

Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)

Civil Society -Government Partnership and Advocacy in Six States:

Report of evidence-based advocacy efforts by CSOs supported by ESSPIN

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- JG Jigawa
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- KN Kano
- KW Kwara
- LG Lagos
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Abbreviations

CGP	Civil Society Government Partnership
CPS	Community Primary School
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CFUBEA	Compulsory Free Universal Basic Education Act
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EFA	Education for All
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IE	Inclusive Education
LGAs	Local Government Areas
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SMD	Social Mobilisation Department
SMO	Social Mobilisation Officer
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

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This report was written by Helen Pinnock with substantial input and advice from the Lead Specialist, Community Engagement and Learner Participation Fatima Aboki and Sandra Graham, the CSO Task Leader. Research findings from civil society coalitions in Enugu, Lagos, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Kwara states are summarised from state reports.

Executive Summary

1. In Nigeria, the potential of civil society to support education is significant. While government is the duty bearer for the right to a quality education, civil society can mobilise resources from communities, philanthropists, development partners and business for improving the quality of service delivery, thus complementing public funds. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria have strong capacity and excellent networks at different levels. Opportunities exist for civil society organisations to collaborate with government, strengthening capacity and changing attitudes where government does not seem to have quality outreach and trust with communities.
2. ESSPIN has conducted a seven-year programme of capacity development to bring communities and civil society into the centre of efforts to improve education. As a result of working with local government social mobilization officials to train School Based Management Committees (SBMCs), CSOs brought a range of issues to the attention of local and state government between 2010 and 2014.
3. Through ESSPIN support in 2010 initially, 43 CSOs working with SBMCs implemented advocacy plans based on SBMCs' concerns reaching approximately 1200 schools in six states during the pilot phase. The number of CSOs increased during state roll out based on progress made in school getting improved because of SBMC actions. CSOs conducted research with communities to produce evidence, and advocated to secure changes in policy and practice at local and state levels. Advocacy meetings and events were conducted by CSOs, and CSOs helped SBMCs and SBMC women and children's committees raise issues at local forums organised to give voice to SBMC concerns. Government partners the SMOs reported a range of policies and investment decisions changed as a result of advocacy based on SBMC concerns.
4. The final stage of ESSPIN support was a 'consolidation' initiative, intended to strengthen the capacity of 60 CSOs to undertake participatory research and conduct evidence-based advocacy on education challenges affecting communities. This initiative took place from 2014 to 2016 at a cost of approximately 1 million GBP supporting over 10,000 schools in six supported states. Each state government signed a memorandum of understanding whilst ensuring sustainable pathway a critical part of this process, and with oversight functions in quality assuring the implementation of each stage in the process.
5. Grant-based support from ESSPIN focused on enabling CSOs and SMOs to work with existing SBMC communities to conduct more advanced research for advocacy. The grants scheme was intended to help CSOs strengthen fundraising and documentation skills so that they could seek a greater range of funding after ESSPIN closed.

Implications of CSO research

Unlocking community resources for expanding access

6. In Lagos, the process of finding out how strongly communities felt about poor school infrastructure and overcrowding gave CSOS a platform to broker agreements between communities and government to use land for school building. This offers an innovative way to get over a major stumbling block for expanding education access in Lagos, and should be further investigated as a potential policy solution.

Overcoming inclusion barriers

7. Lagos's research also highlighted government failure to ensure that head teachers were aware of inclusive education policy commitments to admit children with disabilities to local schools. This is a relatively easily fixed issue, at least in the short term: government would need to issue a communiqué requiring head teachers to admit all children, including those with disabilities, and share this with SBMCs as well as schools. CSOs working with SBMCs would be well placed to hold head teachers to account on this issue and report any violations to the Social Mobilisation Department. SMOs and SSOs are supportive, advises head teachers on inclusive education principles and practices.
8. To ensure full inclusion, long-term efforts would be needed to offer more capacity building to schools with disabled students, but in the short term a significant policy implementation success could be delivered and many more disabled children brought into school.
9. Similar issues were found in Kaduna, Kano and Enugu. It is clear that ongoing efforts on inclusive education policy now need to be followed up with implementation including sustained awareness raising and advice for teachers in practical ways to support children with disabilities.

Language challenges

10. The Kwara CSO team's findings on language of instruction are revealing. It is useful to hear from children themselves that they need to be taught in their first language to do well in school. It is no surprise that parents are anxious for their children to gain good English skills. What is most interesting is that teachers in the schools surveyed know the importance of teaching in mother tongue – but they do not feel that they are able to. While further research into this would be useful, it is likely that teachers also feel the pressure to maximise English. As language of instruction issues are not currently receiving policy focus in Kwara, teachers are unlikely to be aware of the techniques available to combine mother tongue teaching with English proficiency.
11. As with enrolment of disabled children in Lagos, the initial way forward for state government in Kwara is relatively straightforward. A letter or communiqué to schools reminding teachers of national policy to teach in children's mother tongue/the main community language that children use at home for at least the first three years of primary

education can be issued. At the same time, CSOs can be commissioned to undertake consultation and awareness raising in communities on the value of mother tongue education.

12. More strategic solutions would involve SUBEB to match Fulfulde-speaking teachers with Fulani schools. This would also be relatively straightforward, in the sense that little cost would be attached.
13. It would be possible for Kwara State to seek advice from the numerous language of instruction experts in Nigerian universities and worldwide, on other steps to improve learning through strengthening the language of teaching. One option would be to train the SSIT to support teachers on language issues. Another possibility would be to pilot bilingual education. CSOs in Kwara will continue to engage with government on the need to explore solutions to language issues in education.

Teacher deployment

14. In Jigawa, Kano, Enugu and Kwara, common challenges with teacher deployment were revealed to be rooted in lack of incentives to overcome extra costs and inconveniences in moving to rural areas. This creates a self-perpetuating reluctance to work in rural schools, as working conditions are so difficult with so few teachers.
15. Two policy solutions were recommended. The first is for SUBEBs to do an initial sweep of rural teaching posts, attempting to allocate qualified teachers to postings in their home communities. This would address the need identified in CSOs' research in Kwara for teachers to use the same community language as children.
16. Remaining gaps in rural teaching post allocation should be filled by offering incentives to teachers to cover additional transport or accommodation costs. Two-year commitment agreements could also be made with teachers to stay in rural areas and perform well.
17. Where such incentives are already in place, further research is indicated to find out whether they are being implemented appropriately. Technical advice could be sought from GPE in Jigawa to strengthen the system of teacher allocation and retention.

Poverty barriers and solutions

18. The research in Kano identified similar root causes to exclusion from school as in Jigawa, with family poverty and lack of investment in quality learning environments forming major barriers. The large number of practical solutions gathered from parents, teachers and children in Kano should be particularly useful for State government, especially when considering where to direct external support from initiatives such as GPE.

Safety and protection

19. Kano's investigations on child protection show that the topic of child protection is of interest to school communities, and that local stakeholders supported by SBMCs are already working

to improve children's protection and safety. This gives government a strong foundation for boosting child protection through policy initiatives designed to improve the attendance and participation of vulnerable groups.

20. Findings in both Kano and Kaduna indicated that the physical safety of the school environment and the route to school is vital for continued attendance. SBMCs and communities have taken effective action to increase school safety, but constant encouragement and investment to make school buildings, walls and transit routes safe for children are needed.
21. Kaduna's research revealed significant child protection challenges in abusive relationships between teachers and children. Enforcing teacher codes of conduct, and creating stronger social norms to value children's voices and protect children will be important for the future.

