

Organisational Development and Management

Introduction

In Nigeria there is a strong desire to make fundamental changes in the way that education is provided and managed. But this is made difficult by top-heavy education structures, overlapping responsibilities and ineffective management systems. To be successful, reform in education has to take place in parallel with other changes, including changes in legal frameworks, planning and financial systems.

ESSPIN is helping federal, state and local government education agencies to work together more effectively and build trust in each other. To do this, ESSPIN is supporting those agencies as they review their roles and responsibilities, and identify the skills and structures needed to deliver quality education without duplication and waste. This includes streamlining the top-down management system and developing the capacity of managers across the system to work more effectively.

Top-down education management leaves schools and communities almost powerless to play a part in improving education. When central authorities determine what schools need, there is little scope for local ownership of education. Schools and communities need to be consulted, and to be given responsibilities for improving teaching and learning – and for managing the resources needed to do so.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

Throughout the education system, the core management functions of planning, financial management and quality assurance are weak. So ESSPIN's approach is to help improve the skills needed to deliver those functions. Working with senior staff throughout the education system, ESSPIN is providing opportunities for capacity building so that managers can prepare sound organisational plans and budgets, and determine ways in which organisational structures might operate more efficiently and effectively.

Strategy

A more effective education system requires some re-organisation of federal, state and local governments to clarify responsibilities, locate those responsibilities at the most appropriate level in the system, and put in place measures to make sure those responsible are held accountable. ESSPIN focuses on organisational development and management in the parts of the system where changes will make the biggest difference.

Federal education management

ESSPIN works with the Policy, Planning, Management and Research Department of the Federal Ministry of Education, and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). These two agencies are the main channels of federal funds to basic education.

The UBEC's strategic plan sets out its main responsibilities – mobilising resources and supporting State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) – and gives states more flexibility in bidding for funds to accomplish goals they themselves have determined.

State education management

In states ESSPIN works SUBEBs. These boards channel federal and state budget allocations to local authorities. Then, further along the funding chain ESSPIN works with local education authorities because these directly support schools. With state Ministries of Education, ESSPIN involves all relevant departments and local government organisations in drawing up Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs). Six states now have these frameworks setting out their visions, missions, goals, objectives and actions. In order to implement these strategies, ESSPIN is helping states to review their organisational structures, legal and financial systems (see also ESSPIN briefing note 2: Public Financial Management).

Future challenges

Maintaining momentum – building relationships with key policy makers and senior staff in education – is fundamental to changing attitudes and transforming organisations. ESSPIN sustains close ties with UBEC and six SUBEBs so that they, in turn, can support and guide the hundreds of local authorities beyond ESSPIN's reach. ESSPIN will need to overcome resistance to change and help reform-minded policy makers and managers to understand the benefits of organisational development.

An additional challenge is to encourage the establishment of robust institutions that will be sustainable after the completion of ESSPIN's work.

ESSPIN support for streamlining educational management	Helping UBEC devolve responsibilities, change how funds flow to states and put more trust in states to carry out tasks assigned to them	Helping LGEAs address school priorities through stakeholder forums such as school-based management committees (SBMCs) and use evidence-based criteria to select schools for targeted improvement	Helping review the legal framework of the education system
	Helping SUBEBs support and build capacity in Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) and build sufficient trust in their capabilities to devolve responsibilities to them	Helping review organisational structures to match structure to strategy	Helping introduce public sector management reforms to the education system that parallel and reinforce the reforms that State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) is introducing in the Office of the Head of Service, and Ministries of Economic Planning and Finance.
ESSPIN support for streamlining the education system	Develops planning processes in each part of the education system	Audits state and local authorities to identify overlapping roles, responsibilities and functions	Rationalises management structures, roles, responsibilities, human resources management
	Supports the collection, analysis and publication of key educational data including school census returns as a basis for sound planning	Reforms and develops processes to make them more transparent and accountable	Uses learning-by-doing to build capacity
	Integrates MTSS planning at federal and state levels		Improves co-operation and communication among federal, state and local government in the education system
