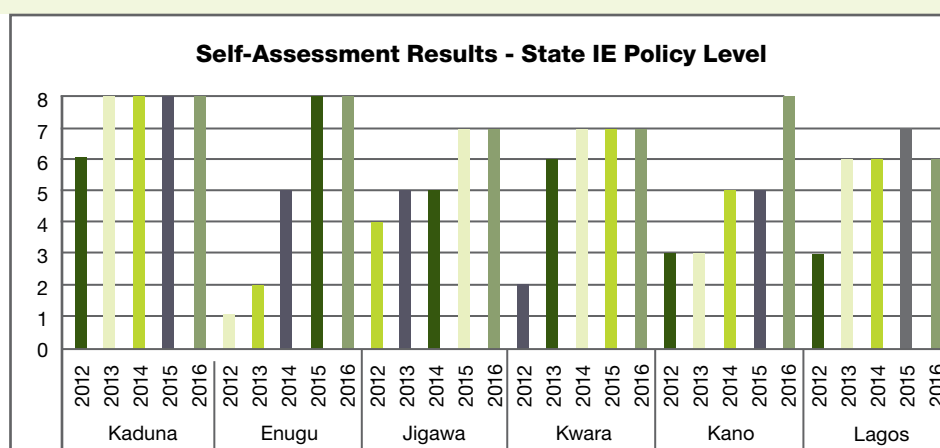
Since 2012, ESSPIN has facilitated stakeholder self assessments to track progress in advocating for policy change. As shown in the graph below, representing the results of stakeholder self assessments (see section 6), each state is on a steady upwards trajectory for inclusive education policies. A qualitative A to D rating scale has been converted to numerical scores 0 to 8 for data handling purposes in Figure 4, below .

3 Institutional supports to policy implementation

One of the biggest challenges to delivering inclusive education policy is working out which barriers to education are largest and/or most urgent. Data collection in this area has been weak in many states. ESSPIN has supported government and civil society teams in all states to produce more rigorous data and analysis on these issues. ESSPIN has supported out of school surveys in five states. These aimed to fill the gaps on the lack of statistics and information on children who are out of school and to identify the reasons why. Budget plans are being influenced by civil society to respond to this data, allocating resources efficiently where needed.

States have also been encouraged and supported to deliver capacity development plans for education support staff, especially at the LGEA level, to ensure proper implementation of inclusive policies. The institutional development framework developed at LGEA level with the support of ESSPIN has enabled the creation of structures following up the implementation of inclusion beyond state to the local and school level. As such efforts have been placed in reorienting existing gender desk officer in the north, special education, or social mobilisation officers in the south roles in focusing more broadly towards inclusion.

Figure 4. Inclusive Education Self Assessment Results



¹⁷ ESSPIN Self Assessment Reports 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016

This chimes with ESSPIN efforts to support and strengthen the role of gender and inclusion desk officers within SUBEB. Discussions have further involved how to avoid duplication in transport costs with SMOs visiting schools, and how to ensure that gender and inclusion desk officers can train, orient, and support other staff at LGEA level, rather than setting up parallel relationships with schools.

Out of school surveys in Kaduna, Jigawa and Enugu

ESSPIN has been working with stakeholders in Kaduna¹⁸, Jigawa¹⁹ and Enugu states to identify the number of out-of-school children to support the State Government's plans of achieving universal access to education for all children. Of particular concern is the large number of out-of-school children in all the three states. The surveys' key objectives have been:

to gather information on out-of-school children and the responsible factors

to support the States with adequate information that will inform decision-making for education of marginalised children

to guide the planned enrolment campaign and targeted advocacies for attendance and transition at basic education and senior secondary school levels

to inform Government on policies and programmes to reduce the number of out-of-school children

In Kaduna State

The Out of School Survey in 2012 was a key building block in developing an inclusive education policy:

Number of Out of school children in Kaduna – 'Out of school survey 2012'	Male	Female
	92,510	86,222



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All children are encouraged to learn together regardless of their physical challenges.

¹⁸Out of school survey report Kaduna, ESSPIN April 2013

¹⁹Out of school survey report Jigawa, ESSPIN May 2015

²⁰Out of school survey report Enugu, ESSPIN July 2015

“The first challenge was knowing the children who were really out of school let alone knowing the reason. ESSPIN supported 75% of the Out of School Survey. Then ESSPIN set up a committee to develop an IE policy, and advocacy and communication subcommittees worked on promoting the policy.”
SUBEB IE and Gender Desk Officer, Kaduna

In Enugu State some major findings were:

Just over 1 in 4 (28.6%) children were out of school in 2014 - a total of 416,832 children, including 210,605 boys and 206,227 girls aged 3-18 years. The out-of-school children include:

110,572 children who have never attended school, including 54,513 boys and 56,059 girls

306,260 children who have dropped out of school, including 156,092 boys and 150,168 girls

Gender differences between out-of-school boys and girls are relatively small, with a higher number and proportion of boys out of school from the ages of 5-15 years. At age 15-18 years, the gap narrows with 37% of boys and 37.1% of girls out of school.

Children were out-of-school for a variety of reasons, but most commonly due to financial problems (21.4%) and a range of medical issues – physical disability (14.2%), mental health (9.6%), hearing impairment (6.4%), HIV/AIDS stigma (4.8%), as well as general medical reasons (11.5%).

In Jigawa State the major findings include:

Just over 1 in 3 children (35.8%) were out of school in 2014 - a total of 820,930 children, including 420,680 boys and 400,250 girls aged 3-18 years. The out-of-school children include:

733,382 children who have never attended school, including 370,666 boys and 362,716 girls

87,548 children who have dropped out of school, including 50,014 boys and 37,534 girls

Gender differences between out-of-school boys and girls are relatively small until senior secondary school where a higher number of boys are out of school than girls. However, it is likely that the number of females aged 15-18 who are out of school is underreported in the survey due to early marriage. At 15-18 years, many girls in Jigawa are no longer children in their parents' household as they become wives and mothers.

Children were out-of-school for a variety of reasons, but most commonly due to financial problems, distance, parental lack of interest, and parents preferring IQTE, although reasons varied by those children who had dropped out and those who had never attended.

A total of 95,468 children attend Islamiyya/Quranic schools only – approximately 1 in 25 children (4.1%). Just under half of these (46.7%) were 6-14 years old (basic education age). A further 36.7% were 15-18 years (senior secondary school age) and mostly girls.

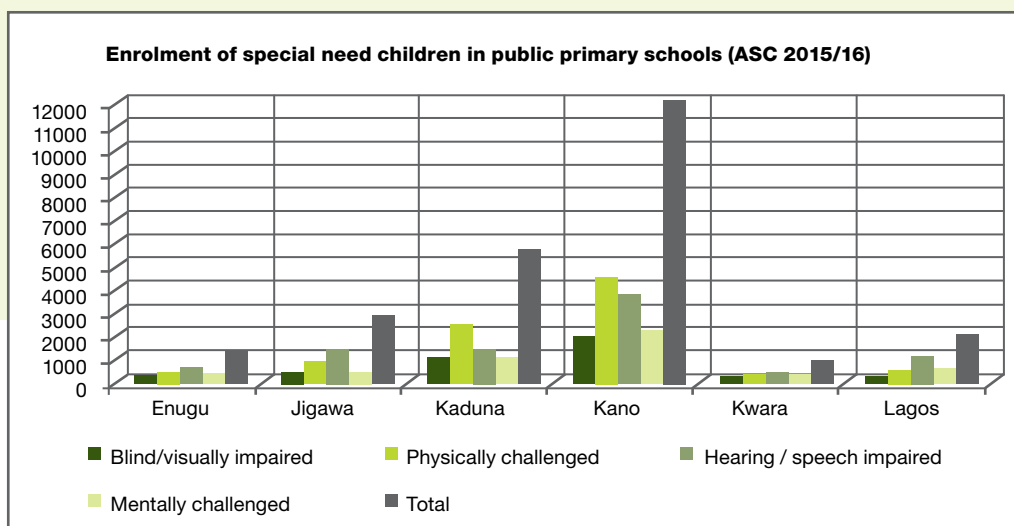
Identifying children with disability

Through out of school surveys conducted in Kaduna, Enugu and Jigawa States, ESSPIN has been trying to identify the number of children with disability who are out of school. In parallel, ESSPIN is supporting state data teams to regularly track the number of children with disability in the annual school census. While there are challenges with estimating who is disabled and who is not, this is hopefully a first step towards building disability into EMIS.