Conclusion

22. Overall, the research process shows the value of keeping close relationships between CSOs and government education bodies. This research has offered government better insight into the pressing issues which communities feel are really making the difference between educational access and exclusion, success and failure. CSOs have been able to bring out voices which are often unheard within communities, such as women and children, as well as bringing information from remote areas to the attention of government. CSOs also offer government a channel to try out solutions to these challenges, using the trust and openness in certain school communities which has been fostered by CSOs' partnerships with government.
23. An important lesson from ESSPIN's CSO development work has been that time to nurture relationships at all levels is critical to sustaining government-civil society partnership and engagement in service delivery. Such strong relationships makes evidence-based advocacy easy to conduct and share, and welcomed by government – because it is targeted at government priorities and offers constructive advice from CSOs and communities that government would otherwise not have access to.
24. ESSPIN's work to bring CSOs more strongly into education accountability and improvement has created space for dialogue, consensus building, collaboration and responsiveness in strengthening education. Continued interaction between government and civil society in overcoming Nigeria's education challenges must be facilitated by donors, government, private sectors and all sections of society.

Introduction

25. It is recognised that government alone cannot solve the problems facing children left out of school or failing to learn. This is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, which identifies partnerships between government and civil society as a key strategy for delivering inclusive, quality education to all children.
26. In Nigeria, the potential of civil society to support education is significant. While government is the duty bearer for the right to a quality education, civil society can mobilise resources from communities, philanthropists and business for improving the quality of service delivery, thus complementing public funds. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria have strong capacity and excellent networks at different levels. Opportunities exist for civil society organisations to partner with government, strengthening capacity and changing attitudes where government does not have good outreach and trust with communities.
27. At the same time, advocacy by civil society representatives can bring the voices of the excluded and marginalised to the attention of government decision makers, illuminating hitherto unknown issues. Civil society organisations can bring evidence about education challenges from the grassroots to government attention, acting as conduits to help people from school communities raise their concerns directly with government. This helps government understand which issues are more pressing, and which solutions would have the best chance of working at local level, in order to allocate public resources against need more effectively.
28. ESSPIN has conducted a seven-year programme of capacity development to bring communities and civil society into the centre of efforts to improve education. The final stage of this support was a 'consolidation' initiative, intended to strengthen the capacity of 60 CSOs to undertake research and conduct evidence-based advocacy on education challenges affecting communities. This report describes the process and outcomes of this CSO capacity building initiative.

Background

29. Nigeria has thousands of active civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the different sectors. Most CSOs which focus on education are organised under CSACEFA (Civil Society Action Coalition on Education For All) which focuses on Education For All goals and now supports the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. Many of these CSOs work directly for and with vulnerable people, filling gaps in government service provision. In 2009, when ESSPIN began strengthening community voice and accountability in education, it was realised that CSOs had to play a central role.

30. At that stage, CSOs were not generally trusted by State government to contribute to school improvement. Conversations with state officials revealed assumptions that CSOs would be over-critical, and would not be able to help government with the challenges they faced in expanding quality education. ESSPIN's community engagement work stream aimed to demonstrate ways in which CSOs could make constructive contributions to education strengthening efforts. These strategies had to be sustainable after ESSPIN closed, and could not set up any additional or 'parallel' structures.

CSO positioning in relation to the education system

31. While many CSOs had good potential, they often had weak capacity to overcome the education challenges affecting communities. An initial assessment of potential ESSPIN partner CSOs in 2009 found that CSOs had great enthusiasm and strong trust in target communities. This trust would be very useful for helping to set up and train the new school based management committees (SBMCs) that ESSPIN was strengthening. CSOs with good community links and an understanding of facilitation and training were selected to partner with ESSPIN and state government to be involved in SBMC setup and development. These CSOs were mostly well regarded at State and local levels, but did not have access to large amounts of funding.
32. There was a challenge of sustainability for involving CSOs in SBMC development. If the ESSPIN SBMC development and training approach was successful and became replicated by government, how could government manage wider rollout of training when CSOs had done the training? It made much more sense for government staff to train SBMCs; but they often had few skills in training and facilitation, and did not have the trusting relationships with communities to enable training to go well. It was clear that both government and CSOs needed to be involved with CSO development.
33. The SBMC development model would need to be self-sustaining, so that government could replicate it more widely without help after ESSPIN ended. Funding to cover CSOs' involvement in training and supporting SBMCs would need to come from government. It was important to model an approach of having government contract CSOs for SBMC development during ESSPIN, so that it could be taken up successfully after the programme finished.
34. Social Mobilisation Departments (SMD) in State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) has the mandate from UBEC to support SBMC development which ESSPIN strengthened. Social Mobilisation Departments would receive capacity support from ESSPIN to channel information on community education problems upwards for resolution – for example, through better targeting of resources for school infrastructure. It was also realised that CSOs working with multiple SBMCs would be able to identify common education problems affecting all the communities they worked for. CSOs could play a major role in bringing community education challenges and voices to government attention. Such external work to

hold government accountable acts as a vital complement to internal government efforts to improve performance.

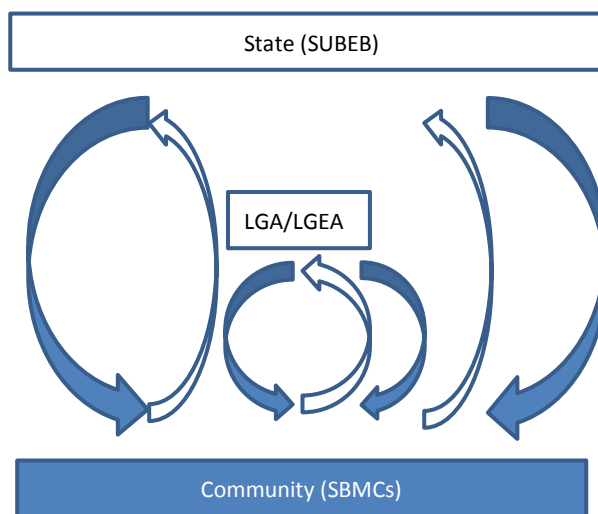
35. However, there was a perception that advocacy involved protest and confrontation. Few CSOs had experience with evidence-based advocacy, or of offering constructive solutions to government's problems with delivering quality education for all. Many government teams were also weak in responding to the issues that were blocking educational change at community level. This was partly because government had not had access to consistent information from grassroots levels, and partly because government often lacked systems to direct resources and adjust policy based on evidence.
36. As well as ESSPIN technical support to strengthen government evidence production, analysis and decision making, it was recognised that capacity building would be needed to show CSOs how to advocate effectively. Relationship building between government and civil society would also be essential to build willingness to work together on education challenges.

