

**Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria  
(ESSPIN)**

**Telling Stories:**

**ESSPIN's Experience of Working with Radio, Film,  
Journalists and Community Theatre**

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The documentary series is arranged as follows:

- ESSPIN 0-- Programme Reports and Documents
- ESSPIN 1-- Support for Federal Level Governance (Reports and Documents for Output 1)
- ESSPIN 2-- Support for State Level Governance (Reports and Documents for Output 2)
- ESSPIN 3-- Support for Schools and Education Quality Improvement (Reports and Documents for Output 3)
- ESSPIN 4-- Support for Communities (Reports and Documents for Output 4)
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- JG Jigawa
- KD Kaduna
- KN Kano
- KW Kwara
- LG Lagos
- EN Enugu

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

C&KM	Communications and Knowledge Management
DFID	Department for International Development (UKaid)
DVD	Digital Video Disk
JDP	Journalism Development Programme
KMS	Knowledge Management Specialist
LS	Lead Specialist
PSA	Programme Support Activity
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SIP	School Improvement Programme
SMD	Social Mobilisation Department
SMO	Social Mobilisation Officer
SSIT	State School Improvement Team
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
YARAC	Youth, Adolescence Reflection and Action Centre {refer to standard list}

## Abstract

1. ESSPIN's communications and knowledge management strategy and work with different media (radio, film, journalists and community theatre) is reviewed. Consideration is given to the impact achieved, including testimonies from diverse audience groups, and the lessons to be learnt.

## Executive Summary

### *Introduction*

2. Communications and Knowledge Management (C&KM) has a vital role to play in raising issues, promoting solutions and explaining the rights, roles and responsibilities of community, civil society and government stakeholders in order to encourage greater transparency and accountability across the Nigerian education sector. By working with different media (an integral part of civil society), ESSPIN is helping create a critical mass of informed advocates willing to push systemic change from inside and outside the Nigerian education sector.

### *Purpose of the Consultancy*

3. ESSPIN has undertaken some innovative communications initiatives with the media and much of the institutional memory and experience of the rationale, approach and methodology, as well as the impact and learning, resides with the Lead Specialist (LS). It was therefore considered useful to review and document ESSPIN's C&KM Programme Support Activities' with radio, film, journalists and community theatre before the LS' departure.

### *Initial Challenges*

4. ESSPIN's communications strategy is, simply put, all about information in and information out. But what information or messages, to whom, how and, above all, why?
5. Early messages were about the existence of the programme itself but ESSPIN's communications quickly became focused on what the programme offered to partners and other stakeholders. The main areas for ESSPIN messaging were soon apparent – to put performing schools at the heart of the education sector reform agenda, to prompt community members to be more involved in the management of **their** schools (especially through the development of functioning SBMCs), and to promote the government management systems, structures and processes necessary for effective policy, planning and funding of basic education. These were to become the pillars of ESSPIN's School Improvement Programme (SIP). They were therefore the areas where behaviour change was necessary and therefore the key messages of the communications products.
6. The broad target audiences are on one side those with a direct interest or involvement in schools - children, their parents and other community members and those with a

responsibility for delivering basic education working either in schools or within a technical or management capacity (mostly, but not all, civil servants); and, on the other side, the politicians and opinion leaders in government and civil society who have power to influence the success of the reform agenda.

7. ESSPIN opted for a mixed mass media strategy to secure the widest possible coverage. Film / TV, the press, community theatre and, above all, radio drama were deployed Whenever possible media partners have been local partners to meet a C&KM objective of supporting the development of Nigerian media capacity –and avoiding higher international production costs. The pay-back has proved to be the need to invest more ESSPIN time and energy in supporting production, especially in the areas of research, writing and project management.
8. Within the programme, perceptions and misconceptions of C&KM within ESSPIN and DFID presented early and persistent challenges for the communications component of ESSPIN.
9. ESSPIN and its C&KM work is about finding sustainable solutions to problems and demonstrating processes that partners can continue to roll-out after ESSPIN has finished. State Universal Basic Education Boards' (SUBEB) Social Mobilisation Departments (SMD), with their clear communications function and an established role in community engagement already tied in to ESSPIN's promotion of school based management are ideally positioned to partner ESSPIN C&KM teams.

#### *Main Activities - Working with different Media*

10. The long running Gbagan Gbagan radio drama allowed education messages to be carried to large and spread audiences in an entertaining format that kept people listening. Different themes or elements of the school improvement programme were emphasised each series. It particularly encouraged community engagement at the immediate school level, notably through School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), and also raised broader governance and education quality issues. Broadcast fees remained a consistent problem.
11. Film production provided a longitudinal video documentation of the challenges and successes of education reform. ESSPIN's first documentary film project in 2009-10, entitled "Better Schools, Better Nigeria", was undertaken in close collaboration with the five partner state ministries of education. It was a deliberate attempt to present an inspiring picture of potential and progress. Two years on from BSBN, "Nigerian Future" took a significantly different in approach. The new films were more striking by focusing on ordinary people to tell of the results being achieved and the further efforts and investment required to secure a better future for Nigeria's children.
12. ESSPIN is working with Nigerian journalists from the press and other media to improve the quantity and quality of reporting on the state of the nation's education sector and so build civil society demand for improvement. Two Journalism Development Programmes (JDP) of

awareness raising and skills development have been supported. The JDPs promote the concept of “Immersion Reporting which details the individual's experiences from a deeply personal perspective and the journalism is rooted in a descriptive realism which helps to evoke how people live and what they value. ESSPIN has been instrumental in developing links between journalists and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) at state level. This helps CSOs get voices from communities heard and provides journalists with access to the real life stories of basic education.

13. Community Theatre is live and immediately responsive to the crowd and the context of the performance. By personally engaging communities in the tribulations and triumphs of basic education and bringing them together in discussion of what's going on in their schools, the theatre work raises “voice” and demand for change and encourages community involvement in school based management. ESSPIN offered a rare opportunity to present Community Theatre on a large scale and over a prolonged period and with the advantage of closely linking it to other social mobilisation work by government and civil society partners. This gave it much greater resonance with communities and, in turn, meant it added considerable value in changing behaviour towards schools and basic education.

#### **Impact**

14. Quantitative and qualitative data indicates ESSPIN's communications are getting vital messages across to a wide and diverse audience and that people were acting positively in response to these messages. Media partners also report positively on the experience of working with ESSPIN.
15. The now evident changes in attitude and behaviour taking place in schools and communities cannot be solely attributed to ESSPIN's C&KM work. However, in supporting the delivery of the programme outputs and the integrated approach to school improvement, ESSPIN's communications are clearly making a significant contribution to the programme's outcomes and eventual impact.

#### **Lessons**

16. Media partners need careful managing to keep them “on message” and to manage risks to programme, partner or stakeholders by disseminating inappropriate material.
17. Further efforts are required at the pre-production stage to tackle the issue of broadcast fees through closer working with broadcasters. Radio budgets saved from the prematurely ended Gbagan Gbagan could fund repeats of still relevant earlier series could.
18. The Community Theatre has shown the power of its performances and the quality of the responses from the audiences. The theatre has shown great value and exceeded expectations in promoting community engagement and supporting school improvement. Further theatre production is a must.

19. Filming the plays for broadcast and DVD for widespread distribution has been requested in all states and this should be seriously considered. The drama needs to be properly adapted for the screen.
20. Media engagement, as part of a sound communications strategy, is better understood and firmly embedded in ESSPIN's integrated approach to school improvement. It is critical for advocacy and political engagement with civil society and government. More pro-active investment and support for established communications projects from across the ESSPIN work-streams is required.
21. Capacity building for our Nigerian partners includes management of the production process and raising media partner awareness of the expectations of an international development programme. We could do more to improve partner understanding of our operational and contractual requirements.
22. SUBEB Social Mobilisation Departments must be further involved in all ESSPIN's communications work. This requires ESSPIN's ongoing investment in joint projects and greater commitment of state resources through education sector strategies and budgets.