Communities supporting data and information gathering

School-based management committees are actively supporting children to enrol, regularly attend and learn in schools. They are also tracking the reduction of dropout rates and newly enrolled children. More importantly, SBMCs are identifying the barriers children face in accessing and learning in schools, in order to target interventions to tackle their needs. The table below is an example of data collected in Kwara State by SMOs, who asked SBMCs to estimate how many children facing enrolment challenges they had brought into school.

Figure 4. Inclusive Education Self Assessment Results



Kwara: SMO Estimates of children excluded from school enrolled/brought back by SBMCs, 2011-14

	Girls	Boys	Total	Disability	Financial barriers	Ethnic minority
Number of children in State enrolled due to SBMC action	9,881	10,381	20,262	327	5,268	3,033
Number of children returned due to SBMC action	1,557	1,587	3,144	94	987	720

ESSPIN has been utilising these instruments to understand the barriers and opportunities faced by children with disability at the level of the family and household, the wider community, the local institutions (schools, local government and NGOs, etc.), and the wider system or structures (the national government, policies, economic systems, etc.).

C-EMIS: community data informing understanding of exclusion

In Jigawa and Kwara, ESSPIN provided funding and technical support over two years to pilot C-EMIS (community based education management information system) in which communities produce their own research to capture barriers to education experienced by marginalised groups.

This data identified barriers keeping the poorest children out of school, such as levies used to patch gaps in school funding, and basic living costs forcing children into work or begging . Announcements were made in Kwara that school levies would be reduced. The C-EMIS results in Jigawa, which helped to inform broader Out of School Survey findings, gave impetus to work with the Global Partnership on Education to establish cash transfers to address poverty barriers in education.

Federal Inclusive Education Policy Development

Inclusive education was viewed in 2011 primarily in terms of disability and ‘special needs’. Thus, a series of awareness workshops and advocacy meetings have been organised on the course of the years to address the understanding of concepts of inclusive education. This lack of clear concepts, coupled with unwillingness to shift thinking around segregated ‘special education’ being a solution, resulted in delays in ensuring that national legislation was in line with international conventions.

In June 2016, the National Policy on Inclusive Education was finalised by the Federal Ministry of Education with the support of ESSPIN and is currently awaiting approval from the next Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) in 2017. The policy was developed in close cooperation with the Universal Basic Education Commission

(UBEC,) National education Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Commission for Mass Literacy (NMEC), Civil Society and ESSPIN partners after numerous consultations at National and State Level.

After the drafting of the policy, a national dialogue on inclusive education was organised to provide further conceptual clarifications on inclusive education, increase awareness on the importance of inclusive education, introduce the policy and share best practices of its implementation in Nigeria.

Below
ESSPIN is mobilising basic school supplies to encouraged all marginalised and out-of-school children to access quality basic education.



The dialogue provided a platform for initial discussions among educational stakeholders, teachers, parents, civil society representatives and international development partners at Federal Level on the strategies and resources that can best support inclusive educators and those who support them in all the states in Nigeria. As inclusive education gets increasingly taken up within international policy discourses, and reinforced by the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4) it has become imperative to explore and identify best practices that respond to diversity and unequal contexts of schooling for marginalised children in Nigeria.

The communiqué developed at the end of the national dialogue clearly state key recommendations to support the implementation process of the inclusive education policy:

There is the need for advocacy and sensitization to policy makers and relevant stakeholders on IE.

Related to (i) there is a mechanism already in place across all states of Nigeria for broad sensitisation of communities on inclusive education through School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) the membership of which includes the traditional and religious institutions. Provide resources for SBMC training/ refresher training on roles and responsibilities including IE.

Capacity development by training and retraining of regular and special teachers on inclusive teaching methodologies

Identify, employ and develop the capacity of Inclusive Education Desk Officers to work alongside Gender and other relevant Desk Officers within SUBEB Departments of Social Mobilisation and linked to School Services Departments.

UBEC involvement in implementation of inclusion

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 2014 lays great emphasis on issues of Special Needs Education. Furthermore, the UBE Act of 2004 also emphasises on the need to institute special interventions, as such it mandated UBEC to mobilise and enlighten stakeholders on how to ensure their commitment and participation in the Basic Education delivery process so that the objectives are realised especially at the State, LGEA and Community levels.

In order to accommodate special needs education, the Federal Government of Nigeria, approved 2% of 2% of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) to UBE Commission to support States to cater for the education of children with disability, which the Commission has been disbursing since 2005 to SUBEBs and to selected qualified private providers. On the course of the ESSPIN program several attempts have been made to revise the funding guidelines in line with promoting inclusive education. However, these efforts were only forthcoming after the development of the Federal level Policy on inclusive education where UBEC was actively participating on the course of all the development process.

Based on the outcomes of the 2015 monitoring reports carried out in all the 36 states for the fund disbursement of 2013 an interactive workshop was held with the all the State Desk Officers in Kaduna on July 2016 where ESSPIN team was invited to support. The workshop aimed at challenging UBEC's response to the education of children with disability in Nigeria.

ESSPIN's representative introduced the forthcoming National Policy on Inclusive Education and elaborated on how UBEC funding response could be linked to the policy implementation targets and vision.

Inclusive education at school level

Some of the key outcomes of workshop communiqué included:

That existing schools and classrooms should be modified to accommodate all children with disability

That UBEC mandates States to include Special Needs Education trainings in the Teacher Professional Development Programme (TPDP) annually as approved by the National Council on Education (NCE) 2009

That UBEC should solicit through the Federal Ministry of Education upward review from 2% to 5% CRF allocation for Special Needs Education as obtained in ECCDE

ESSPIN's approach to teacher development has been to help establish the foundations for effective teaching within public primary schools, nomadic schools and Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education Centres (IQTEs). Lesson plans, teacher development structures and school leadership development have been provided to professionalise teaching. Within that, teachers have been encouraged to engage all children in their class and, in recent years, to address more of the needs of different learners.

Barriers to learning in the classroom

At the beginning of ESSPIN programme, if you happened to pass by a Nigerian classroom, the sound you would hear was of pupils chanting and chorusing answers repetitively. If you heard nothing, then pupils would be copying work from a chalkboard that the teacher had copied from the textbook. Pupils were taught en masse, and rarely seen as individuals with different needs. This didactic approach suited few pupils and numerous assessments have indicated that very few of them were achieving expected learning outcomes at the end of the school year. Addressing individual pupils' needs is one of the biggest challenges to teaching and learning in Nigerian schools and is something ESSPIN has, from the beginning, made central to its support to schools.

School Improvement Program

ESSPIN's School Improvement Program (SIP) activities are all designed with aspects of inclusion central to their delivery. Different tools have been designed and implemented to support schools, LGEAs and States to take more ownership of the SIP and through their use inclusion has been strengthened. These tools include a lesson observation proforma that goes from school to State level.

The reporting system looks at three aspects of school improvement: "teachers delivering an effective lesson", "professional leadership" and "better planning". Each aspect is divided into three standards: effective, inclusive and advanced. The inclusive and advanced standards are state specific and have been developed by stakeholders from the state with the support of ESSPIN specialists. This approach has ensured stakeholder involvement in setting goals on inclusive education and has enabled states, LGEAs and schools to assess their own commitment and progression in school improvement and inclusive education.

Improving inclusive practices in schools

Inclusion is for all pupils. Stakeholders working with ESSPIN specialists have developed different training and support modules to improve inclusive teaching and learning processes in schools. Trainings on, for example effective use of praise, use of teaching aids, gender balanced questioning, managing pupils' behaviour, meeting the needs of all pupils and different ways of assessing pupils' learning have been stepped down through the system of State School Improvement Teams (SSITs) to School Support Officer (SSO) support to schools. SSOs carry out school support visits on a regular basis. The visits provide on-the-job-support to Head Teachers and Class Teachers and ensure that the learning from the training and inclusive practices are implemented in the classroom.