The Civil Society-Government Partnership

37. To enable this relationship building, ESSPIN's civil society development team, led by Save the Children, developed a framework to bring government and civil society organisations closer at local and State levels. This was named the Civil Society-Government Partnership (CGP).
38. At school-community level, one CSO staff member was paired with one Social Mobilisation Officer (SMO) from the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). Each pair would cover a number of SBMCS (20 on average). These 'buddy' pairs would receive training from state specialists to deliver SBMC training at school cluster hubs, working as co-facilitators.
39. After initial training was complete, each pair would visit each SBMC once every six weeks for 11 months to deliver follow-up mentoring and training sessions on a wide range of topics, such as conflict resolution, resource and community mobilisation, relationship management, school development plans, SBMC roles and responsibilities, inclusion and child protection etc. During this process CSO staff would transfer some of their facilitation and mobilisation skills to the SMOs. This meant that SMOs would be better skilled to continue visiting and mentoring SBMCs once the formal training and mentoring phase was over.
40. While CGP teams were training and visiting SBMCs, they were asked to produce reports of the issues raised in discussion with SBMC members. SMOs fed regular reports of resources for education generated by SBMCs and challenges raised up to SUBEB, to justify investment in SBMCs and identify the need for further investment. CSOs produced a more qualitative voice and accountability reports of achievements in helping children attend school and highlighted issues where government had failed to respond to SBMC requests for more support, for use in state and local level advocacy.

41. The CGP also organised SBMC Forums at LGEA and State levels. These brought together local leaders, SBMCs (including children), politicians and education officials, to hear what communities had been doing to boost education and what government needed to do to play its part.

Feedback loops: After inputs of training and mentoring from the CGP, SBMCs, SMOs and CSOs provide information on urgent education problems up to LGA/LGEA and State levels. Government can then respond with resources and policy decisions. For example, in Kwara state, after SBMCs raised concerns about children being out of school, CSOs conducted participatory research which revealed that PTA levies were pushing children away.



SBMC development tasks completed by CSOs

42. The first CSO task for SBMC development after undergoing an indepth capacity organizational assessment and contracted was community entry in every school. This was meant to ether activate or establish SBMCs in schools as well as interact on the objectives with the gate keepers and traditional institutions. CSOs were essential in introducing ESSPIN's SBMC training to communities in partnership with SMOs, using the trust they had built up in communities to generate enthusiasm for SBMC development and ensure that community collaboration with government for SBMC development was acceptable.
43. The second task was to deliver a structured capacity building program. CGPs delivered training, monitoring and mentoring to SBMCs through regular visits, on a range of topics from gender awareness, resource mobilisation to conflict resolution, disability and child protection amongst others. This was done in partnership with LGEA-level Social Mobilisation teams: a CSO representative and a Social Mobilisation Officer would partner to deliver training and mentoring sessions to SBMCs through regular meetings and community visits. In this way, the capacity of SBMCs and of SMOs was boosted by CSOs. After the initial year of

SBMC training and development, SMOs were able to continue with visiting and advising SBMCs on their own while CSOs rolled out more training and mentoring to other areas of their states.

44. The third area of work which depended on CSOs was bringing communities' voices to government in a systematic way. It was always intended that SMOs would report education challenges to higher levels of government, but it was recognised that external pressure on government would also be needed to secure a significant shift in resource allocation to respond to community concerns. It was also recognised that CSOs had the capacity to synthesise issues coming from communities, so that priority challenges for multiple communities could be presented in succinct format for government policy makers and budget holders to consider. CSOs were seen as also being well placed to consult communities on which potential solutions to education problems would be most acceptable and likely to succeed at grassroots level.
45. In these ways, CSOs provided an important supplement to government capacity – linking community concerns to higher levels of government, providing concise information on the nature and scale of problems appearing at the grassroots, and providing feedback on the solutions which are likely to be most appropriate for communities.
46. During their time supporting the rollout of SBMC development in ESSPIN-supported states, CSOs played all three roles. Once initial piloting of the SBMC training and mentoring package was completed, state governments continued to contract CSOs to roll out training and mentoring with Social Mobilisation departments more widely across the states. It was clear from the continued willingness of government to contract CSOs that the usefulness of CSOs had become accepted by state government.

Key Outputs/Results from ESSPIN SBMC development 2010-2016

Total number SBMCs trained	11,698			
		Male	Female	Notes
Total number SBMC members trained	187,168	116,980	70,188	
Total number children reached (estimate)	4,620,710	2,402,769	2,217,941	Based on calculation from Annual School Census plus ESSPIN data
Total number of SBMC Women's Committee members trained	116,980	116,980	0	
Total number of SBMC Children's Committee members trained	175,470	87,735	87,735	
Estimated children enrolled in school as a result of SBMC action	165,171	72,990	92,181	Of total: 2,301 girls with disability 2,503 boys with disability

Total amount leveraged from communities for school improvement (in-kind, approach to philanthropists and private orgs, old boy networks etc.) Validated May-June 2016	NGN 1,841,498,229	£4,800,000	Includes materials, text books, infrastructure, repairs, latrines, support to vulnerable children.
Results against Key Indicators of SBMC Development (from state govt SUBEB data 2016)			
Total number of Functional SBMCs of 11,023 monitored (as per state criteria)	8,175	74%	Whilst 11,968 schools now have SBMCs, as yet monitoring data is only collected from 11,023
Total number of SBMCs of 11,023 with women/children participating (as per state criteria)	6,778	61%	
Total number of SBMCs of 11,023 supporting inclusive education (as per state criteria)	7,620	69%	

47. The model of using CSOs to deliver SBMC training and mentoring alongside government through the CGP has now been taken up by UBEC for nationwide replication, and is used by UNICEF and ActionAid. Rolling out this approach to SBMC development should result in funding and greater community engagement for CSOs, which will in turn enable them to bring grassroots education issues to government attention.

48. As a result of this interaction with SBMCs, CSOs brought a range of issues to the attention of local and State government between 2012 and 2016. Through ESSPIN training, 60 CSOs working with SBMCs implemented advocacy plans based on SBMCs' concerns. CSOs conducted research with communities to produce evidence, and advocated to secure changes in policy and practice at local and state levels. Advocacy meetings and events were conducted by CSOs, and CSOs helped SBMCs and SBMC children's committees raise issues at local forums organised to give voice to SBMC concerns. Government partners reported a range of policies and investment decisions changed as a result of advocacy based on SBMC concerns. Some examples were:

- In Kaduna, the state Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) agreed to include boundary walls in all school infrastructure contracts, due to SBMCs highlighting the need to protect schools from theft and occupation.
- In Kano, the State government committed to give all schools boundary walls, as a result of SBMCs and CSOs bringing the importance of protecting school premises to SUBEB's attention.
- In Jigawa, increased numbers of girls' junior secondary schools have been set up in close-to-home sites requested by SBMCs, through a coordinated advocacy effort.
- In Lagos, the State inclusive education policy was updated and expanded, and a law to support it was instituted.

- In Kwara, the levy which PTAs (parent-teacher-associations) can charge was halved by State government after SBMCs and CSOs did research showing how PTA levies pushed children out of school.
- In Enugu, state government began a review of teacher allocation and payment mechanisms as a result of CSOs presenting evidence from schools on teacher absenteeism, misdirected salaries, and 'ghost teachers' who were claiming salaries but had retired or were inactive.

Prospects for sustainability

49. Throughout ESSPIN's involvement with CSOs, ways of working were put in place to encourage a more sustainable future for CSO work to bring out community demand in education and hold government to account.
50. One reason for encouraging government to contract CSOs for SBMC development rollout was to provide CSOs with a sustainable base of operations. While funding was small-scale, it meant that CSOs could maintain their links with communities and local government through regular training and mentoring visits.
51. From 2012 onwards, ESSPIN-supported CSOs were brought together to conduct self-evaluation using a CSO Self-Assessment Framework. This was a set of criteria against which CSOs were asked to rate their activities in community support, evidence gathering, advocacy – and securing policy changes as a result. CSOs were required to bring evidence in support of their claims of success. The process was relatively low-cost and offered both a way to collect evidence about CSO effectiveness and a way to encourage mutual success by sharing examples of good practice.
52. It was realised that CSOs had just started to strengthen their skills in evidence-based advocacy, but that moving to roll out SBMC development in new communities would require them to leave behind the issues raised by the original SBMC pilot communities. An opportunity was identified for ESSPIN to set up a grants scheme to help CSOs consolidate and increase their advocacy skills. CSOs would undertake research into issues raised by, communities and would conduct state level advocacy based on the evidence they produced.