### *Conclusions*

23. Working with the media has proven challenging, sometimes innovative, often rewarding; and we hope inspiring. We've supported our producers and have received a high quality of output in return. The key to the relationship has been to work in partnership rather than to use the media simply as service providers. ESSPIN's mixed media communications have benefited from and enhanced the vibrancy of other technical assistance provided to communities, schools and government and civil society organisations.
24. Our media partners have demonstrated their value in implementing broad advocacy and political engagement strategies. No programme can afford to ignore the power of the media if it is seriously intent on raising awareness of important issues and seeks to create the necessary demand for social and institutional development..

## Introduction

25. From the outset, an effective communications and knowledge management (C&KM) strategy was recognised as an intrinsic part of the UKaid Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN). The programme offers an integrated approach to school improvement in the basic education sector and C&KM are critical to support the delivery of the programme outputs – better managed schools with competent teachers and an improved learning environment, stronger community engagement and “voice” in school improvement, and better planning, budgeting and management of basic education at all levels of government.
26. Communications and Knowledge Management (C&KM) has a vital role to play in raising issues, promoting solutions and explaining the rights, roles and responsibilities of community, civil society and government stakeholders in order to encourage greater transparency and accountability across the Nigerian education sector. ESSPIN and the programme partners need a dialogue with diverse audiences at all levels of the sector to ensure the flow of relevant information to drive the supply and demand of improved education services. Effectively engaging communities with those responsible for state education and encouraging a responsive audience for “voice” is essential for accountability and good governance. In promoting the “reform agenda” at Federal, State / Local Government, School and Community levels we seek to create understanding as to why the education system is broken and what is needed to fix it, with the opportunity to highlight success and failure.
27. This paper considers how by working with different media (an integral part of civil society), ESSPIN is helping create a critical mass of informed advocates willing to push systemic change from inside and outside the Nigerian education sector. This increases pressure for funding to flow to schools, for comprehensive improvements in the delivery of quality education and for greater community participation in the management of schools. Ultimately, in the progression from information and public awareness-raising to mobilisation and engagement, ESSPIN and its media partners provide a spur to action and seek a public response. In the long term this means behavioural change and institutional development for basic education in Nigeria.

## Purpose of the Consultancy

28. The “consultancy” was a short extension of the long term position of Lead Specialist: Information Management (sometimes referred to as Communications and Knowledge Management). ESSPIN has undertaken some innovative communications initiatives with the media and much of the institutional memory and experience of the rationale, approach and methodology, as well as the impact and learning, resides with the Lead Specialist. It would be ironic if this knowledge was lost to ESSPIN and programme partners with the Lead

Specialist's departure. Although there are a number of other technical reports of ESSPIN's radio, film and theatre production and the work with journalists, there has not been a previous attempt to provide a programme perspective or overview. It was therefore considered useful to review and document ESSPIN's C&KM Programme Support Activities' with radio, film, journalists and community theatre. The assignment also allowed the possibility of field work to follow up community theatre performances some months / year after they had taken place to assess the impact of this medium for behaviour change communications. This may form part of a longer term research assignment towards Continuing Professional Development objectives.

29. Full Terms of Reference for the assignment are provided at Annex 1.

### Structure of the Report

30. This report is derived from the drafts of the ESSPIN Experience Paper – Telling Stories: School Improvement in the Media, which was the main assignment output. It was realised that the Experience Paper format would exclude the more detailed account, analysis and lesson learning otherwise possible in a more formal technical report, i.e. it would be lost in the editing. So, for the record, here is a fuller version but the structure remains as per the Experience Paper template. This breaks down as follows:

- a consideration of the initial challenges of ESSPIN C&KM with regard to the main strands of the programme's communication strategy.
- a review of work with different media which describes the process, outputs and issues arising
- a consideration of the impact of the media work which first reviews the quantitative data available from the Communications Impact Study<sup>1</sup> and then the qualitative data of audience responses included in a "Voices" sub-section. This last also gives space to the media partners to tell of their experience of working with ESSPIN.
- lessons are included in the next section and are broken down in to production learning and programme learning
- conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> ESSPIN Report 531 - Communication Impact Study at [www.esspin.org/resources/reports](http://www.esspin.org/resources/reports)

## Methodology - Initial Challenges

### ESSPIN's Communication Strategy

31. The initial challenge for ESSPIN C&KM was to develop the programme communications strategy. This has gone through annual iterations with inevitable changes of emphasis based on programme and client needs but it has been essentially consistent in its aims and objectives and methods of implementation. Simply put, it is all about information in and information out. But what information or messages, to whom, how and, above all, why?

### The Messages

32. An early priority was to promote the existence of the programme itself but ESSPIN's communications quickly became focused on what the programme offered to partners and other stakeholders. ESSPIN was not the story, instead the work being supported in the states to deliver better quality education was. (This was subject to some fluctuations in DFID's own communications policy as to whether UK aid needed to be visible or not). Although ESSPIN's integrated approach to school improvement took time to evolve and become more integrated, the main areas for ESSPIN messaging were soon apparent – to put performing schools at the heart of the education sector reform agenda, to prompt community members to be more involved in the management of **their** schools (especially through the development of functioning SBMCs), and to promote the government management systems, structures and processes necessary for effective policy, planning and funding of basic education<sup>2</sup>. Along with the importance of Inclusive Education, to ensure education for all Nigeria's children, these were to become the pillars of ESSPIN's School Improvement Programme (SIP). They were therefore the areas where behaviour change was necessary and therefore the key messages of the communications products.
33. Simultaneously, alongside the technical knowledge disseminated by ESSPIN specialists, it was important to gather and report information on the situation on the ground to provide the necessary programme context. As the programme passed the half-way mark it became more possible to show evidence of the programme's impact and, without hiding the continuing challenges, the real progress being made – increasingly with state partners' own resources. Positive results were fed back in to the media work to offer examples of best practice and lessons to inspire further efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> See ESSPIN Experiences on School Improvement, School Based Management and Medium Term Sector Strategies

## The Audiences

34. ESSPIN's target audiences for the key messages are many and diverse and, especially at state-level, could be further segmented to smaller, more localised groupings. The broad targets are on one side those with a direct interest or involvement in schools - children, their parents and other community members and those with a responsibility for delivering basic education working either in schools or within a technical or management capacity (mostly, but not all, civil servants); and, on the other side, the politicians and opinion leaders in government and civil society who have power to influence the success of the reform agenda. ESSPIN's challenge, and especially that of the C&KM team, has been to help bring power to those with a direct interest and create interest in those with the power.
35. It is very much part of the higher governance objectives of the programme to secure stronger "voice" on the demand side and greater accountability on the supply side of the education sector. Although they have come to much greater prominence in the latter half of the programme, advocacy and political engagement have been fundamental to ESSPIN's communications work from the outset. To some extent this extends to an international, notably UK, audience - especially in a time of economic recession coinciding with protected and increasing aid budgets.

## The Media

36. In tackling the challenges of a moribund education system ESSPIN needs to reach large, geographically spread, and socially / politically / economically diverse audiences with the main messages about the school improvement programme. Whilst some sections of the population have access to all kinds of media, there are many whose choices are limited by their circumstances and others that have strong preferences as to where they receive information from. Different media have the potential to communicate to different sections of this huge audience so it was clear that ESSPIN opted for a mixed mass media strategy to secure the widest possible coverage. Film / TV, the press, community theatre and, above all, radio drama were deployed as Programme Support Activities to get the messages out and to try to bring stakeholders in to a local, regional and national dialogue on better schools.
37. Finding the right media partners at the right price was challenging. A rigorous competitive selection process was undertaken to secure the best possible value for money. It was clear that many prospective service providers' proposals were aspirational in terms of their capacity and their perceived value. The international donor market had also raised expectations of lucrative deals to be done. And the largely insurmountable problem of having to pay radio and TV broadcast fees on top of any investment in production was quickly apparent.

38. Inevitably, despite the cautious approach, there was something of a leap of faith about the selection but in the main ESSPIN has been very well served by its media partners. Whenever possible these have been local partners to meet a C&KM objective of supporting the development of Nigerian media capacity –and avoiding higher international production costs. The pay-back has proved to be the need to invest more ESSPIN time and energy in supporting production, especially in the areas of research, writing and project management.