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Inclusion is for all pupils: ESSPIN is ensuring all children learn together.

Head Teachers are supported through a leadership programme which promotes the meeting the needs of all pupils and engenders collaboration with the schools' SBMC to make sure the school and the class teachers' behaviours meet the needs of individual pupils.

In collaboration with the SBMC, schools in some areas have developed an inclusive school policy and set clear guidelines for all staff and pupils. Collaboration between school and its community is encouraged to help all pupils including those with special needs be supported both at school and at home.

Inclusive practices at classroom level

After seven years of ESSPIN supported SIP activities, changes are being seen in classrooms. Today, ESSPIN-supported schools are more likely to offer an interactive and inclusive classroom. Through ESSPIN supported Lesson Plans, teachers are now using different teaching approaches, classroom management styles and teaching aids to encourage all pupils to learn.

Teachers are expected to be better able to address pupils' different abilities by adjusting their lesson plan activities or by adding suitable activities for pupils at different levels of learning. Lesson plans for upper grades of primary produced by ESSPIN now help teachers plan activities for more advanced, average and less advanced learners.

Now a classroom is expected to be a place where pupils will experience respect, participation quality education, acceptance and support, enabling them to grow to their full potential. In classrooms, inclusive education is reducing discrimination by supporting pupils with different abilities to grow up and develop their skills together. Having an inclusive environment in schools and communities is enabling pupils to develop academic and social skills that will help them in their future lives. Inclusion is not just benefiting the individual pupils but benefiting society as a whole.

Support to children with disabilities

ESSPIN's messaging around mainstreaming children with disability is not so much, 'big challenges are difficult', but rather, 'many challenges are very small', and has started the work initially with a focus on attitudinal change. The ESSPIN team is working by accentuating the positive in what States are already doing on disability issues, and by working with States to design initiatives that impact on access and the provision of better educational opportunities for children with disabilities. To further support children with disability learning needs at school level, a strategy has been developed by ESSPIN where activities and plans are based on ESSPIN's experience and research with teachers, parents and students .

Inclusive teaching for children with disabilities

ESSPIN's explorations using the 'twin track approach': The current dilemma for inclusive education stakeholders is if they take a too broad an approach, they might miss out on individual disabled learners' needs. If they take a disability-specific approach, they risk being criticised for not 'seeing the bigger picture' of inclusion. That said, it is perfectly possible for an inclusive education programme to take a 'twin-track' approach, teachers (and those who train and employ them) need to embrace inclusive beliefs and practices that generally support all learners and make education a welcoming and positive experience for all; and they need to be sufficiently confident and skilled to meet the specific learning needs of students with disabilities.

Many of the learning needs of students with disabilities can be met by generally making the education system more flexible, welcoming and responsive ('track' one) – but many children with disabilities will also have needs that require more specialist attention, so a second 'track' has to be part of an inclusive education approach. In other words, the twin-track approach works on broad system and school-wide improvements at the same time as addressing the specific needs of individual learners, particularly those with disabilities .

In order for this to happen, States need to have a flexible approach to mainstreaming children with disability and teachers need to be provided with training that reflects the needs of all their pupils in school. ESSPIN has been piloting small-scale efforts to show how this can be done in practice. The extract from ESSPIN's 2016 Inclusive Education Review below gives one example:



Left
Pupils with disabilities have been provided cycles to help their mobility to school.

Training for inclusive teaching teams in Kaduna

With ESSPIN support, a structure for building the capacity of teachers in the mainstream schools to teach children with disability has been successfully piloted. Initially 40 teachers from inclusive / mainstream school from four LGEAs were selected for training, based on their motivation and positive attitude towards children. The director of the Kaduna School for the Deaf (an internationally supported NGO school) delivered a four-day disability-inclusive practice-training course to these teachers, assisted by hearing and visual impairment experts from the school.

The training covered attitudinal change, enabling teachers to express their worries about being asked to teach disabled children and focused on building their confidence to work with children with disability. Throughout the training teachers were also trained in using sign language, Braille, and active learning techniques to be able to engage with a range of learners. When the trainees went back to their schools, they were assigned as focus teachers for a particular area of disability, in addition to their regular teaching duties. Some of the teachers focused on hearing impairment. They supported the learning of hearing impaired children using sign language and taught sign language to all pupils in the class. This enabled all children to communicate with each other using sign language.

The dynamism and enthusiasm of this group of teachers was very noticeable during lesson observations, as a result three months after the teacher training, most children were able to use basic sign language. One student reported that she helped her hearing-impaired friend to catch up on lessons after school, through using sign language.

Building on the success of the initially training SUBEB Kaduna supported trainings of more teachers from inclusive/ mainstream schools across the state

Right
Teachers are trained to support all children with diverse needs.



Kwara supporting children with disability in mainstream schools

Through a pilot programme in Kwara State, teachers from special schools are now supporting teachers in the mainstream schools on how to work with pupils with different abilities and needs. The programme has demonstrated an improvement in inclusive teaching skills in the programme schools which are leading to increased learning achievements by all pupils in both mainstream and special schools. Some of the specific activities included:

Providing training for teachers in mainstream schools, where children with disabilities are enrolled to become a focal point for learning support. These teachers offer guidance and help to other teachers relating to strategies for teaching children with different disabilities and different learning needs. Consideration is also given to the fact that the more teachers trained, the greater the support for all children will be. Recent research indicates that the training of at least two members of staff from each school greatly assists the adoption of new ideas in the establishment. School-based training and support from mentor teachers within a cluster of schools can ensure local needs are taken into consideration .

Supporting the assignment and further training of special needs teachers to support the children and teachers in the mainstream school

Supporting the training of a focal SSO (School Support Officers) person at the at LGEA level

Supporting the training of a focal group at SSIT (School Support Improvement Team) level

The Kwara pilot program provided an opportunity for the SSIT to work with Special Schools and learn through hands-on experience how to identify and address learning needs for children with disability. Supporting the teachers in the special and mainstream schools by the SSIT and SSOs gave the teachers, including special needs teachers, new knowledge and exposure to situations in classrooms that they did not experience before.

Targeted Interventions to Fill Inclusion Gaps

ESSPIN's inclusive education approach operates in two ways. On the one hand, partner schools are supported to become safer and more inclusive environments in which children grow and learn. This entails inclusive teaching, school leadership, management, governance, communities and a supportive professional, planning, resource and policy environment as detailed above.

On the other hand, ESSPIN supports specific interventions where particular problems relating to demand- or supply-side factors, access, equity and quality lead to discrimination in outcomes of which children get to participate in and benefit from schooling.

Gender Champions in Kaduna State

ESSPIN is currently working with stakeholders in Kaduna state to support the government's aim of achieving universal access to education for all children.

Through the Gender Champions Initiative, men and women role models are identified by the communities as positive deviants who can inspire and motivate School-Based Management Committees (SBMC) that women's participation is essential to their success.

A pilot that started in 2013 in 7 LGEAs has now scaled up to additional 9 LGEAs where Gender Champions have become very active in exercising their roles and responsibilities.

Who are gender champions? Gender champions engage with schools and communities to increase girl enrolment, talk about the benefits of women's participation and child protection, as well as address other inclusive behaviours at schools. Gender champions are:

Both male and female

Based in the school communities

From the local community (e.g. active SBMC members, women's group leaders, teachers) and from LGEA or State (e.g. politicians, professionals, civil servants)

Fully supportive of – and convinced of the need for – women's participation

Able to persuade, inspire and motivate women to participate and men to encourage and facilitate women's participation

Volunteers (small allowances will be paid for transport only).

Continuous capacity building for Gender Champions is key to success:

Before beginning work, gender champions attend an initial two-day orientation training, to discuss gender issues and develop messages to take to the community. Followed, by visits to SBMCs in pairs (preferably one man, one woman per clustered schools) to talk about the benefits of women's participation and encourage discussion. They also offered guidance to SBMCs in establishing or strengthening women's committees.