ESSPIN's Civil Society Consolidation Programme

53. ESSPIN's grant-based support from 2014 to 2016 (termed the 'consolidation programme') focused on enabling CSOs to work with existing SBMC communities to conduct more advanced research for advocacy. The grants scheme was intended to help CSOs strengthen fundraising and documentation skills so that they could seek a greater range of funding after ESSPIN closed. This was seen as a way to minimise dependence on government funding, to avoid compromising CSOs' ability to advocate independently for the concerns of communities.

54. ESSPIN acted as a grant-managing hub to manage and support qualifying CSOs. ESSPIN conducted a due diligence process to establish which CSOs were eligible for inclusion in each states' research and advocacy group. This exercise was based on DFID standards of financial, technical and management professionalism, and was conducted by an external consultant to assure independence. Once CSOs passed the due diligence process they were encouraged to advertise this to government and other partners, as a 'stamp of approval' qualifying them to provide services and partnership.
55. CSOs were also required to submit detailed proposals to take part in the consolidation work. All these different assessments and performance reviews were intended in themselves to add capacity to the CSOs.
56. Direct contact with SBMCs/schools and communities, working with SMD, remained core to the consolidation model as the only way of ensuring that advocacy at all levels is based on education challenges at community and school level and of consolidating the SBMC development model. Contact with SBMCs/schools communities would be more focused on the main issues identified by communities which prevent children accessing good quality education in each state, problem solving and channelling these up through SBMC forums and CSO advocacy.
57. The next step was to plan the research and advocacy process. Through a series of training events, CSOs worked in state groups to select issues which had been raised with them by communities. CSOs were supported to choose one or two issues for each state, and plan a research and advocacy initiative for each issue. Selection of issues was based on:
- The severity and scale of the issue in relation to inclusive, quality education goals
 - Capacity and political will to address the issue at state level
 - CSOs' positioning and capacity to find and present evidence about the issue.
58. During this training, the CSO groups were supported to produce a draft grant proposal for their research and advocacy initiative. The proposal laid out the rationale for focusing on the chosen issue; the expected advocacy objectives to be achieved; and the data collection and analysis process planned to generate supporting evidence. This was followed up by training on fundraising and donor development for private and public sector donors.
59. CSO groups in each state revised and submitted their proposals to ESSPIN, which provided technical advice on strengthening them.
60. After revisions, proposals were submitted by each state group, and were awarded funding totalling approximately £800,000 GBP – or roughly £13,000 per CSO on average. Individual grant contracts with CSOs were agreed based on their share of the planned work. CSOs conducted data collection in roughly equal numbers of communities, and allocated analysis and report writing among the group.

61. ESSPIN State Access and Equity Specialists worked with a team of experts in Abuja to supervise the research and advocacy process. Once state CSO groups had completed their data collection, analysis and findings were produced. Draft research reports were then produced and revised on the basis of feedback from ESSPIN. CSO groups produced advocacy plans and organised events and meetings with state government representatives to present their research. CSOs then conducted meetings and enquiries to chase up commitments made in response to the issues raised by the research.
62. Training also took place in 2014 with SMOs and Social Mobilisation desk officers at state and local levels, on how to work with CSOs in generating evidence of community concerns, and how to advocate internally on the basis of community education problems raised by SBMCs. This was intended to lay the groundwork for collaboration on the planned research, as well as for future collaboration between civil servants and CSOs, in representing community needs in education to higher level decision makers.

CSO participatory research and evidence based advocacy in each state

Lagos

63. The group of 9 CSOs in Lagos State focused on inclusion for their advocacy research. They aimed to generate information to understand why some groups of children were failing to enrol and dropping out of school.
64. CSOs worked in collaboration with the School Based Management Committee, Community members, parents and the Social Mobilisation section of Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) to organise the research. The research covered 60 public schools across Lagos's 20 LGEAs, three from each LGEA. 720 pupils and 1200 other respondents participated, including teachers, SBMC members and community members. Respondents were asked survey questions, based on their perspective, about which children were excluded from school and from learning, and the main reasons for this.
65. School infrastructure surveys were also conducted, and focus groups of children and teachers were asked to consider the effects of infrastructure challenges in the exclusion of children from education.
66. At school level, groups of stakeholders were asked to rank challenges affecting different groups of children's education, and to prioritise the solutions they felt would make the most difference.

What new information did the research capture?

67. The main causes of children's exclusion from education, as perceived by local stakeholders. Poor school infrastructure in poorer areas came top of the list as a cause of exclusion. Poor school sanitation, lack of materials, lack of teachers, poverty and distance to school were also identified as key factors putting children and parents off attending school. Overcrowded classes, and poorly maintained buildings, often falling into disuse due to flooding and squatting, were a major cause of concern. Stakeholders felt that the only real reason why schools were not accessible to all children was the disrepair of school infrastructure. 37.94% of children felt that overcrowded classrooms had a negative effect on teaching and learning.
68. Children and teachers identified sexual harassment and other security issues as major challenges, particularly for girls' inclusion in education.
69. An estimated 12,745 children with disabilities were recorded as being out of school in the area surrounding surveyed schools. Respondents stated that these children were being refused entry to their local school. This is an important finding, given that Lagos's inclusive education policy is strong. ESSPIN's recent Inclusive Education Review (Pinnock, 2016) also captured stakeholders' concerns that efforts had not been made to enforce the IE policy with head teachers: head teachers were either not aware that they did not have the right to

refuse disabled children, or they were not being held accountable for refusing disabled children access.

70. Solutions proposed by parents, teachers and children, for example:

- What can help girls come to school?
 - Improved sanitary condition
 - Increased security
 - Monitor and mentor them in school and at home
 - Provision of school materials
 - Encourage them academically and to always speak out
- What can help disabled children come to school?
 - Provision of specially trained teachers
 - Provision of safe and friendly environment
 - Provide means to and from school
 - Provide materials to work with in school
 - Show them love

71. 67.62% of children said that having a school compound bigger than those of the most of the private schools around would encourage them to attend. 23.57% said the teachers' loving attitude towards them would be the key to greater attendance. Other reasons given were free education offered to them by the State Government, nearness to their place of homes.

Advocacy

72. The issue of infrastructure as a key factor in exclusion from education was selected by the CSO group as a priority area for advocacy with government decision makers. The CSO group developed an advocacy strategy around the following recommendations based on the research:

73. Based on the findings, the study proposed the following recommendations to improve primary education in Lagos State.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE:** Government must give top priority to primary education by providing needed infrastructures for school in the state. More schools need to be built in the riverine communities and in rural areas where children can access education easily and parents can send their children to school and have guaranteed safety of their girls to nearby schools without worrying about their safety. It is necessary to invest in school structures including classrooms, libraries, gender sensitive facilities, and providing a safe water supply to all schools.