### Other challenges

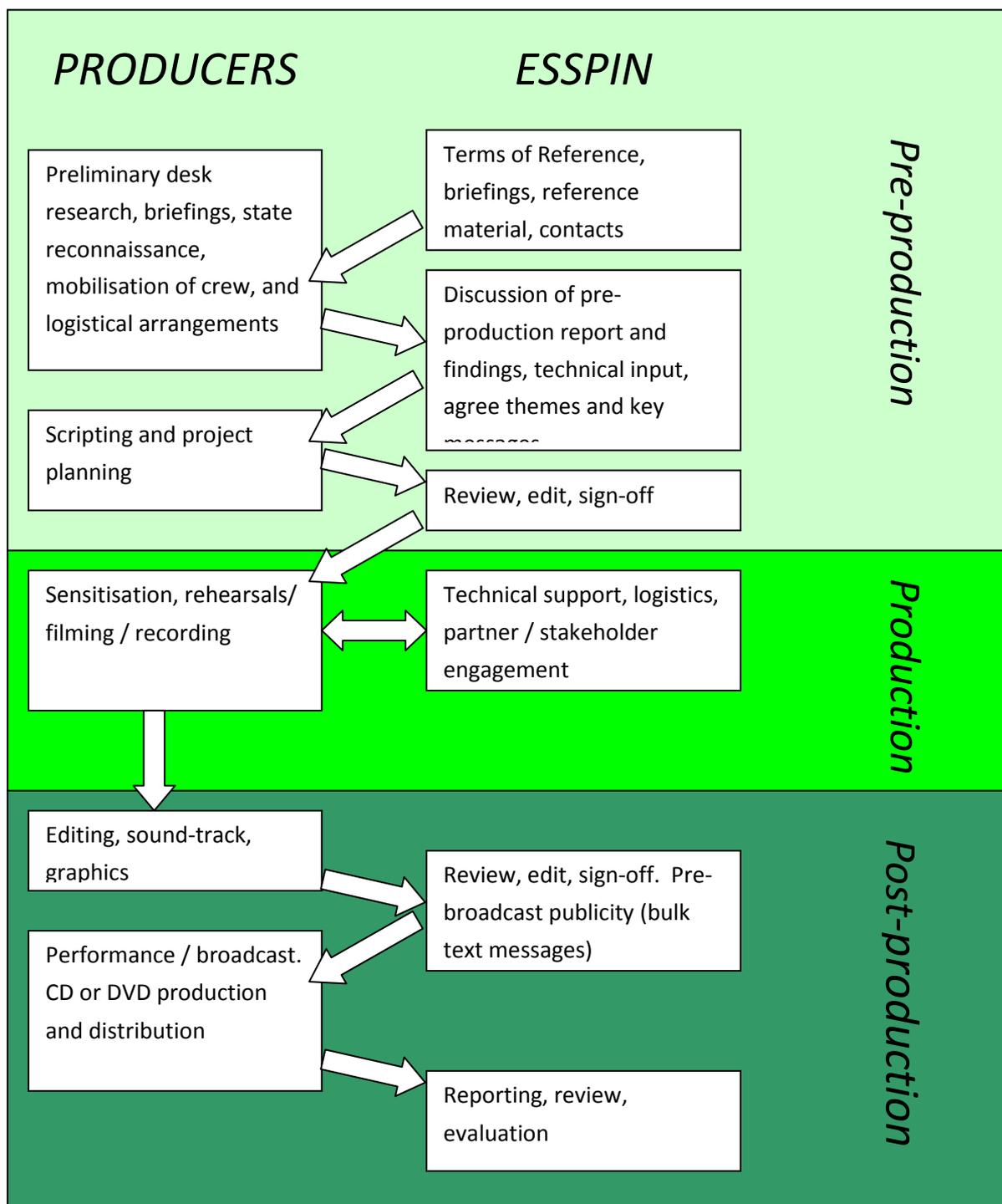
39. Perceptions and misconceptions of C&KM within ESSPIN and DFID presented early and persistent challenges for the communications component of ESSPIN. Whereas health programmes have long established the need and practice of effective communications as integral to getting behaviour change messages across to the public and policy makers, in education it seemed to be more innovative and less understood. Throughout ESSPIN it was therefore necessary to keep highlighting where C&KM fits in to the programme and what it offers. The cross-cutting nature of the communications work exacerbated this problem to some extent, as there is no distinct “home” for C&KM, but a glance across the programme Logical-Framework and the Results Monitoring Table reveals the potential scale and scope of C&KM activities in all output work-streams. Nonetheless, in a resource constrained context, staffing has been cut and budgets reduced – from 8% to 5% of the Programme Support Activity budget.
40. The time, effort and money required to produce good quality communications materials was another area of some misunderstanding. Ironically at times, the better the output was, the easier it seemed to be and the fewer resources were perceived as necessary. In reality turning up with a camera, a microphone, a group of actors or a journalist's notepad is only part of the process. So much more goes on behind the scenes to create the desired product.
41. An early task for ESSPIN C&KM was to establish the C&KM unit as an essential part of the programme and to develop the necessary infrastructure. This included the development of ESSPIN's “visual identity” and house styles to be rigorously applied to all communications output. A robust and versatile programme website was also an essential requirement to carry all communications products to a global audience. The development of high quality Information, Education, Communication (IEC) printed materials in many formats has been a continuous feature of ESSPIN's C&KM work but is not further considered in this paper. These documents, and other media generated output, are available on the ESSPIN website [www.esspin.org](http://www.esspin.org)
42. ESSPIN is a temporary concept and C&KM work, like other programme activities, is about finding sustainable solutions to problems and demonstrating processes that partners can

continue to roll-out after ESSPIN has finished. Early attempts to do this were centred on the State Ministry of Education Communication Committees that were inherited from the Capacity for Universal Basic Education (CUBE) programme. However, these ad hoc and disparate bodies quickly proved of limited use other than as irregular cross departmental meetings to discuss possibilities. Without a clear mandate and budget they were unlikely to achieve little without constant support and as interest in them waned ESSPIN supported functional reviews of the MoEs and SUBEBs consigned them to history anyway. A ready and more plausible alternative was to link ESSPIN's C&KM work to State Universal Basic Education Boards' (SUBEB) Social Mobilisation Departments (SMD). Here, by definition, there was a clear communications function and an established role in community engagement already tied in to ESSPIN's promotion of school based management. By working at the interface of government and community efforts to reform basic education, they are important gatekeepers and channels of communication for supply side sensitisation and demand side voice. The KMS were instrumental in joining with Social Mobilisation Officers as much as possible in C&KM planning and activities, thereby helping to show by example the how and why of communications practice and develop SMD's own C&KM capacity.

## **Main Activities - Working with different Media**

43. The use of various mass media allows ESSPIN to reach across the social, cultural, economic and political spectrum, and a wide geographic area, with a range of messages to inform and mobilise stakeholders. Research indicates considerable variation in the take-up of different media in terms of audience size and type. Radio captures a wide audience, often otherwise unreachable, which is mobilised to mainly engage with schools at community level. Those receiving information and sensitised by TV and the press are relatively few, but drawn more from the wealthy and educated “movers and shakers” of the elite in a better position to influence policy. Community Theatre reaches a yet smaller audience but it is adaptable to very local contexts, directly and immediately engaging audiences in debate as to what is happening to schools in their communities.

**Basic Process for ESSPIN Media Production**



**Radio Drama**

44. Radio has been the central plank of ESSPIN's media platform with by far the largest and most widespread audience and increasingly reaching the most disadvantaged and excluded, notably poor rural women. For a remote population with low levels of literacy and a largely non-reading culture, radio serves to inform and entertain.

45. Between early 2010 and mid 2012, ESSPIN produced and broadcast four series of an almost continuously running, weekly 30 minute radio drama onomatopoeically titled “Gbagan, Gbagan – the Bell is Calling You!<sup>3</sup>” The drama was broadcast nationally in pidgin on state and independent radio and in local language translations in the north and south.
46. By entertaining with down to earth, life like characters and storylines the audience was engaged and came back for more. ESSPIN could develop the story of school improvement which was integral to the drama and keep up a steady flow of relevant messaging. To avoid audiences switching off, the education content / messaging amounted to approximately just ten minutes in each episode of the drama
47. Different themes or elements of the school improvement programme were emphasised each series. It particularly encouraged community engagement at the immediate school level, notably through School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), and also raised broader governance and education quality issues. There was the opportunity to feed in progress from the real world to the imaginary community of Tikomi. Each series ended with a ‘town-hall’ style discussion around series’ themes with a live and participating audience in one of the ESSPIN states. The bell brought people closer to their radios, it sounded the alarm about the state of the nation’s schools and it called children to better schools.
48. Flint Productions were selected as ESSPIN’s radio partners in a competitive process that considered capability and value for money. The production process then started with a period of desk research and discussions with ESSPIN specialists to gain an understanding of the basic education issues, challenges and proposed solutions – what was to emerge as the school improvement package. ESSPIN specialists joined the script writers for the first series to contribute their expertise and understanding of the real situation on the ground to the imaginary world that was being created.