On the course of the program several trainings and revision workshops have been organised, providing the opportunity to share feedback, lessons learned and brainstorm ideas on strategies in identifying and engaging positive deviants as gender champions; tentative monitoring movements of gender champions going forward. Lastly a two-day training session was held to help roll out the Gender Champion Initiative to ten more LGAs (Jaba, Zangon Kataf, Kaduna South, Giwa, Sabon Gari, Igabi, Zaria, Lere, Kubau, and Ikara), where 93 gender champions attended the training in October 2015 – 64 men and 29 women.

Gender Champions have had a range of successes, including:

increased school enrolment for both boys and girls;

cases of delaying early marriage; new opportunities for previously marginalized youth, including engaging in community development activities;

improved community-based school governance through SBMCs and better relationships between parents and school staff;

changes in attitudes around women's participation in community decision-making processes—among women themselves and among their community.



Left
All children have the opportunity to learn together.

ESSPIN findings revealed that the many male Gender Champions are proving to be key allies in championing girls' education, drawing on their roles as Gender Champions, SBMC members, and on their wider community roles, including in one case as a traditional leader. Gender Champions are getting involved in child protection issues, helping cases to be identified and addressed.

How are gender champions protecting children?

Case study of an 11 year old girl being abused on her way to school:

"Our District Head is very old and can do very little because of his age while the village head is ill so the youths are taking advantage of this. The herculean task now lies with us (the Gender Champions and SBMCs).

There is an 11 year old girl (name withheld) who goes to school daily with her little siblings, but on the way makes a stop at a house where a man has asked her to make a stop daily. She goes in and does not report to school until break time. Some men reported this case to me and I told the head teacher.

The next day we watched out for her and when she came in at break time, she was waylaid by the teachers and I asked to see her privately in the head teacher's office where I spoke to her convincingly and she later told me that the man takes off her panties and has his way with her after which he gives her N50 (fifty Naira only) to buy food during lunchtime in school and asks her to return in the evening. I asked her what time she leaves home? She replied at 7.45am and does not eat breakfast. She buys food and water with the money the man gives her. I called the head teacher and shared the girl's story and we reported the case to the Police.

The man was arrested and we took him and the girl to the hospital where they were tested. Luckily he was not HIV positive and the girl was taken care of. I followed the girl home and spoke with her mother on the danger she has exposed her girl to because she was not feeding them breakfast and has allowed them to walk to school unprotected. The mother responded that the girl's father is a beggar and they are so poor, but will make sure that she improves in taking care of the children.

The man who has molested the girl is still serving his two year sentence in the Kaduna central prison and the girl comes to my house every morning to collect her breakfast and we walk to school together daily".

The Girls' Education Initiative (GEI) in Jigawa

The GEI is a pilot project in Jigawa state helped to improve 6,000 girls' access to and retention in school/education in 3 LGEAs of Miga, Roni and Birniwa since 2011, through a combination of five key areas of work:

provision of school materials;

capacity building for women leaders;

sport activities;

media engagement;

formation of Gender and Social Inclusion Committee

As of 2016 from the initial 48 pilot schools, the GEI is now covering a total of 330 schools in all the 27 LGAs with a total reach of 26,000 girls. The schools selected have a very low enrolment of girls, therefore plans have been put in place to increase awareness through the SBMCs and the work will be closely monitored by the Gender Officers in each LGA. SUBEB is rolling out most of the elements of the ESSPIN model such as working closely with communities, providing school uniform and sanitary pads to encourage girls' enrolment and retention.

The GEI has brought about achievements in girls' school enrolment and retention:

Analysis of data from Jigawa State's Annual School Census on beneficiaries enrolled in primary school shows that the percentage of girls enrolled in primary school has gradually increased in all three ESSPIN LGEAs. Participants in the qualitative research (women leaders, students and school staff) see the pilot as highly successful, discussing a range of ways in which the programme has led to girls' increased enrolment. In Birniwa LGEA women leaders attribute enormous gains in girls' enrolment in primary school to their active engagement, raising awareness and distributing school uniforms (they say girls enrolment has increased from two to three girls per class to 60-80 new girls in the school).



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Dramatising the message: ESSPIN supports children to learn through different creative methods.

Girls and Sports – Supporting Enrolment and Retention

ESSPIN planned to implement a pilot girls’ sports initiative in Jigawa state as part of the Girls Education Initiative(GEI). The aim of the initiative was for sport to contribute to the increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools by providing a conducive and interesting learning environment for both boys and girls.

“Sports for girls encourages them to come to school and stay in school because it is fun. Playing sports makes the girls feel that they are given a chance to feel important and proud of what they can achieve.”
- Head Teacher, Roni LGA Jigawa State, June 2016

Summary of activities.

Activities began in 2012 with the distribution of equipment to 48 schools in 3 LGAs. Inter school sports events were also organised. Further activities included meetings and workshop with key stakeholders at the state and LGA level around the benefits of sports for girls and ways in which to promote sporting activities. Collaborations were developed within SUBEB and at the state level whilst capacity was built of LGA Sports Desk Officers. A draft of a simple sports guide for teachers and discussions are underway regarding the development of the guide into a digital format for teachers to access via their mobile phones.

Below
Creativity through sports: ESSPIN ensures that girls are not left out in developing their sporting skills.



Advocacy visits to the State Governor and Deputy Governor have created potential partnerships for the further roll out of the pilot with significant state ownership and opportunities for the involvement of private sector and development partners such as the World Bank's Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Key achievements. The GEI has worked to provide sporting opportunities for girls in Jigawa, through provision of sporting materials, and creation of sport days. The GEI targeted 1200 girls in primary schools, 200 out-of-school girls ages 14+ in rural areas, and 2,000 people in the community who attend community sport days to watch their children play. As of 2014, the GEI had piloted girls' sporting activities in 48 schools in three LGEAS in Jigawa.

Sports for girls, and the benefits of sports for both boys and girls, in relation to completing their education are more broadly understood within SUBEB, amongst LGA desk officers and in some schools. The state government leadership has shown significant interest in promoting sports in schools and collaborative efforts are currently under discussion.

Lami Danjani Hadejia, Gender Coordinator, SUBEB, Jigawa: "There was a sporting event in Miga where a group of out-of-school girl hawkers came to watch the students playing sports. The next day the Education Secretary called me to say that a number of girls were waiting outside her office, chanting her name! She told me that the girls had been inspired by seeing other girls playing sports and had asked their parents to enrol them. The secretary followed up with the parents, provided uniforms and enrolled the girls in schools."

There is greater understanding and articulation of the benefits of sports for girls and boys in Jigawa by girls and boys themselves, teachers and other state actors. There is also more appreciation of some of the related challenges that can be experienced when encouraging girls to participate in sports, such as appropriate sportswear, health and safety considerations and the need for women role models to accelerate activities.

The pilot initiative unearthed new evidence around the potential for sports for girls and boys to contribute to improved enrolment and retention of children in schools. Whilst the scale of the pilot remained relatively small the initial signs were available that schools were beginning to see how sports can be utilised to encourage children to stay in school. Children, themselves, talked passionately about how sports had enhanced their school experience.

The draft sports guide has created an opportunity for ESSPIN to leave a legacy from this pilot in the shape of a digitalised sports guide for teachers. Whilst it is often challenging to describe, in words, how to play a sport, short video clips of sports activities and demonstrations can help teacher to quickly pick up how a sports session can be carried out at school.

Girls' Summer Academy in Kano – Supporting Transition to Junior Secondary School

The KSCA program supported the retention of 10,648 girls in primary 5 and 6 and aimed to increase transition of girls into JSS 1; to increase girls' self-esteem; to improve girls' knowledge of personal hygiene; and to increase girls' academic performance in literacy and numeracy. It also aimed to increase community support and create an enabling environment for girls' education.

On the course of the program girls were provided with: face-to-face tutoring, educational materials, travel costs, and a 'school in a bag' (uniforms, notebooks, and stationary) at the end of the programme. They were expected to attend a total of 33 days of KSCA, held in three phases: September 14-23; December 21-31; and April 18-May 6. Upon completion of the KSCA program, girls completed an additional 86 hours of face-to-face tutoring, held in 186 hub schools across Kano state.