- **TEACHERS:** Government must recruit more Teachers and redistribute the current Teachers in post to cope with unbalanced shortages and surpluses. Government can as well look inward to upgrade the Non-Teaching Staff who had acquired additional teaching qualifications.
- **SAFETY:** Schools should be encouraged to establish an effective safety, health and welfare management committee (with members drawn from pupils, teachers, SBMC, Parents Forum, member of the armed forces) to plan, monitor and evaluate safety in the school environment.

Follow-up

74. The CSO group subsequently tested innovative solutions to the problem of overcrowded school infrastructure. Three CSOs acted as trusted brokers to negotiate agreements with communities to provide land for government to build schools. These CSOs will continue to monitor progress and hold government accountable for delivering the agreed infrastructure. Without CSO involvement, there would not have been sufficient trust between communities and government to make this land available.

Kwara

75. The Kwara CSO team chose two issues for their research: teacher distribution and language of instruction. SBMC visits had revealed major shortages of teachers in rural areas, while schools in urban areas had a disproportionately high number of teachers. Fulani minority children in SBMC communities were struggling with school attendance and participation, as few teachers were using their language (Fulfulde) for teaching.

Findings on teacher distribution

76. From the results gathered, teachers in rural parts of Kwara State complained of difficult working conditions, they feel their salary is too low and that promotion does not happen regularly. Many have admitted to being disillusioned by the whole teaching process, about half of the total respondents in the research (both parents and teachers) believe that the major reason why teachers seek redeployment or do not want to be deployed to rural schools have to do with challenges with transportation (including poor rural access roads, difficulty of finding motorists/motorcyclists who ply the roads, safety and security on rural roads, low government support on mobility for rural teachers and high cost of transportation to rural areas).
77. A quarter of respondents also believe that poor accommodation (with poor facilities) provided by community also contributed to the rural-urban disparity in the distribution of teachers in Kwara State. While about 30% of parents in rural communities opined that the poor Rural Teacher Housing (by government) is partly responsible for the resistance of teachers towards deployment to rural areas, most of the teachers disagree with just 11% acknowledging the possibility of poor housing being a factor for teachers' uneven distribution. Not more than 15% of both teachers and parents think that teachers' desire to remain attached to their families is a factor that influences the unevenness in teachers' distribution in the state.
78. Results from most LGAs sampled in this study indicate high cost of transportation as the most significant factor influencing the uneven distribution of teachers (Except in Edu LGA where accommodation is seen as the key challenge). There was however a slight disagreement among teachers in a few LGAs. Three quarters of teachers in Ilorin East LGA are of the opinion that poor accommodation is responsible while half of them admitted that poor transportation is also responsible for the uneven distribution. Poor accommodation was also observed to be the key factors by teachers in Isin LGA. Accommodation and attachment to families were noted to be the key factors by teachers in Kaiama and Ekiti LGAs. Both parents and teachers in Ilorin South and Ilorin West LGAs see transportation as the major challenge, with all other factors seen as having negligible effect on rural-urban disparity in teacher distribution.

Language

79. 70% of children in 42 schools said that they preferred to be taught in their first language. The majority of their teachers agreed that children should be taught in their first language. However, parents in the same communities were found to believe that children should be taught in English. This may contribute to teachers' statements that they continued to teach mostly in English, despite knowing that this was not good practice.
80. These findings offer a strong basis for developing further dialogue between teachers, CSOs and government around school language. Children are clearly stating that they are having problems with language, and it is currently unclear why teachers are not teaching in mother tongue, at least for the first three years of school as mandated by national policy.
81. Further research and discussion should take place to identify what support teachers would need to use children's mother tongue more in teaching. Is it primarily a case of raising awareness among parents of the value of mother tongue teaching? Parents may need to be given information that children are more likely to do well in English when their mother tongue is well developed throughout education. In addition, teachers may need training and advice on how to develop children's mother tongue throughout school, while gradually offering access to English in ways which do not damage children's mother tongue development or make understanding difficult.

Advocacy

82. CSOs in Kwara State organised a meeting with the Chairman of SUBEB. The research was presented under the CSACEFA umbrella for education-focused NGOs. This allowed the research to be linked to the Kwara State policy priority of 'Every Child Counts'. They emphasised that their research had found challenges with language of instruction, teacher distribution and teacher training. The CSOs also highlighted how essential they were in expanding SBMC development across the state.
83. The Chair of SUBEB showed strong interest in the issue of teacher distribution and asked the CSO coalition to continue presenting constructive criticism to help civil servants be effective. He said that instruction was given to all Education Secretaries (ES) to carry out assignments on posting of teachers.

Jigawa

84. Despite successful rollout of SBMC development to 303 schools in Jigawa, CSOs visiting those schools found major challenges around teacher deployment and inclusion. The CSO group conducted research on both these themes, aiming to find out how serious concerns about lack of teachers in rural areas were, and what capacity gaps were affecting children's inclusion in education.
85. 50 schools were selected for the research by 10 CSOs. Focus Group discussion method was employed in the conduct of research as well as group interviews. Teachers, parents and children were the research respondents. This includes female teachers, SBMC women leaders, parents of out of school and in school children as well as the head teacher. Each CSO conducted a research in 5 school communities. The research was conducted by a team comprised of CSO Facilitators, CSO Coordinators and LGEA SBMC Desk Officers. The team was supported by at least 3 literate members of the SBMC in the conduct of the work.
86. All the tools filled during the conduct of the research were harmonised at state level with support of ESSPIN. The team liaised with LGEA SBMC desk officer/Gender officers in the LGAs facilitates communication with head teachers and SBMC chairs and arranged all the needed logistics for the research work.

Summary of key findings

87. The study found uneven deployment of teachers in schools, with the biggest gaps in rural schools. Many teachers were found to be concentrated in urban schools to the detriment of rural ones.
88. Stakeholders stated that some teachers connive with staff in the Local Education Authority at LGA so that they can be deployed to urban schools. Similarly to research on teacher deployment in Kwara, the study found that availability of social amenities and to save transportation fare were key reasons behind teachers' preference for urban schools.

Teachers Deployment

- The result shows that there is a serious gap in teachers' deployment between rural schools and urban schools. Most of the teachers prefer teaching in urban schools to reduce the cost of transportation and there is no inducement or incentive for teachers in rural schools that would cover up their transportation cost.
- The educational administrators give more consideration to urban schools in the deployment and posting of teachers.
- The lack of availability of social amenities and School infrastructures such as Staff quarters, mobile phone services, and electricity and road networks affect the interest of the teachers to stay in the rural schools.

Inclusive Education

89. The result of the research work on inclusive education shows there are still challenges in making sure that every child attends school. The result shows that children do not attend school due to the following reasons:

- Lack of parental care for children's books, uniform and other materials needed in school.
- Hawking and other domestic work stop children from attending classes.
- Farming and poverty level of the family
- Lack of sporting facilities in schools to attract children interest in schools
- Parents and children are not encouraged by unemployment level of those that finish school.
- Unqualified teachers especially in rural schools.
- Distance to school especially for girls and other vulnerable children in rural communities.

90. Other reasons that are not as strong as the above ones are: corporal discipline in schools, early marriage, cultural influence and religious misconceptions.