“Producing Gbagan-Gbagan, ESSPIN's radio drama about the challenges and reforms around basic education in Nigeria, has been a professionally rewarding experience. The Gbagan-Gbagan experience with ESSPIN, to create an output that was effective both as an enjoyable audience experience and a development communications vehicle, honed our skills. The effect of the Gbagan-Gbagan experience on the audience was also imbibed by the team.” - Chidi Ukwu, Chief Executive, Flint Productions

49. Much of the airtime was devoted to exciting storylines about peoples’ relationships, criminal or other dubious activity, and local politics – far more interesting than a dirge on the state of basic education. But in amongst the bangs and bust-ups there were children,

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<sup>3</sup> Gbagan Gbagan is the sound of the bell, as used in Nigerian schools.

teachers, parents and other community members who were dealing with major issues in schools. Teacher quality, school facilities, community engagement, education for all (including those often excluded because of their gender, disability or poverty), and the use and abuse of power and money by those responsible for delivering education services all featured as central themes.

50. Scripts were approved by ESSPIN before recording began and this often meant a period of negotiation over story lines and content to ensure messages were included and correct and that risks to UKaid / ESSPIN were minimised. There was also some contribution to the overall creative process with suggestions as to how stories could play out. Once signed off, it was then over to the production cast and crew, including some of the best of Nigeria's acting talent and technical expertise, working on set and in the studio to produce high quality radio.
51. All recordings were checked and agreed by ESSPIN before broadcast. The independent national broadcasts were delayed a series behind the FRCN broadcasts which was initially thought to be a problem but later considered to work well to reinforce messages. Pre-broadcast publicity included the use of bulk text messaging to ESSPIN's stakeholders.
52. Broadcast arrangements were left in the hands of the radio producers to organise. Initially it was thought this would secure better deals on the broadcast costs and left the responsibility for getting the drama heard with those being paid to produce it – i.e. unless it was on air the job wasn't done. In the latter part of the programme, broadcast contracting for series repeats was taken over by ESSPIN and there were further negotiations to offset rising fees.
53. Having to pay for the broadcast of some of the best material available on the radio, which had cost the broadcasters nothing to produce, was a constant irritation, especially as Gbagan Gbagan started to become more popular and its Saturday morning slot more lucrative for advertising. Finding this sort of alternative funding had been seen as a sustainable exit strategy by ESSPIN which would have left the show on air and the production team and broadcasters doing good business. However, this did not work out and the possibility of growing a radio market eager for quality radio programming that would attract bigger business than broadcast fees was missed. Increasing broadcast fee contributed to the premature end of Gbagan Gbagan. Other development programmes have attempted to address this issue and work with radio companies to reduce or remove broadcast fees but ESSPIN did not have resources to dedicate to capacity building or institutional change across the industry, nor the time to wait for messages to be released only when they became free to air.

## Film

54. In presenting a strong visual context, film raises public awareness and more responsible engagement with education issues. Film helps provide eye-witness testimony to inform opinion and promote the formulation of evidence-based education policy.

### *“Better Schools, Better Nigeria”*

55. ESSPIN's first documentary film project in 2009-10, entitled “Better Schools, Better Nigeria”, was undertaken in close collaboration with the five partner state ministries of education. It served as a video baseline for the programme. There was criticism from the states that films made under the earlier CUBE programme did not give a broad enough view of the various issues and challenges the states face. It was felt that they did not give government a “voice” to express what they are doing and what they plan to do, and did not provide a positive view of the way forward. Learning from this, the new films had a different approach. Whilst not hiding the grim realities of basic education in the states, it was a deliberate attempt to present an inspiring picture of potential and progress. There was little benefit in simply dwelling on the doom and damnation that was the usual story of Nigeria's education sector. State officials from the Honourable Commissioners of Education downwards made public statements of their aspirations and commitments to offer all children an improved standard of basic education.
56. State partners' early work with ESSPIN to improve teaching and school management through the development of the State School Improvement Teams and School Based Management Committees was showcased. Important governance issues around developing education sector strategies and budgets were covered. State specific priorities highlighted included the provision of better learning environments through infrastructure investments, the collaborative initiative to integrate elements of a modern curriculum in to Islamic schools, and the efforts to reduce numbers of out of school children (notably girls and those from nomadic communities in the north).
57. The production process started with desk research by the production company, Straightline Films, and briefings with ESSPIN communications and other technical staff. Preliminary reconnaissance visits to meet ESSPIN's state teams and education stakeholders determined key themes for each state. Individuals to be interviewed and locations for filming were identified. A draft shooting script was prepared and a pre-production report covering the proposed themes was shared with the state stakeholders before filming began.

“The difficult task the production faced was to make the films relevant, useful and interesting to a wide audience; This challenge was compounded by the fact that the films had to be authorized by each state’s government. So the films had to attempt to be credible to a wider audience while still being acceptable to the government whose failures we were examining.” – Chris Morgan, Producer / Director, Straightline Films

58. The week of intensive filming in each state was demanding but, whilst not without challenges, was fairly straightforward. A small film crew of three was ably supported by ESSPIN C&KM and administrative staff, who organised in advance the necessary appointments, permissions and logistics for the crew.
59. The less visible part of the production process, and perhaps the hardest and longest graft, came afterwards in the editing suite when the footage from the states was cut, the script rewritten and voiced, and the sound and graphics added. A rough cut was taken back to the states for screening to key stakeholders. Further fine editing then ensued. Close consultation throughout between ESSPIN and the production team ensured the final product fairly represented the programme and its partners.
60. A 15 minute “Better Schools, Better Nigeria” (BSBN) film was produced for each of the five states ESSPIN was working in. 6 minute versions were made for broadcasting within popular breakfast magazine shows and on the internet. The short state films were also available in Hausa and Yoruba, as appropriate. A 30 minute film using the same material but with a more thematic view across the states was added. The different versions of the films were shown on national state and independent TV. Pre-broadcast publicity included the use of on screen announcements (“track-ups”) and bulk text messaging to ESSPIN’s stakeholders. The films were mass produced on DVD and widely distributed to education stakeholders in Nigeria, as well as in the UK and internationally. The same material was also used for a short music video for the “1-Goal” education for all campaign that coincided with the FIFA 2010 World Cup. Editable versions of the film stock were provided to UKaid.

“I really enjoyed producing these films with ESSPIN. Finding the important stories in education, stories that can inspire others, was exciting and challenging. ESSPIN was also dynamic and open to new ideas.” – Chris Morgan, Producer / Director, Straightline Films

### *TV “Spots”*

61. ESSPIN’s high level advocacy in support of political engagement and replication was enhanced by the production of six low-budget, thirty second TV “spots”, two of which were aired each day in the weeks preceding the 2011 elections.

### *Nigerian Futures*

62. Two years on from BSBN, the next stage in the longitudinal video documentation of ESSPIN's School Improvement Programme was "Nigerian Futures". This was significantly different in approach to BSBN. ESSPIN worked with an all Nigerian production team, Visual Flow Media, who had made the TV Spots (and included key personnel from BSBN). And the new films were more striking by focusing on ordinary people to tell of the results being achieved and the further efforts and investment required to secure a better future for Nigeria's children. They still provided some context and reference to the state's education reform agenda but the focus was to be on ordinary peoples' experience rather than politicians' or technocrats' – fewer "Talking Heads"! ESSPIN was therefore less concerned to seek government partner collaboration or approval. We wanted to capture the now evident impact of the SIP through the voices of those most directly involved – children, parents, teachers and community members.
63. Once engaged, Visual Flow Media Production followed the established process of research, state reconnaissance, filming, scripting, editing and broadcast / DVD production. ESSPIN time and effort to support the writing and editing process was needed to ensure that we got what we wanted in terms of content and messages, to provide guidance on the expectations of an international development partner, and quality assure the final output. A close, collaborative relationship with our local partner contributed to the acclaimed final output.
64. Learning from BSBN, the now six ESSPIN state films were 5 minutes in length, to offer greater versatility in broadcast schedules, and again available as local language translations. A 30 minute edit looked at the main themes of the SIP across the states and emphasised the integrated approach to school improvement. Both short and long films were broadcast on national TV stations (including notably morning and evening on Independence Day 2012) and made available to programme partners on DVD.