Why only girls? Nigeria is home to the largest number of child brides in Africa at 23 million children or women who were married in their childhood. In the northwest, where Kano is located, 47% of girls are said to be married off before the age of 15 and 78% are married off before they hit the age of 18.



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Learning improves when all children learn together.

Given the data above, it was therefore critical that girls at the verge of dropping out and those that have dropped out were given an opportunity to continue their education. If support programmes similar to the KSCA are provided to girls that are considered of marrying age in Kano, sensitization on the importance of education and education related incentives may delay parents from marrying girls off. It is critical that focus on girl's (support) education continue.

Examples of good practice from the KSCA programme

Relationship building to foster continuous commitment of the Kano state government

Establishment of a Technical Implementation Committee, with high ranking government personnel ensuring rapid programme mobilisation

Meeting with examination offices helped with the selection of topics by understanding which parts of the transition exam caused most difficulties

Flexible, activity-based learning and a supportive learning environment with smaller classes of 45-60 students compared with 100+ during regular classes

Girls were representative of different communities with the LGEA, which also gave girls an opportunity to practice and improve their social and leadership skills.

What do girls like about KSCA?

"I like the way teachers teach."

"The teacher doesn't put an "x" mark on wrong work...she teaches you how to get it right until you get it."

"I like subtraction, learning about the care of our hands, blending and sounding double letters."

"I like personal hygiene...I learned about dental care...the explanation is better."

"I improved in addition."

Important lessons learned from the KSCA programme

There is a need and high interest in the girl's summer camp support programme from the government through community level in Kano. It can be said that school dropout may have been delayed and/or prevented for the 10,648 girls that have attended the KSCA programme for this school year.



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Peer support helps increase understanding:
ESSPIN sets the agenda for peer learning in schools.

Government ownership and support is key to programme success.

Developing clear and transparent selection criteria for girls may help reach the most vulnerable girls and/or those at risk of dropping out in LGAs, it will also help field implementers such as school directors and teachers explain to community members “why” the programme focuses on supporting vulnerable girls and advocate for community support.

Running a summer camp programme must address the usual challenges identified by girls during regular school to ensure higher continued interest, better class performance and higher attendance rates. Examples of such challenges are lack of access to potable drinking water, lack of access to latrines, a teacher centred teaching methodology, hunger and sufficient daily transportation allowance amongst others. Having a comprehensive summer education support programme for girls may address student absenteeism and have higher program success rates.

Helping girls pass the transition examination in primary 6 does not guarantee a school placement in a Junior Secondary School (JSS); one which is equally important in their transition phase. Ensuring that vulnerable girls pass the transition examination and are prioritized or guaranteed a school placement, ideally, in a JSS closest to their community may further increase the transition probability of girls from primary 6 to JSS.

Right
ESSPIN enables participatory learning in schools.



Women and children's advocacy events

ESSPIN has organised several advocacy events around International Days, including 16 Days of Activism around Gender Violence and the International Day for the Girl Child. Some of this work has been done in collaboration with CSOs and other DFID programmes working on these issues, building inter-programme collaboration.

These events have led to several policy commitments, but there is more work to be done to track whether state governments act on these commitments, and to encourage state governments and civil society to take up the organisation of these events in future.

Nomadic education in Jigawa

ESSPIN inclusive education targeted the children of nomadic communities with teaching and learning activities, reaching over 16,232 additional children (48% of whom were girls) since its beginning in 2011. Enrolment of girls and boys was roughly equal in all schools visited in ESSPIN's 2014 Nomadic Education Review, with good attendance from both girls and boys, except for gaps of a few days at a time caused by livestock rearing.

The ESSPIN approach persuaded communities to establish more permanent schools and leave the women and children behind with their farmland and some cattle so the children could be enrolled, retain and complete basic primary education. The intervention adopted an integrated approach to community mobilization, teacher training, use of ESSPIN's IQTE condensed curriculum, mobilizing community teachers as volunteers and networking with CBOs and government agencies to sustain the intervention.

Sustained partnership, ownership and collaboration is evident as 75% of the supported schools have already been taken over by state agencies for nomadic education, which is posting teachers to the schools, taking responsibility for textbooks and monitoring, and planning to bring nomadic



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Literacy and numeracy being taught to children in all schools.

volunteer teachers onto the payroll. There was great enthusiasm from all stakeholders for more improvements to expand the upgrade approach. The intervention has also sparked widespread emerging demand for preschool classes and adult literacy for nomadic communities.

Community commitment in the form of substantial land donations had been recorded in several schools across the programme and cash through joint effort with the Jigawa Nomadic Cattle Breeders' Association (MACBAN). Furthermore, the 90 schools in the programme were included in the Annual School Census for this year, suggesting that, were more schools to be upgraded along the same lines, they could then be included in the ASC, which should mean inclusion in investment plans for sustaining and improving school infrastructure and teaching.

Islamic Quranic Tsangaya Education (IQTE) in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa

ESSPIN responded to community demand for an alternative to secular education by introducing two integrated education interventions for the IQTE schools to meet the learning needs of this group of learners. The first intervention was aimed at Almajiri children from Tsangaya schools, who receive no 'modern' education. The second intervention was designed to provide modern education to primary age girls in un-integrated Islamiyya schools.

Both interventions had a two-fold focus: (1) mobilising the Mallams to allow children in these schools to study modern subjects; (2) developing an effective teacher recruitment and training programme to enable local community teachers to teach six-year primary curriculum to children in IQTE schools in four years (for details see ESSPIN IQTE Experience document). Kano was the lead state for ESSPIN IQTE inputs, though the interventions designed in Kano were also replicated in Jigawa and Kaduna states.

Below
Children combine religious instructions with literacy and numeracy.



The popularity of the IQTE intervention, now reaching 35,832 children (14,618 girls), can be seen at three levels: programme's acceptance within the Mallams; regular student attendance and transition to junior secondary school; and, formal adoption of the model by state governments in the three ESSPIN supported states.

Support to children with Albinism in Kaduna and Kwara

Kaduna: ESSPIN has partnered with the Nigerian Albino Foundation which aims to provide equal access to education for children with Albinism. The intervention has involved reaching out directly to support the enrolment, retention and learning of 332 Albino children (174 girls and 158 boys) in Kaduna. Simultaneously awareness campaigns, radio talks, media engagement and workshops have been organized, reaching a wider audience of over 5,000 education stakeholders, parents and community members to create an inclusive support structure for children with Albinism.

Kwara: As part of the annual Albinism Day on 5th May, 2016, the Albino Foundation in Kwara state offered scholarships to 11 Albino children. In addition, the Chairman of the State House of Assembly Education Committee provided personal scholarship support to one Albino child who was out of school as a response to the awareness created by the ESSPIN team and the Leader of the Albino Foundation.

Evidence and results so far

Monitoring the implementation of inclusive education

Clear expectations were set at ESSPIN’s three levels of inclusive education for monitoring at policy, school and community level:

Levels	Measuring Criteria	Monitoring Tools
Policy	<p>State has clear policy on inclusive education that outlaws all forms of discrimination and promotes learning friendly education.</p> <p>Support civil society to give voice to excluded groups in the planning and budgeting processes.</p> <p>Data on out of school children collected and made available at State and LGEA levels.</p> <p>Expenditure on access and equity activities in schools is predictable and based on the MTSS.</p> <p>LGEA Desk Officers receive information and respond to community access and equity issues.</p>	<p>Self-assessment process</p> <p>Qualitative studies</p>
School	<p>Schools meeting the needs of all pupils</p> <p>Teachers encourage all pupils to take part in the lesson and use appropriate assessment methods</p> <p>SDPs are related to improving access, enrolment and retention</p> <p>Head-teachers promote pupils attendance (Defined as the number and proportion of public and non-state primary and junior secondary schools that seek to provide access and learning opportunities to all pupils)</p>	<p>Composite Survey</p> <p>Annual School Census</p> <p>School Service Officers reports against inclusion indicators</p>
Community	<p>SBMCs mobilizing the community to support the access of all children to school (girls, boys, nomadic children, disability etc.)</p> <p>SBMC monitoring children’s drop-out from school, the cause of it and communicating this to school and community</p> <p>SBMC and Head Teacher taking action to address and report child protection issues in and around school (violence, harassment etc.)</p> <p>SBMC encouraging interaction between parents and the school on children’s wellbeing and progress</p> <p>SBMCs tracking the number of children being enrolled or returned to schools due to their work (categorized by gender and barriers faced)</p>	<p>Composite Survey</p> <p>Social Mobilisation Officers reports</p> <p>Qualitative Studies</p>

Inclusion monitoring tools

Self Assessments – Self Assessment procedures have been designed to allow State Governments to conduct participatory and integrated assessments of key aspects of their performance. They draw on an agreed set of Output Indicators, each of which comprises a number of sub-indicators.

