

Improving access, quality and learning outcomes in Kwara schools

Between 2012 and 2014, schools in Kwara improved in quality, inclusion of women and children and literacy scores. There has been no progress in teacher competence or headteacher effectiveness and schools have generally become less inclusive. Perhaps as a result of no direct training since 2011, teachers trained by the School Improvement Programme (SIP) are now no more competent than others. Improved School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) with additional intervention reflects the potential for these to be strengthened in all schools. Continuous state financing for the SIP is therefore crucial to ensure all Kwara's children can learn more and better in school.

Kwara is one of the six partner states identified by the Nigerian and UK governments to form part of the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), which provides technical assistance to improve school quality, equitable access and learning outcomes in schools.

The School Improvement Programme began in Kwara in 2009-10, covering all 1,485 of the state's public primary schools. A selection of schools received additional training on SBMCs and on participation of women and children.

Surveys were conducted in 2012 and 2014 to understand how schools in Kwara are performing.

The full reports are available on ESSPIN's website www.esspin.org

THE KEY FINDINGS ARE:

Quality is higher in schools that have received more support; overall quality has improved significantly across Kwara

The proportion of schools that met at least three of the four quality standards more than doubled between 2012 and 2014, from 11% to 29%.

Schools that received the additional intervention demonstrated significantly higher quality, although these schools improved only at the same rate as other schools between the two surveys.

Learning outcomes in Kwara have varied, with improvements in literacy but worsening scores for Grade 2 numeracy

“Between 2012 and 2014, there has been a significant improvement in literacy scores for pupils in Kwara.”

The average test score increased by six percentage points for pupils in Grades 2 and 4. However, numeracy test scores decreased in Grade 2, from 61% to 52%.

There is no evidence that test scores improved more

quickly in schools that received additional support compared with other schools. In fact, there is limited evidence that Grade 2 numeracy declined more quickly in schools that received the additional intervention. This may be related to enrolment increasing more quickly in schools that received this intervention, which may have put pressure on learning outcomes.

Teacher competence has not changed overall, but teachers who were trained before 2011-12 have now become less competent than they were

The average competence score of teachers in Kwara remained unchanged between 2012 and 2014. There is little difference between teachers who were directly trained under the School Improvement Programme and other teachers in those schools. This may reflect that teachers who have received direct training are required to share their training with colleagues as an integral part of the SIP approach.

However, between 2012 and 2014, teachers who were directly trained showed a decline in competence relative to other teachers. Direct training did not take place between 2011-12 and 2012-13, suggesting continued investment may be needed to ensure the sustainability of improvements to teacher competence.

Headteacher effectiveness has not changed, but school development planning has improved

There was little change in the effectiveness of headteachers between 2012 and 2014: in both surveys around one in five headteachers met the effectiveness standard. The lack of change may, as with teacher training, reflect the fact that leadership training was conducted before the 2012 survey.

“School development planning increased significantly over the period, with the proportion of schools with a plan available increasing from 43.5% to 80%.”



The proportion of schools with an available plan increased from 43.5% to 80%.

The proportion of head teachers that could present evidence of having carried out activities from the plan also increased, from 11% to 21%.

While inclusiveness has fallen overall, schools that have received more support are more inclusive and SBMCs have improved

The proportion of schools in Kwara meeting at least three of four inclusiveness criteria halved between 2012 and 2014, from 45% to 20%. This was particularly caused by a fall in the number of schools acting to improve attendance, and teachers' inclusion of both genders and pupils across the classroom. Schools that received the additional intervention are more inclusive and declined less than other schools on these measures.

Nearly all schools in Kwara have an SBMC and the proportion of these that meet the functionality standard increased from 30% to 75%. SBMCs in schools that received the additional intervention function to a higher standard than those in other schools.



School SBMCs that met functionality standards

There is strong evidence that the SIP improves equitable access to better quality education for Nigeria's children. State governments need to consistently fund school improvement in their states to raise standards across schools, and improve long-term prospects for Nigeria's economic and social development.