"Working with ESSPIN has been enlightening. The ESSPIN C&KM specialists are very professional and all understand the requirements of film production. They made access to film characters and locations easy. I personally learnt a lot about developmental video production. We at VFM are grateful to ESSPIN for giving us a chance to prove ourselves and for promoting Nigerian talent. - Akinkugbe Okikiola, Visual Flow Media

### The Press and Other Journalists

65. The concept of the press as the fourth estate in politics was attributed to Burke in late 18<sup>th</sup> century England and it is generally accepted that a free press is essential for good governance. An independent media as a pillar of civil society is no less political than the media as an agent of government but they are at their most powerful as watchdog and commentator – as Burke saw them in the public gallery of parliament.
66. Political control and “brown envelope” payments and bribes for stories to appear are cultural norms in the Nigerian media. There is a corollary of newspaper correspondents that don't need to write if they can rely on a steady stream of statements and press releases by public bodies, or think pieces from political opinion makers.
67. ESSPIN is working with Nigerian journalists from the press and other media to improve the quantity and quality of reporting on the state of the nation's education sector and so build civil society demand for improvement. We want column inches in the daily papers for the literate, influential and powerful to read and respond to. Two Journalism Development Programmes (JDP) of awareness raising and skills development have been supported. Participants have produced a steady stream of informed articles.
68. The JDP opens up an important and wide reaching communication channel for messages about school improvement. By working with journalists as partners (principally the press but not excluding those in other media) we seek to tell the story of what's happening in schools and communities and how government can better manage basic education. Those stories have greater validity if they are not ESSPIN's stories, especially not about ESSPIN, but belong to journalists who understand the responsibilities of their independent role and have the capacity to investigate the truth and write from the evidence before them.
69. Our partners, Development Communications Network, promoted the concept of “Immersion Reporting”. Immersion reporting is about establishing relationships with the people whose story is being told. It details the individual's experiences from a deeply personal perspective and the journalism is rooted in a descriptive realism which helps to evoke how people live and what they value. This is designed to make readers feel part of the event being reported and create the feeling of a lived experience.

Event reporting has dominated most media reports in Nigeria with voices of the voiceless hardly heard. However the JDP emphasized issue-focused reporting and created understanding of the challenges of the education sector and steps required to reform the sector.

- Akinlabi Jimoh, Programme Director, Development Communications Network

70. Realistically, ESSPIN understands that journalists work within editorial and proprietorial constraints, that they have to sell papers, and that we cannot dictate what they write. But in collaboration with programme partners and beneficiaries, ESSPIN is trying to bring the journalists closer to the true story of education in Nigeria, the successes as well as the failures, and to be more willing and better able to tell it how it is - on their own account.
71. As an extension of this approach, ESSPIN has been instrumental in developing links between journalists and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) at state level. This mutually beneficial relationship helps CSOs get voices from communities heard and provides journalists with access to the real life stories of basic education.
72. The two JDPs devised with "Development Communications Network" offered a phased approach to improving press coverage of basic education. Identified participants progressed to subsequent stages on the basis of their potential and output – with awards at state and national level for the top performers. An initial desk review of education coverage by journalists from different media houses helped identify likely candidates. Sensitisation days in each of the ESSPIN states brought 20+ invited journalists together to learn about the JDP and to be introduced to some of the salient issues of the school improvement programme. ESSPIN thus had an immediate rapport with about 150 journalists on each JDP even if they did not progress further. Approximately 10 applicants from each state and Abuja were selected for a week long training programme involving presentations, practical skills development and an investigative field visit to a local school or community. 18 (approximately 3 from each state) went on as state winners to become "immersion fellows" for the national level capacity building. This included a short round of further training in Abuja and then the development of a media project with guidance from assigned mentors to develop education stories over several months from the inputs, contacts and impetus provided. From this select group a national winner was selected. Prizes were presented to state and national award winners at a gala even in Abuja which brought together the cream of Nigeria's education reporters in a tremendous atmosphere of celebration and commitment for education reform.
73. The first JDP ran for a little over a year from August 2010. The second JDP began in mid 2012 for a year. It follows a similar pattern but focuses on more local, state based journalists and establishing contact between them and ESSPIN's government and CSO partners. During the first JDP, 68 authoritative education stories were published or broadcast by the participants. These journalists continue to write.

We were able to stimulate them (journalists) to write investigative and impactful reports. We exposed them to the decay in schools through field trips. A high volume of educational reports were produced and journalists who don't primarily report education developed skills and interest in education reporting.

- Akinlabi Jimoh, Programme Director, Development Communications Network

## Community Theatre

74. ESSPIN Community Theatre draws a crowd and raises common issues around the delivery of quality primary education in Nigeria. Despite advancements in information technology, many people are still not connected to modern electronic mass media. A strong tradition of drama and story-telling prevails in Nigerian society. Theatre offers the opportunity to reach the most disadvantaged and excluded amongst a widespread population with a low level of literacy and a largely non-reading culture (notably poor rural women) and is a key component of ESSPIN's media strategy.
75. Community Theatre is live and immediately responsive to the crowd and the context of the performance. Whilst audiences are inevitably smaller than for other media, the drama offers a more memorable event. By personally engaging communities in the tribulations and triumphs of basic education and bringing them together in discussion of what's going on in their schools, the theatre work raises "voice" and demand for change and encourages community involvement in school based management.
76. ESSPIN offered a rare opportunity to present Community Theatre on a large scale and over a prolonged period and with the advantage of closely linking it to other social mobilisation work by government and civil society partners. The drama was not simply a one-off campaign activity, certainly not just entertainment, but instead was in synergy with the package of school improvement activities. This gave it much greater resonance with communities and, in turn, meant it added considerable value in changing behaviour towards schools and basic education.
77. Initial concerns over the viability of Community Theatre meant that the original proposal to cover the six ESSPIN supported states was broken up in to two three state tours of the northern and southern states. Further caution was applied in making the first state, Kano, a pilot to be reviewed before proceeding to Jigawa and Kaduna. Election campaigning and post-election violence then further disrupted and delayed work in Jigawa and Kaduna in early 2011 but eventually it went ahead. The southern tour happened in the first half of 2012 and a return to the north and south is scheduled for 2013.
78. Youth, Adolescence Reflection and Action Centre (YARAC) from Jos were selected as partners for Community Theatre. The production process began with briefings and desk

study and then a preliminary visit to the states to meet with ESSPIN state teams and stakeholders and identify local drama groups. Working with local actors is a vital element of the Community Theatre as communication of the messages is facilitated through understanding of the local language(s), culture, religion and politics. We were fortunate to find some great talent in the states who became wonderfully and personally committed to the education reform process and true agents for change.

79. State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) Social Mobilisation Departments became increasingly involved in the theatre tours. It was an objective of the theatre work that ESSPIN should build their understanding of community theatre as a tool for social mobilisation and their capacity to deliver it. Some Social Mobilisation Officers (SMO) even joined the cast! They were especially important in making communities aware of the theatre's coming.