Each sub-indicator is defined in terms of dimensions and performance criteria against which current practice is assessed. Assessment is carried out in a participatory manner by a group of key informants from the State Government and implementation partners such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), facilitated with the support of external consultants and informed by evidence.

The results of the assessment will then be used to identify priorities for forward planning purposes through the annual education sector performance review (AESPR) and MTSS, and to indicate the extent to which States have achieved the Output Indicator targets set, as one measure of ESSPIN's impact on school improvement.

School Support Officer Reports

When they visit schools, SSOs report on four basic indicators of inclusion at classroom and school levels. A school is defined as inclusive if it meets three of these four criteria:

More than half of the teachers encourage all pupils to take part in lessons;

More than half of the teachers use more than one method to assess learning;

The Head Teacher actively promotes attendance by all pupils;

The current school development plan has more than one activity focused on improving access and equity.

The number of inclusive schools is analysed from routine reports of School Support Officers (SSOs). SSOs record the number of inclusive teachers, Head Teachers, and planning processes. The four criteria relating to inclusion are extracted to identify how many schools are inclusive overall.

Social Mobilisation Officer Reports

The reports written by Social Mobilisation Officers and CSOs over the last 5 years are evidence of the strong role that communities through SBMCs can play in directly supporting access, learning, retention and transition of children from all backgrounds through school.

Composite Surveys

ESSPIN's large Composite Surveys (CS), conducted in 2012 (CS1), 2014 (CS2) and 2016 (CS3) track dynamics in inclusion and gender equity within schools across each ESSPIN state during the final states of the ESSPIN programme. The survey data provides a view of state-wide changes which ESSPIN may have contributed to, as well as information on performance within ESSPIN-supported schools.

The survey covered a wide range of indicators at the teacher, head teacher, school-based management committee (SBMC), and pupil levels. This section attempts to understand how inclusive practices in schools and SBMCs in ESSPIN states are changing over time and whether schools which receive ESSPIN's interventions are working better than those which do not; and whether there are differences in education outcomes by gender and background.

Qualitative studies

The evidence is also supported overall by various other key documents including; connected Qualitative SBMC Development Reviews (also 2012 and 2014) ; Inclusive Education Survey 2016.



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ESSPIN has trained teachers to create an environment where children feel comfortable to learn.

Composite Survey Results 2016

The aims of the ESSPIN Composite Surveys are to assess the effects of ESSPIN's integrated School Improvement Programme (SIP), and to report on the quality of education in public schools in the six ESSPIN-supported states. The surveys took place in 2012, 2014 and 2016. The survey covered a wide range of indicators at the teacher, head teacher, school-based management committee, and pupil levels. The aim is to understand change in schools over time, and whether schools which receive intervention through ESSPIN are working better than those which do not. The composite survey used a representative sample of schools which means that the results are generalisable across all schools in each state.

A Gender and Inclusion report attempts to understand how inclusive practices in schools and SBMCs in ESSPIN states are changing over time and whether schools which receive ESSPIN's interventions are working better than those which do not; and whether there are differences in education outcomes by gender and background. The main findings are as follows:

Inclusive practices in schools and SBMCs

School inclusiveness: There is significant, and positive difference between schools that receive ESSPIN interventions, and schools that do not receive ESSPIN interventions. Schools that receive ESSPIN interventions perform significantly better than non-ESSPIN schools on almost all school inclusiveness criteria, as well as on the number of inclusiveness criteria fulfilled, and the schools that partially/fully met the inclusiveness standard.

ESSPIN schools are also more inclusive in terms of activities to improve access for disadvantaged children), and the use of different assessment methods, as compared to non-ESSPIN schools. However, the inclusiveness in schools between CS2 and CS3 has no clear trend, with inclusiveness measured by certain indicators improving during this period, whereas others worsen. There is no significant change in the schools that fully meet the inclusiveness criteria, but there is a decline in the number of schools that partially meet the inclusiveness criteria in CS3 as compared to CS2, indicating that a greater number of schools have failed to meet the inclusiveness criterion in CS3 as compared to CS2.

Head-teachers' actions to improve pupil attendance: A greater percent of the headteachers surveyed in CS3 involved teachers in finding reasons for non-attendance and implementing the suggested solutions for non-attendance as compared to headteachers surveyed in CS2. However, there is no significant difference between the number of actions taken by head teachers to address pupil attendance between CS2 and CS3. There was also no significant difference between head teachers in ESSPIN schools and those in non-ESSPIN schools for most indicators, including the average number of actions taken.

Spatial and gender inclusiveness in classrooms: Spatial inclusiveness is the extent to which teachers include children sitting in all parts of the classroom during a lesson. Teachers in CS3 were, on average, less spatially inclusive than those in CS2; but in CS3, teachers who have had ESSPIN training are more spatially inclusive than those who have not. Gender inclusiveness is measured as the extent to which boys and girls participate in the lesson in equal numbers. There was no evidence of any change over time in gender inclusiveness between CS2 and CS3

SBMC functionality & actions to support inclusion: SBMC functionality improved significantly between CS2 and CS3 for almost all the criteria, as well as the number of schools that met the logframe standard for SBMC functionality. The average school in CS3 met a little over 4.5 criteria for SBMC functionality, whereas those in CS2 met 3 criteria – a significant difference. Within CS3, ESSPIN schools performed significantly better than non-ESSPIN schools, for almost all criteria, as well as the number of criteria met, and the number of schools meeting the SBMC functionality logframe standard.

Right
Children display knowledge and talents through drama.



Inclusiveness of women in SBMCs: SBMCs in CS3 were significantly more inclusive of women as compared to SBMCs in CS2. An average school in CS3 met almost 2 criteria for women's inclusiveness in SBMCs, compared to schools in CS2 which met less than 1 criteria. This is in line with the scale up in women and children's participation training after 2014. Schools that received interventions under ESSPIN performed significantly better than the control schools on all women's inclusiveness criteria.

Inclusiveness of children in SBMCs: There was a small but significant increase between CS2 and CS3 in the overall number of criteria met as well as in the proportion of schools meeting the standard, which increased from 6% to almost 10%. However, there are large differences between ESSPIN and non-ESSPIN schools, with ESSPIN schools performing significantly better than non-ESSPIN schools. Between 19-25% ESSPIN schools met the children's inclusiveness logframe standard, as compared to 4.4% non-ESSPIN schools.

Overall, the survey found that amongst ESSPIN schools, the schools that received intervention after CS1, i.e., post-CS1 schools, have relatively better and higher outcomes as compared to those schools that received intervention prior to CS1, i.e., the pre-CS1 schools. This suggests that ongoing support should be provided to schools to keep up momentum.

Part B: Differences in education outcomes by gender and background

Gender differences: The survey found that boys perform significantly better than girls on all tests with the exception of the numeracy test for grade 2 students. The same trend is observed for schools that received minimum intervention under ESSPIN-output 3, whereas the differences are less marked for schools that received medium and maximum intervention. There are wide variations between the states, with boys performing significantly better than girls in Kano, and girls performing significantly better than boys in Lagos. There is no clear trend for the other states.