Summary of key advocacy messages and recommendations Teacher Deployment

- There is need for mass recruitment of qualified teachers in the state to man the existing schools.
- Jigawa State Government should recruit and deploy teachers to LGEAs based on quarter system.
- Teachers should be recruited from indigenous LGAs so as stimulate retention of teachers in the LGEA.
- Government should classify schools according to rural and urban locations and introduce Rural Posting Allowance as an inducement with a view to stimulating teachers to stay and reside in the rural school communities. A certain percentage of Basic Salary should be outlined by Government for the provision of the Rural Posting Allowance to teachers posted to rural schools
- Government should embark on constructions of Teachers' Houses in rural school communities with a view to stimulate teachers stay and reside in rural school communities and community members should be sensitised to support and provide accommodation to teachers posted to the rural school communities.
- Government should introduce special package allowance for Female Teachers posted to rural areas with a view to support and encourage their stay to teach in rural areas.

Inclusive Education

- The State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should sign Jigawa State Inclusive Education Strategy and collaborate with relevant Ministries, Department

and Agencies to ensure implementation of activities in the strategy towards promoting delivery of quality Basic Education for all children in the state.

- Continuous capacity building for teachers on Inclusive Education methodologies.
- Social Mobilisation Departments of the SUBEB and LGEAs should be strengthened to mobilise communities on the relevance and importance of Basic Education for all children.

91. The CSOs in Jigawa conducted a follow up advocacy visit to the Executive Governor of Jigawa State to share the research findings and solicit the support of the Governors towards implementation of key recommendations.

92. The research findings were exclusive discussed and the Governor promised to implement key recommendations on the research findings.

Kano

93. In Kano, CSOs undertook research to find out how effective sensitisation on child protection and inclusive education had been. The research report is summarised below.
94. It was observed that there are many children of school age who were either not attending any school or were not regular their various schools. There was also the issue of continued deterioration of the quality of basic education at the state and serious security and safety issues which due to the general security threats in the north posed danger to the children as well as teachers especially during school hours.
95. The participatory research was aimed at generating first-hand information on inclusive education and child protection, with a view to coming up with advocacy issues that could be channelled to the appropriate stakeholders, especially the Government of Kano State so as to support in actualising the package of the State inclusive education policy drafted in 2013.
96. Research was conducted through participatory survey technique using school-based group interviews as well as review of school records. The study was conducted by 11 CSOs working with ESSPIN in 55 schools in three local government areas of Kano state.
97. Schools were purposively selected based on identified inclusive education and child protection challenges. In each of the schools selected, parents, the teachers, and the children were gathered for a participatory consultation workshop. For the parents, 12 were invited comprising both males and females and those who have and do not have children in the school. Each school produced 6 children aged 6-10, consisting 3 boys and 3 girls equally. 1,320 people from different groups, with 48% females participated in the research. Participants' responses on who does not go to school, and what needs to be done to ensure every child goes to school, were captured.

Findings

98. The research found that 18% of school age children in surveyed communities do not attend any school. Most of these children were girls. Children, parents and teachers broadly agreed on the main causes of children not going to school. Out of school children were found to mostly live in rural communities and have some form of social obstacles, including those in the diagram below.
99. The CSOs' background analysis indicated that poverty was the most serious bottleneck to achieving the policy of inclusive education in Kano state. Poverty restricts many parents from sending their children to school. Poverty contributes to broken homes and weak parental support as well as child hawking.

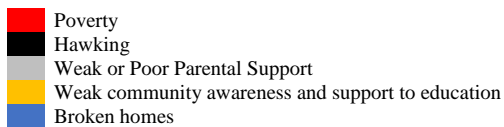
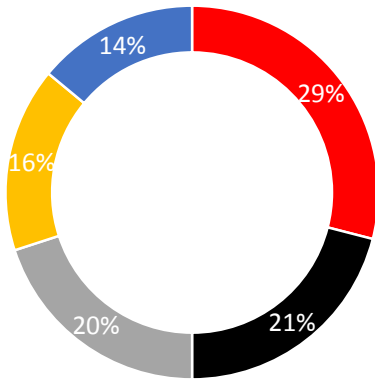


Diagram: split of reasons why children are out of school

100. SBMCs were recommended to liaise with the community and religious leaders to intensify community awareness and sensitisation campaigns on the importance of child education and the need to have maximum parental support to achieve the goal and objectives of the Policy on Inclusive education.
101. Participants commonly requested the establishment of more schools and construction of more classroom, toilets and boreholes, as well as renovation of the existing buildings in their schools.
102. Children felt that making school environments more attractive, with sporting facilities, and providing better sanitation would create better attendance.
103. Strongly recommended to the community by the children was the issue of stopping teachers from using corporal punishment.
104. Stakeholders felt that government should also, as its statutory responsibility, employ more competent and qualified teacher and avoid politics in the recruitment and transfer of teachers across the state.
105. Participants identified a need for community initiatives to ensure girl children are educated before marriage. CSOs recommended that massive community awareness campaigns on the importance of girl child education should be carried out by the community leaders; especially through the SBMCs. Girls' early and forced marriages should be discouraged.
106. Parents requested more junior secondary schools, especially in rural communities; improved and continued school feeding; supply of adequate and durable instructional materials and teaching aids as well as furniture; employ more qualified and competent teachers and improve teacher welfare.
107. Other important recommended solutions included reintroduction and expansion of conditional cash transfers; women empowerment programmes; provision of child safety and

protection measures in various schools; organising annual local government education forum with parents and community leaders, as well as putting measure in place to reduce poverty and broken homes in the larger society.

108. As part of the research consultations, parents, teachers and children were asked about their ideas on what child protection is, and what constitutes a safe school environment.
109. It was found that most of the respondents have idea about the concept of 'child protection', in that it entails child safety and security; provision of maximum security in the school; ensuring classes are fit; provision of conducive learning environments; monitoring of children movement in school; ensuring proper and adequate feeding for children; provision of portable drinking water; maintenance of school rules and regulations in the process of dealing with pupils; improve the healthcare system and environmental sanitation; proper child care and guidance in school; avoidance of child abuse and corporal punishment; and protecting children from any form of violence.
110. It was evident from the results that of the children and teachers were over 90% safe and protected in and around the schools; as it was found that there was moderately high level of security and safety of children and teachers in most of the schools visited. As such most of the children do not face any danger on their way to, in the school and from school to their various homes.
111. However, basic safety and security challenges relating to child protection in and within the schools were found in this research. These include school fencing; road crossing to and from school; social and water erosion; lack of trees and shades; dilapidated roofing; poor and broken chairs.
112. Given the public nature of the research workshop, it was not possible to get at issues like sexual assault or harassment. Some concerns about teacher behaviour were identified, which would indicate that work is needed in Kano on an active teachers' code of conduct. However, the research was able to demonstrate clearly that child protection and safety is a priority for all stakeholder groups, and that government could take specific actions to strengthen protection in schools.

Advocacy

113. Based on the findings the following were identified as the CSOs' key advocacy issues:
- **Completion/approval/implementation of Kano State policy on inclusive education by the end of 2017.** This will ensure that opportunity is given to every child to attend same school regardless of the parental background, gender, disability or other socio-cultural factors that could serve as barriers to child education. It includes provision of

training for teachers in Kano State on inclusive education, and how to ensure that all children learn to the best of their ability.

- **Enactment and full implementation of child rights and protection act especially the aspect related to education (at basic level) by the end of 2017.** The provision of qualitative education is a right to each and every child. Therefore the enactment of this act and its implementation will ensure that every child attend school; feel safe, secured and protected.
- **Sustenance and resources to continue capacity development and monitoring of all SBMCs in the State by the end of 2017.** This will increase community participation and support to education, guarantee full involvement of parents in all school affairs, mobilize and empower women, children, religious and traditional leaders for active participation and support to education. Evidence of SBMC action to date in Kano State demonstrates the very significant role that communities through SBMCs can play in supporting access and learning, and safeguarding children in and around schools.