"Youth, Adolescence Reflection and Action Centre Jos, has had the opportunity to do projects with several local and international agencies. But the most fulfilling and exciting in recent times is the partnership with ESSPIN." – Dr. Tor Iorapuu, Executive Director, YARAC

80. Once individual state issues had been identified and ESSPIN's SIP and its key messages discussed and understood, the theatre producers returned to the states to work with ESSPIN State Knowledge Management Specialists (KMS), SMOs, and local artists in script writing workshops. In the north this was done with representatives from the three states together. Kano and Jigawa opted to develop a common story focusing on girls' education and community involvement, whilst Kaduna created its own with different emphases on school infrastructure and school based management. The southern states had their own individual workshops but these all worked around a common story covering inclusive education, teacher quality and SBMC development, with individual state nuances. The stories were true to life, entertaining, often funny but always provocative.
81. The scripts were all reviewed by ESSPIN and often revised with the producers before being signed-off. Translation for delivery in local languages was essential. The theatre writing was adaptable and, whilst remaining 'on message', it often changed in response to new ideas or local circumstances.
82. After scripts were agreed, rehearsals began in earnest and were immediately followed by the state tours of 15 days, averaging two performances per day. Pre-publicity to inform communities of the theatre's coming was vital. Originally it was intended that performances would be staged in public places, like village squares or motor parks, but it became apparent that this would cause problems with local authorities. Unless by special request, nearly all performances were held in school grounds but open to the wider community. This proved useful in making the theatre more accessible to elders, women

and others who would not be comfortable in public places. It also meant those who had had no previous contact with the school got to visit.

“The Community Theatre is an engaging process. Enabling people to have the appropriate spaces to hold conversations regarding the importance of quality education in a very sincere, participatory and open manner with community leaders, policy makers, teachers and other relevant stakeholders was simply awesome for many”. – Dr. Tor Iorapuu, Executive Director, YARAC

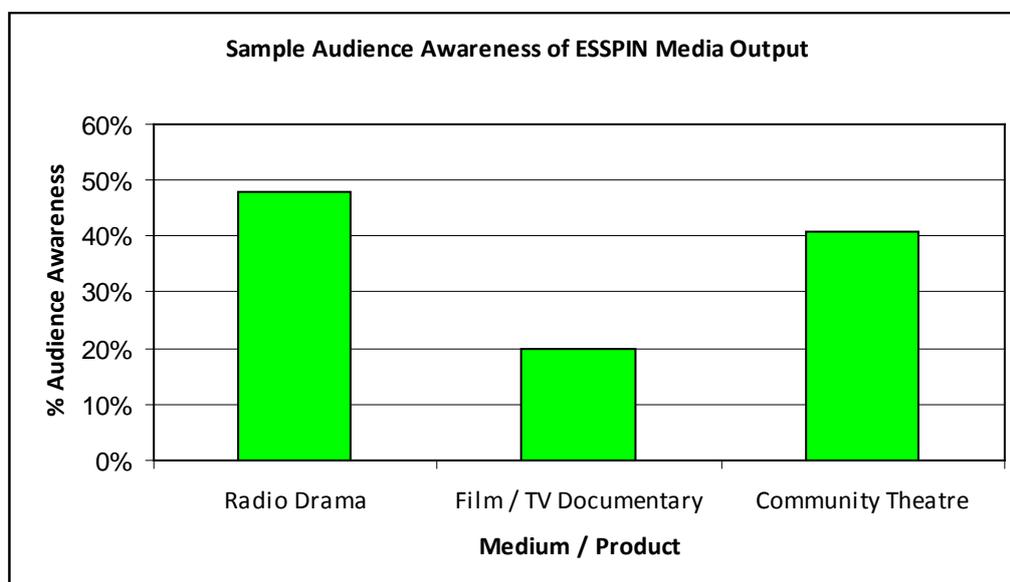
83. The theatre troupes drew a crowd of usually 300 – 500, more or less depending on the pre-publicity, weather, farming activities or local events. A good cross-section of the local community attended: men, women and children, traditional and religious leaders, some local government and political figures, and importantly those who had no current direct interest in the school.
84. But they did not just come to watch. At the end of all the plays the audience suddenly finds itself part of the drama as the actors turn to face them and ask “What has to be done?” to address the issues raised in the play. A lively and often lengthy public debate ensues and all are invited to speak. People identified with the characters and saw the schools presented in the plays as their own. Sometimes they made pledges of immediate support or action, sometimes they demanded a response from government. Everywhere the Community Theatre created a stir.

## Impact

85. Reliable basic data on Nigerian audience size is difficult to find. Using available survey data, ESSPIN extrapolated estimated total audience figures for the radio and TV broadcasts of ESSPIN communication products (programme time, day of week, channel etc) as well as overall newspaper readership. We could provide our own estimated average audience headcount for the Community Theatre. We believe the figures shown in the table below to be reasonably accurate and, if anything, erring on the conservative side. For example, the audience for the October 1 (Independence Day public holiday) TV broadcast of Nigerian Futures has been estimated by industry insiders to be at least twice, quite possibly three times, the figure shown.

Medium	Estimated Audience
Film / TV	5.5 million
Radio Drama	10.5 million
Newspapers (all titles)	6 million
Community Theatre	40,000 (total)

86. In 2011, ESSPIN commissioned its own Communications Impact Study<sup>4</sup> with 1,200 respondents to determine audience responses to ESSPIN's communications output in the ESSPIN supported states. Resource constraints limited the scale and scope of this exercise but interviews and focus group discussions provided a reasonable guide to whether the messages in diverse media were getting through and what people were doing about them.
87. The study first established audience awareness of the different media output. The radio drama had been heard by nearly half of all those randomly sampled, with nearly three quarters of those sampled in Kano claiming to listen. Community theatre (at that time only performed in Kano and Jigawa) had been seen by 40% of those sampled. As expected, film / TV viewing was less widespread with a fifth of the sample claiming to have seen Better Schools, Better Nigeria, though in Lagos this rose to over half. Given that the films and radio drama were broadcast nationally, not just in the six ESSPIN states, even modest estimates for the total Nigerian audience based on these figures would be impressive.



Percentage of sample audience who had heard or seen ESSPIN media output

88. The study also investigated what messages were being picked up from the different media by those who had heard or seen ESSPIN's communications.

#### Radio Drama (Gbagan, Gbagan)

Messages / Needs Perceived	% audience
Sending all children to school	53.2
Greater community involvement	35.4
Improved quality of teaching	29.3

<sup>4</sup> ESSPIN Report 531 - Communication Impact Study at Resources/ Reports at [www.esspin.org](http://www.esspin.org)

Better learning environment	27.7
Support our schools	22.5
Better government management	19.7
Better funding of schools	17.5
Better leadership	12.7

#### Film TV (Better Schools, Better Nigeria)

Messages / Needs Perceived	% audience
Sending all children to school	48
Better government management	45
Better learning environment	44
Better funding of schools	34
Improved quality of teaching	33
Greater community involvement	32
Better leadership	26
Support our schools	18

#### Community Theatre (Kano and Jigawa only)

Messages / Needs Perceived	% audience
Greater community involvement	51.7
Sending all children to school	48.8
Better learning environment	29.7
Improved quality of teaching	29.1
Better leadership	27.3
Better funding of schools	25
Support our schools	24.4
Better government management	22.7

89. Finally, what people did in response to the messages they received was measured. Of the 93% of the total sample who had picked up some key messages from across the media, reaction was as follows:

Reaction	% audience perceiving message
Encouraged others to send their children to school*	56.8
Send my children to school	42.1
Speak to others about basic education	33.3
Visit the school	28.6
Support our schools with resources	24.6
Speak to local leaders about basic education	20.8
Attend SBMC meetings	17.9
Other	4.2

\* i.e. their own children were in school

90. The Communications Impact Study strongly suggested that ESSPIN's communications were getting vital messages across to a wide and diverse audience and that people were acting positively in response to these messages. Other qualitative data from the Communications Impact Study and other sources validates this and examples are given in the next section.
91. The now evident changes in attitude and behaviour taking place in schools and communities cannot be solely attributed to ESSPIN's C&KM work. However, in supporting the delivery of the programme outputs and the integrated approach to school improvement, ESSPIN's communications are clearly making a significant contribution to the programme's outcomes and eventual impact.

## Voices

### Radio

"SBMC development has been accelerated because communities heard about SBMCs on Gbagan Gbagan and wanted to get involved". – O.A. Adefuye, Director, SUBEB Social Mobilisation Department, Lagos

teacher quality as discussed in the episode is vital. Messages on teacher training and re-training should be infused continually in the episodes to come. Good work! – Henry, Kaduna (by SMS)

"What I like is it very educating and easy to understand anytime you listen to it.. It talks on children education to parents who are still resisting sending their kid to school. And I strongly believe that this programme can soften that mind and understanding about western education". - Male FGD Respondent, Kano

"Gbagan Gbagan is a good drama programme I must acknowledge it. It has reshaped people's mind towards the training of a girl child". - Igwe Sunday, Abakaliki, Ebonyi state.