Wealth: CS3 found that an increase in value of the wealth index has a significant and positive impact on the performance of pupils. An increase in the amount of intervention received under ESSPIN output 3 mitigates this effect to some extent, with the wealth gap in schools receiving maximum output 3 intervention being relatively lesser than the corresponding gap in schools receiving minimum intervention. However, this is significant only for literacy tests and not for numeracy tests.

Below
ESSPIN has facilitated training for teachers on different methods of keeping children interested during lesson.

Only 12% and 4% of the poorest pupils in grade 4 meet the grade 4 literacy and numeracy standards, respectively. 33.2% and 13.1% of the poorest pupils who meet the grade 4 literacy and numeracy standards respectively come from schools that received medium or maximum intervention under ESSPIN output 3. Only 1.2% and 0.8% of the poorest pupils who meet the grade 4 literacy and numeracy standards respectively come from schools that received minimum intervention.

Speaking a minority language: The survey found that pupils who predominantly speak a majority language (i.e. not Igbo in Enugu; Hausa in Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna; and Yoruba in Kwara) attain significantly higher results in the numeracy tests as compared to students speaking minority languages. However, there is no significant difference for literacy tests between those who speak the majority language of the state and those who do not.



Disability: The CS3 pupil tests included a number of questions assessing various forms of physical disability among sampled pupils; children who were impaired were not asked to attempt parts of the test that would have been impossible for them to do without adaptation. In total, 51 pupils from the CS3 sample (i.e. less than 0.5%) were found to be disabled.

Location: CS3 found that pupils from urban schools perform significantly better than pupils from rural schools, and this difference in performance increases from grade 2 to grade 4. Proximity to the LGA headquarters is associated with more positive results, particularly for girls in Primary 4.

Age correctness for grade: 46.2% and 46.5% of the pupils in grade 2 and grade 4, respectively, are overage, with almost 50% of all the pupils in Kaduna and Kano being overage. Roughly equal percent of boys and girls are of equal ages, with the percent of overage boys slightly exceeding that of overage girls in grade 4. A majority of the overage pupils exceed the appropriate age by 1 year (grade 2 pupils) or 2 years (grade 4 pupils). Though the literature on overage pupils remains divided, we find that overage pupils perform significantly better than age appropriate pupils in all tests barring the grade 2 literacy test. Overage pupils perform significantly better than age appropriate pupils on all tests for schools receiving minimum intervention under ESSPIN output 3. However, the difference in the performance decreases as the school receives more intervention, i.e., medium or maximum, under ESSPIN Output 3.

Teacher competence: Overall, 45% of CS3 teachers were female, with wide variation between northern (Jigawa: 12.7%) and southern states (Lagos, Enugu 80%+). Female teachers performed significantly better than their male counterparts on almost all the teacher competence criteria for all six states taken together. At the state-level, these gender differences are only mirrored in Enugu and Jigawa. The proportion of female teachers who passed both the teacher tests in English and mathematics is more than twice that of male teachers.

Female teachers perform significantly better than their male counterparts on almost all the indicators and criteria for teacher inclusiveness for schools that received minimum and medium intervention, but there are no significant differences in the performance of male and female teachers in schools that received maximum intervention under ESSPIN output 3. Female teachers are also more inclusive, both in terms of spatial inclusiveness as well as for gender inclusiveness.

Head-teacher effectiveness: In CS3 across all six states, female head-teachers appear to be performing significantly better than their male counterparts: the number of female head-teachers who met the effectiveness standard is more than twice that of male teachers and this difference is significant. Female head teachers perform significantly better than male headteachers in schools that receive minimum interventions, but the differences are less pronounced and less significant for schools that receive medium and maximum intervention. However, it should be noted that there are wide variations between the states, with states in the North having far fewer female head-teachers than those in the South. Jigawa, for instance, has only one female headteacher.

School Improvement Targeting Inclusion, SSO Report Results

From the start of the 2012-2013 school year, ESSPIN States have been producing termly State reports on quality improvements in schools in relation to teacher and head teacher effectiveness. Teachers' teaching is assessed against a range of criteria. These aim to move teachers from a static, didactic method of delivery which focuses on teaching the curriculum, to one that promotes the teaching of children. A key criterion as teachers become more competent is how inclusive their teaching has become.



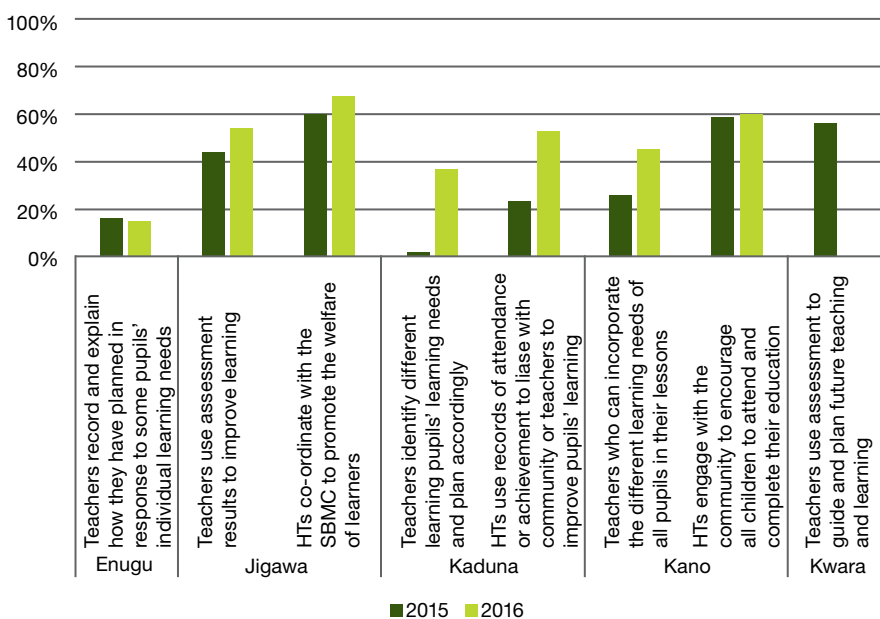
Left
ESSPIN has made significant steps to promote girl-child education. Through ESSPIN's interaction, more girls are now being enrolled in schools.

Teachers are assessed on whether their teaching encourages all children to take part in the lesson and on how the lesson supports/recognises different learning needs. Schools are assessed on whether half their teachers have been shown to deliver an inclusive lesson during the term. The figure below shows the results for all the IE indicators across all states for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 school years.

While the results do not look particularly impressive in all the indicators, there is a need to set them in context and where teachers were coming from in terms of their competency at the beginning of the programme. If reference is made to ESSPIN's baseline Teacher Development Needs Assessment conducted in 2009 in Kano, the results showed that out of 2000 teachers assessed, no teacher had sufficient professional knowledge to teach.

In light of this, the results for teachers teaching inclusively show a marked turn around in teacher behaviour in the classroom. Similar results are being seen in all ESSPIN States and ESSPIN can report with confidence that classrooms and schools are becoming more inclusive. In the words of one teacher from Kano:- “ the use of teaching aids, songs, rhymes and play help all pupils to take part in the lessons and learn better.”