114. Follow-up advocacy meetings to present the research to government were successful in the short term, gaining the support of the Chair of SUBEB for the CSOs' findings and advocacy objectives. Advocacy will continue into 2017.

Enugu

115. The issues identified by the CGP from working with SBMCs included poor infrastructure in most of the schools, inadequate number of teachers, large population of out of school children, poor funding for schools, lack of inclusive practices in schools, lack of community engagement, lack of toilets and water facilities in schools.
116. For their research, the CSOs selected teacher deployment, particularly the bias in the deployment of teachers in favour of urban areas. The CSOs also focused on non-implementation of the State inclusive education policy. These were considered vital areas requiring action to reduce the number of children out of school.
117. The CSOs embarked on mainly qualitative research to find out the extent of the problems around teacher deployment and inclusion across the state. The research report aimed to provide an understanding of the extent to which schools were affected with inadequate numbers of teachers in public primary schools, the implementation of inclusive practices in public schools, and the community's perception of teachers.
118. The research was carried out in 40 public primary schools spread across the 17 local government areas. The research used a questionnaire designed and administered to a focus group in each school. The questionnaire was administered in a participatory way using focus group discussions (FGD). A number of community members were selected and grouped according to their work. Teachers, pupils and SBMC members were selected as participants.

Summary of key findings

Commented [AG1]: Combine this list with list above

Teacher deployment

- There is an acute shortage of teachers in Enugu State.
- There is skewed distribution of teachers, with urban areas having more teachers per school than rural areas.
- Low allocation of teaching posts to rural areas makes teachers more unwilling to work in rural schools, because their workload is higher with larger classes.
- Teachers would be motivated to take up posts in rural areas by increased support for families, accommodation and travel.
- Teachers are highly regarded in communities (favourable view of teachers).

Inclusive education

- The government is putting inclusive structures like ramps in the schools being renovated
- A lot still need to be done in the area of inclusive infrastructure and classrooms.
- Most teachers do not understand inclusive practices but are willing to learn and introduce to their school.

119. Most teachers agreed that not having enough staff was the major reason for further unwillingness to work in rural schools. This was followed by distance from the family. Poor infrastructure and roads also featured as factors. Expensive transport and, access to urban conveniences and distance from family were also cited as reasons.

120. All the respondents agreed that financial incentives will be the main motivator for people to stay or relocate to a rural school. Improved infrastructure and scholarship schemes were also cited as reasons teachers would agree to stay in a rural school.

121. These incentives would ideally cover such things like health insurance, accommodation, including some form of scholarship for wards schooling in government institutions. This could be paid as part of the allowances to individuals who decide to live and work in remote communities. A proper system of checks using the SBMC and the SMOs to check abuse of the system. The will also be tied to the performance of the children and the school in terms of academics.

122. Many of the respondents stated they had not received any form of inclusive teaching advice or training, although they have been asked to encourage physically and mentally challenged children to attend school.

Summary of key recommendations

- The government should recruit more qualified teachers as a matter of urgency.
- Teachers should be redistributed equitably across the schools in state using a teacher deployment policy or guidelines.
- There should be an incentive for teachers working in remote areas. This will encourage many teachers to redeploy and stay.
- Teachers should be given adequate tools to work and their working environment made conducive for teaching and learning.
- The SBMCs should be given the necessary training and support to ensure sustainable and stable learning and school environment.
- The government should develop a standard for school buildings both for public and private schools.
- The government should use the SSIT in the training of teachers in inclusive practices.
- An inclusive practices implementation timeline should be put in place for effective monitoring and supervision.

123. The CSO group presented detailed findings to government through its report and several follow-up meetings. The group made strong arguments as follows:

124. State government is currently spending huge resources in the renovation of schools and the purchase furniture and equipment for the schools. This is coupled with the resources the communities contribute to support education in their various

communities. These are in a bid to improve the standard of education in the state and graduate high quality pupils from the public schools. The state also carries out annual school census and has an Inclusive Education (IE) Policy in place in the state. These are huge efforts in part of state and non-state actors.

125. These efforts will go to waste if adequate measures are not put in place to tackle some of the issues arising from this research. Without teachers, especially, qualified teachers, quality teaching and learning cannot go on. The vision of competing favourably with private schools will remain a dream. There is not only a dearth of teachers in the state but skewed deployment favourable to urban schools. The government should revise or develop a new policy in the deployment of teachers in the state. This will ensure equitable distribution of teachers in all the local government areas of the state. The government should also as a matter of urgency, recruit more teachers into the service. This will help to lower the workload of the current teachers in the service. Consequently, a system of incentives to teachers willing to work in remote locations should be developed to ensure that those sent in such locations stay.

126. The state government should start the gradual implementation of the IE Policy. This is to ensure that physically and mentally challenged children and other commonly excluded children are adequately taken care of in the schools. Currently, most of the schools do not have a specially trained staff to handle such pupils. This creates frustration on the part of the staff because they had been asked to ensure that all children in their domain are in schools.

Kaduna

127. Compliance with inclusive education policy and the status of SBMCs as recognised bodies for school improvement were the two issues chosen for CSO research in Kaduna.
128. Parents, teachers, children and other education stakeholders were interviewed through.
129. participatory research conducted by the coalition in 2015. The research was conducted in 66 schools spread across 16 LGEAs. Stakeholders were asked in focus group discussions why children did not go to school, and what had happened when communities and SBMCs tried to get support to improve school quality and retention.

Children's views

130. Reasons why many children do not go to public schools are related to the school environment; Children's preference for private schools are driven by the very poor condition of public schools; infrastructure dilapidation, lack of good toilets, lack of safe drinking water, shortage of classrooms and furniture, broken classroom floors, inadequate instructional materials, unavailable playground and equipment.
131. Family poverty and hunger distract children from attending school to places where they can get food and other satisfaction. Due to the high level of poverty, parents send children to labour during school hours in order to support the income of the family. Girls' especially are required to work so that their families can afford to prepare items for their marriages such as toiletries, bridal gifts "kayan gara"), bedroom furniture, etc.
132. Children expressed their dissatisfaction with the insufficient number of teachers which translates to overcrowded classrooms and over-populated schools. Pupils also becomes susceptible to peer group influence/bad company which is made worse by poor attitude of teachers to work which are manifested in bullying, abuse, extortion, drunkenness, illicit relationships dating) between teacher and pupil.

Key findings from parents

133. Cultural and religious beliefs remain the strong factors influencing the low level of awareness and importance of education. Underage girls are forced to early marriage as soon as the show signs of puberty. Boys are engaged in farming; attend Tsangaya Islamic) school only or rearing animals to support family and train as a prospective father. Some parents believe that it's a waste of time and resources to send girls to school because of the preference of boys over girls/ gender discrimination.

134. Distance and location of schools create barriers to school attendance and also a risk to children's safety and protection. Children are often at risk of being knocked down by vehicles on the highway as regards the increasing motorist activities around schools. In rural areas, schools around or near bridges and rivers also create barriers. In some difficult terrain pupils prefer to use bush path which could also be risky for them.

135. The research found that 67% of SBMCs made various request to the government, based on their assessment of the needs of schools and of children and 74.2% of those requests were yet to receive any response from the LGEA or SUBEB.

Key recommendations to government

136. Issue 1: Inclusive Education

- That there be training of teachers in inclusive teaching methodology
- Minimize frequent transfer of teachers.
- Teachers who studied special needs education should be employed to collaborate with regular teachers on diverse aspects of disability-inclusive teaching.