"I am a regular listener to your radio drama and I always enjoy it. I want to encourage you to continue as the programme is really enlightening the audience on the need for reform in our education sector". - Tosin Ajiboye, Osogbo, Osun State

### Film

"That documentary is a master stroke; I must be honest with you. I was watching it here and somebody came in and asked me 'where is this place?' I told him this is Nigeria. This is the situation of this country". - Male Stakeholder (The Guardian), Enugu

"What I like about the documentary is that, it has now given us a very good basic knowledge on how we can improve our country; we must develop our education... we must

put a lot of resources, not only resources, we must make sure that all resources put are accounted for". - Male Stakeholder, Kaduna North LG

### **Press and other Journalists**

"The Journalism Development Programme (JDP) has exposed me to certain things which I had no previous knowledge of. It has widened my scope of reportage of issues in the society. Issue-based and advocacy reporting has been on the lips of my station's management since last year", – Cecilia Chinwe Chukwu, Senior Reporter, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Enugu.

"The JDP has been of great impact in my work. Before taking part in the programme, I never really paid special attention to basic education issues. Today when I pass by any primary school I look out for things that can impact positively or negatively on basic education. The awareness in education reporting is increasing. Today papers dedicate pages to education like business and politics. This development arises from the training those of us who are from these media received" - Tony Akowe, The Nation, Kaduna

"JDP came at the right time when the education sector is under reported and when it is reported, it is done from the government perspective. So for me, the programme succeeds in opening my eyes to certain things that ordinarily I don't look out for when I'm doing stories. Prior to now, there are things we see in the education sector that policy makers pretend they don't see. It is our responsibility to bring it out to them. I now have that skill. I'll be very honest to tell you that the stories I did on school infrastructure in Kaduna State got the required attention. These schools are undergoing renovation right now." - Anthony Forson, Nigeria Television Authority, Kaduna

"My perspective to reporting has changed. When I go to an assignment and you tell me you are about to roll out a policy, I go back to my office and ask myself the following questions: Who are the people that will benefit from this policy? Are they aware that something like this is going to happen? What will be the impact? Is government sure that it will implement the policy? I take my reporting not from what the government says but how it will impact the lives of Nigerians generally who we are supposed to be writing for. For me that is what matters, that you can impact lives with your writings". - Boco Edet, Daily Trust, Abuja

### **Community Theatre<sup>5</sup>**

"The content of the play – "Agbajowo", was not only informative but an efficient and effective means of sensitisation to all stakeholders in education in the selected schools / communities." - Letter of Commendation from Lagos State Universal Education Board, 30 May 2012

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<sup>5</sup> Further audience reaction is included in ESSPIN Reports 5341 and --- oTheatre for Development in the northern and southern states.

“The story of this play “Hannu Da Yawa” is about me. The character, Gagarau, reflects my earlier thoughts about education especially where girls are concerned. I have since realised I was hurting my children. I have six of my children in this school and I am ready to go at any length to support their education. I am a welder and looking around, I think I can contribute to hanging some of the falling windows.” - Mallam Bala Usman, Gobirawa Special Primary School in Fagge LGA, Kano State

“This play is one of the best things that has happened to us here, parents don't want to get involved with the school, they are not even willing to provide for their children's school needs because the government has declared free education. I will immediately liaise with the Baale (Chief) so that we can start our own SBMC”. – Mrs. Isijola. (Act H.T.), Lagos

“This is one of the best dramas I have watched. As usual the community has a catalogue of needs. But it is even more exciting to see the eagerness to engage with the issues the drama raises. This is impressive”. - Barbara Payne, Senior Education Adviser, UKaid Nigeria

“This play is a proverb to the entire community- Change came because Agbabiaka dared to challenge a situation he did not like. We all must learn from him”. - Chief Solomon Ishola- (Baale),

“I have never had interest in drama but this one has been an experience. It has been both entertaining and educative. One of the key things I got from the play is the role of the community in the monitoring of government projects in the community”. - Mr. Alabi Kadupe, Kwara

“Before now, the women in the North are not allowed to go to school instead they hawk about and in so doing get exposed to dangers. As a result of the Hannu Diyawa drama so many parents who don't allow their girl children to go to school are now sending them to school, instead of them wandering about in the community during school hours.” - Female FGD Respondent, Kano

“In LGEA U/ Bassak, witnesses of the drama returned home and educated others; 10 plastic chairs were donated to the school as a result. In Chori, attendance to SBMC meetings improved and two female drop outs in Chori returned back to school” - Zinas Zugu, SUBEB SMD Desk Officer, Kauru LGEA, Kaduna

“Some communities are very religious and see education as an obstacle to their religion and encouraging moral decline – with the youth rejecting religion. After the drama, education is now seen as helping bring people together - children support parents, and it helps business, helps farming.” – Balarebe Yusuf, Dir SMD, Dutse

“Previous efforts to enrol children by going house to house had had little success but the drama made people come directly to the school to enrol pupils in Class 1 – many people understood the message of the drama.” - Alhagi Yaumuhammad, Village Head, Kwachirin Jobe

“I came and watched the drama, it made me see there is no reason why my child should not go to school”. – Nura Usman, Chai Chai, Jigawa.

“About that drama. Many of the housewives we traditionally wouldn't allow them to come but many heard the announcement and they came to witness the activities. There were so many people, men, boys, married women, girls - you would not know your wife was here” – Nura Usman, Chai Chai, Jigawa.

“The drama helped us let parents know their responsibilities and the role they should play” – Promise Ogu, Acting Dir, Enugu SUBEB SMD

“We have seen a rise in the enrolment of physically challenged children in Udi Local Government Area since the play “– Promise Ogu, Acting Dir, Enugu SUBEB SMD

“After they watched the play women were motivated to support the school. They make the children wake up on time and come washed by 07.30” – Beatrice Eze, Udi, Enugu.

“The drama made a big impact. Some big men in the community were not ready to help the school. They were only interested in their own advancement, but after the play they started to contribute” – Godwin Ali, SBMC Chairman, Premier Primary School, Udi, Enugu.

“The community learnt they are part of the school; that they are part of the problems of the school. They started to respond to calls for help. For example they brought those tyres to tackle the problem of (soil) erosion” – Rosalind Edze, Women's Group Leader, Premier Primary School, Udi, Enugu

“After the drama we noticed it was much easier for us to get the people to do what we wanted them to do to develop the school. Attendance at meetings was significantly higher. I have made myself more available for meetings and activities”. – Igwe (King) Prof. Kenneth Onyia, Nsude, Enugu

## Lessons

### Production Learning

92. Entertaining audiences has never overridden the political and social purpose of ESSPIN's work with the media to secure behaviour change. Our media partners need managing throughout the production process to ensure we keep "on-message".
93. There are times when the Nigerian context is highly charged and some issues raised are extremely sensitive – political and religious violence and cultural challenges to "western education" for example have been features of recent years. We still need to communicate about good governance and improving education opportunities for all children, but without risking the interests of the programme, partners and other stakeholders with inappropriate or inflammatory content.<sup>6</sup>
94. By careful monitoring of scripts and recordings and close collaboration with producers and editors we have been able to sensitively cover corruption in government, election violence and child-brides in the radio drama; the Community Theatre toured and brought together communities in the north after elections in 2011; and, without being able to control the press, journalists have challenged state governments in an informed and responsible way about the abysmal condition of the country's schools or the use of public funds. ESSPIN's communications team must continue to diligently oversee all output.
95. We failed to convince broadcasters to reduce broadcast fees. ESSPIN should continue to develop more direct relationships with broadcasters, ideally pre-production, to encourage joint ownership of communications products for mutual benefit. This approach has already seen some traction with discounts and deals on repeats secured. Corporate Social Responsibility is worth exploring with media houses mindful of reputations in a growing modern business environment. A joined up approach with other development programmes can help.
96. A combination of production company operational difficulties and increasing broadcast fees led to the untimely demise of the Gbagan, Gbagan radio drama before the planned fifth series. With the prospect of discounts on repeat broadcasts it could be possible to air the still relevant four series of GG again.
97. The Community Theatre has shown enduring strength in the power of its performances and the quality of the responses from the audiences. Initially more experimental than other media, the theatre has shown great value and exceeded expectations in promoting

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<sup>6</sup> See Annex 2 QES Process for ESSPIN Film / Radio / Theatre Production

community engagement and supporting school improvement. Money now available from radio production would be well spent in further theatre production.