Figure 7: Attainment of advanced inclusivity criteria in school over time



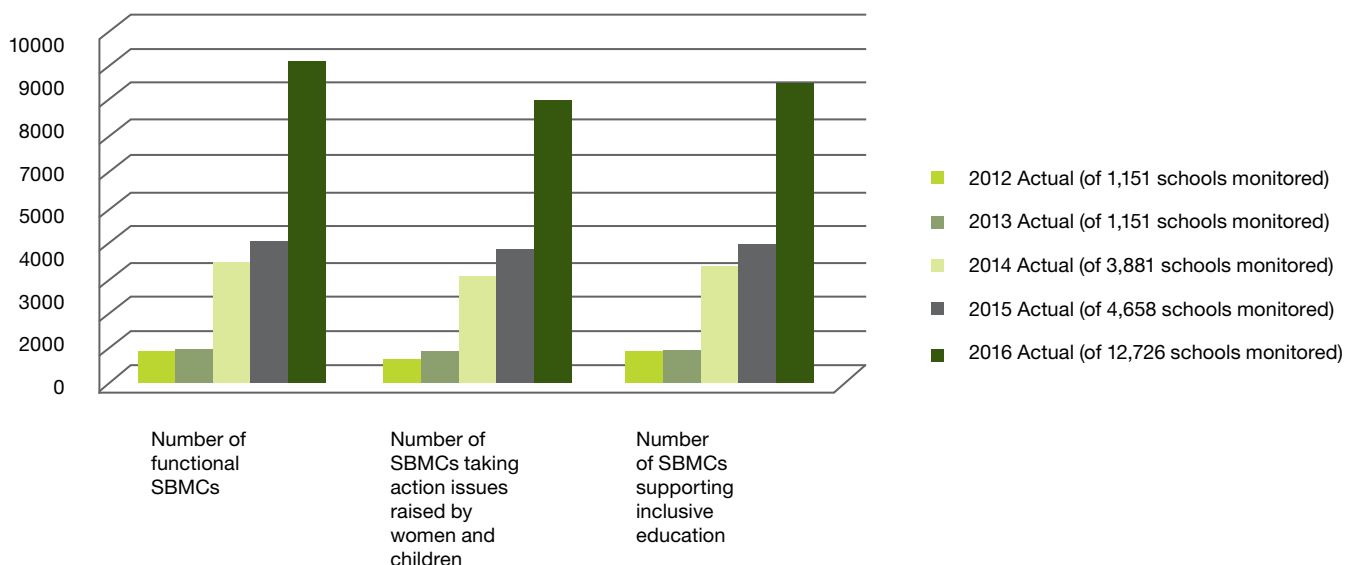
SBMC /SMO Report Results

SBMCs Supporting Inclusive Education. Out of the 12,726 SBMCs monitored by the SUBEB Department of Social Mobilisation in September 2016, 8,575 SBMCs are supporting inclusive education in community and school ensuring that as far as possible, all children are in school and learning. This is 67% of schools monitored across the six states.

The chart below highlights change over time on SBMC support to Inclusive Education, with more schools being added by the government each year.– Women and children’s participation in SBMCs has also improved over time. In 2009 SBMC research highlighted them to be ‘highly constrained’ and ‘unacceptable’ respectively.

In 2009 SBMC research highlighted that awareness and action on any of these indicators was at best, extremely limited. Following a capacity development programme for Civil Society Organisations working in partnership with State Governments to activate, train and mentor SBMCs over 6 years the data indicates a transformation in the way government, communities and civil society view, take action on and advocate for the PRESENCE, PARTICIPATION, and ACHIEVEMENT of ALL children in school. The chart below shows the final results from SUBEB Summary SBMC Data 2016; The number of SBMCs Supporting Inclusive Education by Criteria per State.

Figure 8: Number of SBMCs supporting Inclusive Education 2012-2016

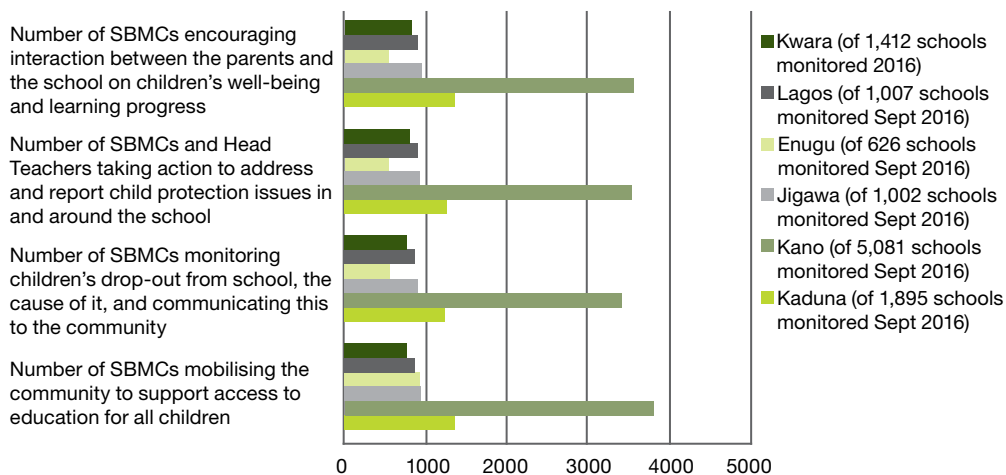


SBMC impact on enrolment. In 2013 ESSPIN helped government introduce a new system of monitoring and reporting on SBMC development. SUBEB Social Mobilisation Officers (SMOs) from the Department of Social Mobilisation (the institutional home of the SBMC) use SMO reporting templates to judge how well SBMCs are performing the roles and responsibilities agreed and set out in state specific SBMC policy guidelines, and to assess where additional support may be needed.

The SMO reports also collect estimate data of how many children (disaggregated) have enrolled in school as a result of SBMC action.

Selected findings from 2016 qualitative review . This review, which took place between January and April 2016, focuses on ESSPIN’s work around inclusion in the six states where the programme is active, as well as ESSPIN’s engagement on inclusive education at the federal level. The main objective of the review was to undertake a qualitative analysis of the scale of change and impact of the inclusive education aspects of ESSPIN’s work, particularly around disability, gender and ethnicity. Selected findings from the review are extracted below:

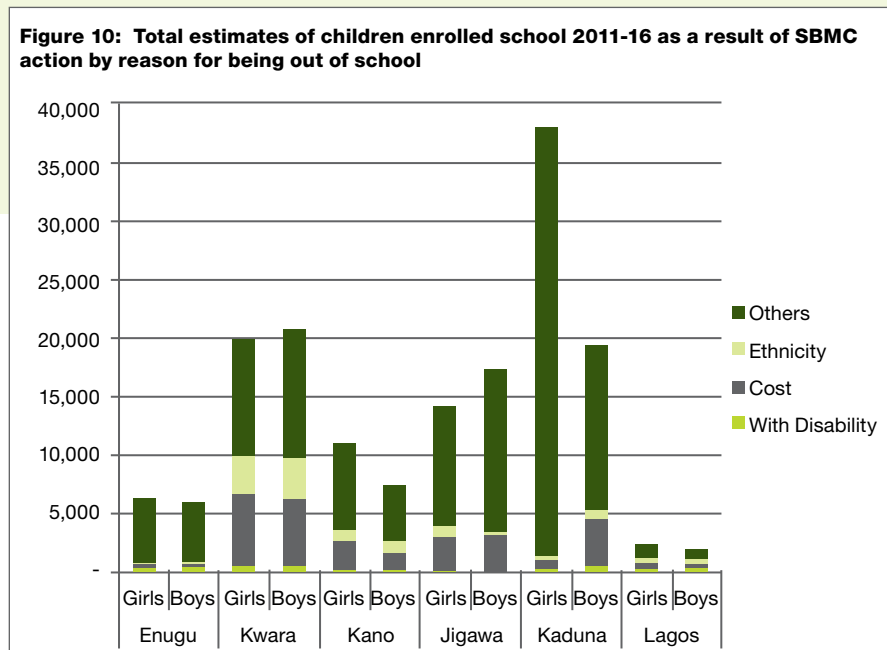
Figure 9: SBMCs supporting Inclusive Education, by indicator and state, 2012-2016



The review found that ESSPIN is acknowledged across all six states to have significantly boosted state progress on inclusive education, in some cases mobilising new demand, and in others giving new impetus to existing commitment. ESSPIN has helped state governments deliver changes at school and community level that have brought more of the most excluded children into education.

ESSPIN efforts to establish sound state IE policies and inclusive SBMCs have been the most sustainable and best institutionalised inclusive education interventions. Approaches for boosting girls' education in the North have also been adopted by state governments relatively easily, and continued support in this area from programmes like GPE is likely to ensure that these initiatives continue.

However, recent economic downturn, lack of time remaining for ESSPIN to support institutionalisation, and change in government, has left it doubtful whether funding and political will can be found to continue with key ESSPIN models, particularly around inclusive teaching and state government capacity to deliver against inclusive education policy.



The only data available for the period 2011-14 was from Kwara and this has been incorporated into the data above. All other data from all other states is from 2015-16.

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