Issue 2: Community Voice and accountability

- That SBMCs be institutionalised as community education volunteers to channel and to receive prompt responses to demands on infrastructure, provision of adequate teaching and learning materials, provision of portable drinking water, and securing school environments from encroachment and damage.
- Timely and adequate provision of financial support should be provided to the SBMCs to enhance quality management especially in monitoring teacher and pupil attendance, run enrolment drive campaigns especially for increasing enrolment, retention and completion of the boy and girl child in school.

Implications of CSO research

Unlocking community resources for expanding access

137. In Lagos, the process of finding out how strongly communities felt about poor school infrastructure and overcrowding gave CSOS a platform to broker agreements between communities and government to use land for school building. This offers an innovative way to get over a major stumbling block for expanding education access in Lagos, and should be further investigated as a potential policy solution.

Overcoming inclusion barriers

138. Lagos's research also highlighted government failure to ensure that head teachers were aware of inclusive education policy commitments to admit children with disabilities to local schools. This is a relatively easily fixed issue, at least in the short term: government would need to issue a communiqué requiring head teachers to admit all children, including those with disabilities, and share this with SBMCs as well as schools. CSOs working with SBMCs would be well placed to hold head teachers to account on this issue and report any violations to the Social Mobilisation Department. SMOs and SSOs could be directed to advise head teachers on inclusive education principles.
139. To ensure full inclusion, long-term efforts would be needed to offer more capacity building to schools with disabled students, but in the short term a significant policy implementation success could be delivered and many more disabled children brought into school.
140. Similar issues were found in Kaduna, Kano and Enugu. It is clear that efforts to formulate inclusive education policy now need to be followed up with awareness raising and advice for teachers in practical ways to support children with disabilities.

Language challenges

141. The Kwara CSO team's findings on language of instruction are revealing. It is useful to hear from children themselves that they need to be taught in their first language to do well in school. It is no surprise that parents are anxious for their children to gain good English skills. What is most interesting is that teachers in the schools surveyed know the importance of teaching in mother tongue – but they do not feel that they are able to. While further research into this would be useful, it is likely that teachers also feel the pressure to maximise English. As language of instruction issues are not currently receiving policy focus in Kwara, teachers are unlikely to be aware of the techniques available to combine mother tongue teaching with English proficiency.
142. As with enrolment of disabled children in Lagos, the initial way forward for state government in Kwara is relatively straightforward. A letter or communiqué to schools reminding teachers of national policy to teach in children's mother tongue/the main community language that children use at home for at least the first three years of primary

education can be issued. At the same time, CSOs can be commissioned to undertake consultation and awareness raising in communities on the value of mother tongue education.

143. More strategic solutions would involve SUBEB to match Fulfulde-speaking teachers with Fulani schools. This would also be relatively straightforward, in the sense that little cost would be attached.

144. It would be possible for Kwara State to seek advice from the numerous language of instruction experts in Nigerian universities and worldwide, on other steps to improve learning through strengthening the language of teaching. One option would be to train the SSIT to support teachers on language issues. Another possibility would be to pilot bilingual education. CSOs in Kwara will continue to engage with government on the need to explore solutions to language issues in education.

Teacher deployment

145. In Jigawa, Kano, Enugu and Kwara, common challenges with teacher deployment were revealed to be rooted in lack of incentives to overcome extra costs and inconveniences in moving to rural areas. This creates a self-perpetuating reluctance to work in rural schools, as working conditions are so difficult with so few teachers.

146. Two policy solutions were recommended. The first is for SUBEBs to do an initial sweep of rural teaching posts, attempting to allocate qualified teachers to postings in their home communities. This would address the need identified in CSOs' research in Kwara for teachers to use the same community language as children.

147. Remaining gaps in rural teaching post allocation should be filled by offering incentives to teachers to cover additional transport or accommodation costs. Two-year commitment agreements could also be made with teachers to stay in rural areas and perform well.

148. Where such incentives are already in place, further research is indicated to find out whether they are being implemented appropriately. Technical advice could be sought from GPE in Jigawa to strengthen the system of teacher allocation and retention.

Poverty barriers and solutions

149. The research in Kano identified similar root causes to exclusion from school as in Jigawa, with family poverty and lack of investment in quality learning environments forming major barriers. The large number of practical solutions gathered from parents, teachers and children in Kano should be particularly useful for State government, especially when considering where to direct external support from initiatives such as GPE.

Safety and protection

150. Kano's investigations on child protection show that the topic of child protection is of interest to school communities, and that local stakeholders supported by SBMCs are already working to improve children's protection and safety. This gives government a strong foundation for boosting child protection through policy initiatives designed to improve the attendance and participation of vulnerable groups.
151. Findings in both Kano and Kaduna indicated that the physical safety of the school environment and the route to school is vital for continued attendance. SBMCs and communities have taken effective action to increase school safety, but constant encouragement and investment to make school buildings, walls and transit routes safe for children are needed.
152. Kaduna's research revealed significant child protection challenges in abusive relationships between teachers and children. Enforcing teacher codes of conduct, and creating stronger social norms to value children's voices and protect children will be important for the future.
153. Overall, the research process shows the value of keeping close relationships between CSOs and government education bodies. This research has offered government better insight into the pressing issues which communities feel are really making the difference between educational access and exclusion, success and failure. CSOs have been able to bring out voices which are often unheard within communities, such as women and children, as well as bringing information from remote areas to the attention of government. CSOs also offer government a channel to try out solutions to these challenges, using the trust and openness in certain school communities which has been fostered by CSOs' partnerships with government.

Conclusion

154. With ESSPIN support, CSOs have matured to fill information gaps and offer a brokering role between government and communities. CSOs are independent, speaking for and with communities, but with enough knowledge and trust to suggest solutions which work for both government and communities.
155. The ESSPIN consolidation process has helped CSOs form the alliances they need to deliver change effectively. The strong relationships between organisations, formed by working together on research and advocacy planning, have been noticeable in recent interactions.
156. CSOs have demonstrably gained research, writing and planning skills during the consolidation process, producing high quality reports and organising strategic advocacy events. These increased research and presentational skills have allowed CSOs to command greater respect from government as they continue to share good quality, useful evidence and recommendations. This fosters more confidence for future collaboration between government and CSOs.
157. CSOs also now have a strong framework against which to monitor their progress, having got used to the ESSPIN CSO Self-Assessment Framework. Individual organisations and groups can continue to use this framework to track their progress, and to demonstrate their value to potential funders.
158. ESSPIN organised a CSO marketplace event in November 2016. The event offered development partners and government the opportunity to build links with CSOs, using their research and advocacy experience to sell their expertise and skills to donors and government clients. This is an aspect of civil society development which should be enthusiastically supported by government and by international development partners.
159. An important lesson from ESSPIN's CSO development work has been that time to nurture relationships at all levels is critical to sustaining government-civil society partnership and engagement in service delivery. Such strong relationships makes evidence-based advocacy easy to conduct and share, and welcomed by government – because it is targeted at government priorities and offers constructive advice from CSOs and communities that government would otherwise not have access to.
160. ESSPIN's work to bring CSOs more strongly into education accountability and improvement has created space for dialogue, consensus building, collaboration, and responsiveness in strengthening education. Continued interaction between government and civil society in overcoming Nigeria's education challenges must be facilitated by donors, government, and all sections of society.