98. Filming the plays for broadcast and DVD for widespread distribution has been requested in all states and this should be seriously considered. The drama needs to be properly adapted for the screen and shot on location as a bona fide video production combining the creative talent of the dramatists with the technical expertise of the film makers. DVD showings and post drama discussions in communities would then allow far greater and continuous coverage at a fraction of the cost of touring troupes.

### Programme Learning

99. Media engagement, as part of a sound communications strategy, is better understood and firmly embedded in ESSPIN's integrated approach to school improvement. It is critical for advocacy and political engagement with civil society and government. More pro-active investment and support for established communications projects from across the ESSPIN work-streams, rather than just a continuing reliance on C&KM to support the delivery of the programme outputs, would mark a further shift from justification to acceptance to endorsement of the power of the media in achieving development goals.
100. ESSPIN's ongoing capacity building for our Nigerian partners includes management of the production process and raising media partner awareness of the expectations of an international development programme. We could do more to improve partner understanding of our operational requirements with regard to contract conditions, accounting and reporting procedures, and to expedite documentation and payments.
101. SUBEB Social Mobilisation Departments must be further involved in all ESSPIN's communications work. Developing SMDs' understanding and management of media production is a priority for our principal partners in community engagement and advocacy, This requires ESSPIN's ongoing investment in joint projects and greater commitment of state resources through education sector strategies and budgets. Then ESSPIN's investment in the power of the media to mobilise can be sustained in a way that leaves more than a legacy of past productions.

### Conclusion

102. ESSPIN's experience of working with the media has proven challenging, sometimes innovative, often rewarding; and we hope inspiring. We've given considerable support to our producers and have received high levels of commitment and a high quality of output in return, often exceeding expectations. As in so much development work, the key to the relationship has been to work in partnership rather than to use the media simply as service providers. This joined up approach is symptomatic of ESSPIN. Just as school improvement

is integrated across the programme and the C&KM component is embedded within the Output work-streams, so ESSPIN's mixed media communications have benefited from and enhanced the vibrancy of other technical assistance provided to communities, schools and government and civil society organisations. So knowledge is managed, communicated and enriched.

103. Our media partners have demonstrated their value in implementing broad advocacy and political engagement strategies since the start of ESSPIN. No programme can afford to ignore the power of the media if it is seriously intent on raising awareness of important issues and seeks to create the necessary demand for social and institutional development. ESSPIN's mixed media approach reaches across society to reflect on what must be done and rouse the critical mass of change agents necessary to make better schools and a better Nigeria.

## Annex 1: TOR for Extension to Assignment of Lead Specialist - C&KM

### C&KM Media PSA Documentation

#### Background

##### *ESSPIN*

The Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) is a six year DFID programme of education development assistance and is a part of a suite of State Level Programmes aimed at improvements in governance and the delivery of basic services. ESSPIN's aim is to have a sustainable impact upon the way in which government in Nigeria delivers education services and is directed at enabling institutions to bring about systemic change in the education system, leveraging Nigerian resources in support of State and Federal Education Sector Plans and building capacity for sustainability. It is currently operating in six States (Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Kwara, Jigawa and Lagos) and at the Federal level.

##### *ESSPIN Communications and Knowledge Management*

Communications and Knowledge Management (C&KM) has a vital role to play in raising issues, promoting solutions and explaining stakeholders' rights, roles and responsibilities in order to encourage greater transparency and accountability across the Nigerian education sector and to achieve ESSPIN's higher level governance objectives. ESSPIN and the programme partners need a two-way engagement with diverse audiences at all levels of the sector to ensure the flow of relevant information to facilitate the supply and demand of improved education services. In promoting the "reform agenda" at Federal, State / LGA, School and Community levels we seek to create understanding as to why the system is broken and what is needed to fix it, with the opportunity to highlight success and failure. We can prompt the questions and indicate the answers and, by working through various media (an integral part of civil society), ESSPIN can help create a critical mass of informed advocates willing to actively seek systemic change from inside and outside the Nigerian education sector. This translates into pressure for funding to flow to schools, for comprehensive improvements in the delivery of quality education and for greater community participation in the management of schools. Ultimately, in the progression from information and awareness raising to mobilisation and engagement, C&KM is about provoking a response and a spur to action. In the long term this promotes institutional development and behavioural change.

ESSPIN has created a diverse range of communications products to convey key messages to education sector stakeholders and partners utilising a mixed media approach featuring: film / TV, radio drama and features, community theatre, the press, as well as graphically designed print materials (posters, flyers etc), web and other electronic media.

## **Purpose of Assignment**

The end of the long-term posting of the Lead Specialist for Communications and Knowledge Management has prompted a need to review key elements of ESSPIN's C&KM work with diverse media, as featured under Programme Support Activities and within the context of ESSPIN's C&KM strategy. The purpose of the assignment is to provide a record of programme experience, learning and best practice whilst capturing personal institutional memory.

## **Objectives of Assignment**

The assignment will document ESSPIN's C&KM engagement with community theatre, radio drama and documentary film producers, as well as the ESSPIN Journalism Development Programme. The review should consider the rationale for working with the media, the production process followed and the final outputs, and consideration of the impact of the work to date with proposed next steps. Service providers have produced technical reports on their respective assignments so this exercise is to produce a programme overview in an accessible format for a wider audience. (See Terms of Reference for ESSPIN Experience Papers at Annex 1).

As part of a potential longer term, more academic, study of ESSPIN's community theatre work, this assignment should also provide opportunity for field research in to the process and longer term impact of theatre for development (ref RH PDR 2010, 2011, 2012).

## **Outputs**

- The text and preliminary design work for an ESSPIN Experience Paper on ESSPIN's communications work with different media.
- Research evidence to support longer term study of ESSPIN's experience of theatre for development

## **Key Areas of Activity**

- Liaison and collaboration with ESSPIN Specialists, programme partners and stakeholders, as required.
- Research – reference to programme docs as desk research, and field work for the longer term study.
- Writing / Editing (including revisions).
- Preliminary design work with Graphic Designer.

## **Proposed Timeframe**

6 weeks from 1 October 2012 to 9 November 2012  
(Detailed itinerary to be advised).

## **Reporting**

The consultant will report to the National Programme Manager.

## Annex 2: QES Process for ESSPIN Film / Radio / Theatre Production

Project Stage	Sign off	Validation	Notes
Terms of Reference	TTC*	Requests for Proposals	Form part of contract. Includes statement on intellectual property rights and need for all material to be sensitive to programme and stakeholder reputations.
Proposal (concept)	LS	Draft Contract	Due reference to programme objectives, C&KM strategy, company / partner / client priorities and sensitivities.
Contract	NPM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Signed Contract</li> <li>●Milestone Payment</li> </ul>	TOR attached to contract
Briefing / Research / Creative Workshop	LS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Possible preliminary report or email trail, otherwise scripts.</li> </ul>	Technical input from prog specialists and senior management team (SMT) on content themes and issues. Should relate to TORs.
Script / Shooting Script	LS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Documented scripts in English and local languages.</li> <li>●Emails (re translations)</li> <li>●Milestone Payment</li> </ul>	Possible further technical input from prog specialists and SMT on specific points arising. (May need multiple iterations and edits). Translations checked by local staff.
Recording / Filming / Rehearsal	LS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●First DVD / CD recordings. (Checked against agreed scripts).</li> </ul>	Reedits as necessary. (May involve partners).
Final production	LS / CKMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●DVD / CD (Checked against agreed scripts).</li> <li>●Milestone Payment</li> </ul>	Public Broadcast / Performance ready
Broadcast / Performance	LS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Certificate of Broadcast. Audience testimony – including staff. (Audio / visual for live performances).</li> <li>●Final report agreed.</li> <li>●Milestone payments</li> </ul>	Project process documented.

TTC = Technical Team Co-ordinator; LS = Lead Specialist; NPM = National Programme Manager; CKMC = Communication and Knowledge Management Co-ordinator.