

ESSPIN
Experiences

**School-based management:
engaging communities in
school improvement**



esspin

Education Sector
Support Programme
in Nigeria



UKaid

from the Department for
International Development

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Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria's (ESSPIN) **Community Engagement and Learner Participation (CELP)** work in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kwara, Enugu, Lagos and Kano states is part of an **integrated approach to school improvement**. Seeking to make **quality basic education accessible to all children** and to raise learning outcomes, ESSPIN is supporting the establishment and functioning of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) as the main vehicle for **enabling communities to support schools and improving school governance**.

School-based management encourages **community demand for better quality, inclusive education**. It improves the financing and delivery of education services by devolving school management, and increasing decision-making on education provision at the local level.

SBMCs link service users and service providers and are a mechanism for channelling community 'voice', including that of commonly marginalised groups such as women and children, and for improving accountability.

In 2005, the Nigerian National Council for Education (NCE) approved the establishment of SBMCs in all schools and the Federal Ministry of Education issued guidelines for this.

Below
SBMC members show much interest in children's ideas for school improvement.



However, few SBMCs became fully functional. ESSPIN is working with relevant government and civil society structures to adapt and implement the national guidelines in the six states.

At state and federal level there is now interest in replicating the SBMC model developed in the ESSPIN-supported states.

This document describes the initial challenges around SBMC development and community involvement in education, and the response to these challenges – highlighting lessons learned. Government and civil society organisation (CSO) partners' monitoring and mentoring activities provide evidence of changes happening as a result of this response. Finally, this document presents plans to consolidate work on community engagement and learner participation.

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Building on international experience and Nigerian government initiatives on SBMCs, ESSPIN supported specific research in 2009¹ to examine how SBMCs were working in reality and present some key recommendations to strengthen and support the initiatives. A community survey² was also conducted in 2009 to provide a broad picture of existing community support to schools at the beginning of ESSPIN's intervention, to compare against subsequent years.

1

Poulsen H (2009) School-Based Management Committees in Policy and Practice, Research Synthesis Report

2

ESSPIN (2010) Community Survey Report

3

Williams (2009) quoted in Poulsen H (2009) School-Based Management Committees in Policy and Practice, Research Synthesis Report

These documents highlighted the following main challenges:

Where SBMCs were functional and had received some support, many people in communities were not aware of them and had not contributed to plans for school development. This was generally misunderstood by government as apathy or general acceptance of the status quo.

One of the most striking highlights of the ESSPIN research, however, was the willingness and readiness of communities to take action and demand their rights in relation to education if they were provided with opportunities for dialogue, learning and support. This kind of pressure from the community had been almost entirely missing from many schools in Nigeria.

There was a general lack of clarity about what kind of institution an SBMC should be and why it should exist. Financial resources were not allocated at school level. Governance structures at state and local government level were ineffective and communities had little capacity to contribute effectively to school governance.

Wider participation of community members in SBMCs was limited. The research highlighted the participation of women to be 'highly constrained', especially in the northern states, and participation of children in SBMCs was 'not accepted'. However despite this, the research also pointed to other programmes, such as UNICEF's Girls' Education Project, which had demonstrated that attitudes were not completely entrenched and that there was space for women to be involved in decision-making processes.

There was a lack of clarity as to the role of the local government education authorities (LGEAs) in supporting SBMCs, and the variety of training programmes offered by different organisations to SBMC stakeholders was not aiding cohesion³.



Above
Children know well the factors affecting their education.



Left
The participation of both men and women is critical to improvements in education for all children.

Section 2: ESSPIN's response

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ESSPIN's support for community engagement and learner participation in school improvement aims to strengthen accountability for education by increasing the capacity of communities and civil society to support schools and demand inclusive, quality, basic education services.

'The SBMC development approach has been participatory in nature, working through existing structures and with all key education stakeholders in a consultative and collaborative process, in order to promote sustainability and replication of the model.'

Fatima Aboki,
CELP specialist

ESSPIN is working to:

Assist states to increase the availability of information on education services, education quality and inclusion issues at the school and community level.

Promote and enhance wider community participation in the preparation and implementation of school development plans.

Improve linkages between communities and civil society and develop capacity to make demands for better quality, inclusive education.

Strengthen government responsiveness to the demands made by communities and civil society.

SBMC visioning at state and community level

To adapt national SBMC guidelines to suit the state context, state governments engaged a wide range of stakeholders in a three-phase consultation (visioning) process, culminating in the production of state-specific policy documents on SBMCs. State level and community level visioning were conducted to articulate the characteristics of school based management. The outcomes of these were then harmonised into one overall framework. Key products emerging from this process included developing state guidelines on SBMCs in six states, a training of trainers manual to train civil society and government partnership (CGP) members, and state-specific SBMC guidebooks with which to train and mentor SBMCs. Some 21,400 copies of the guidebook were printed and distributed.

Right

SBMCs consult with, and provide feedback to, the wider community on education and school improvement.

Far right

SBMCs conduct monitoring and support visits in schools.



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State task teams

As the basis of a broad platform of school improvement, early in the programme ESSPIN helped states form and train state task teams (STT) of officers from within the Ministry of Education and its agencies. These teams have an oversight, monitoring and advocacy role at state level. They liaise between policy actors (senior managers from the State Ministry of Education and the State Universal Basic Education Board), the implementers of the SBMC concept (Department of Social Mobilisation staff), the SBMCs (school-community representatives), and the wider community where the school is situated. The STTs also have responsibility for securing resources through the Medium-Term Sector Strategy and budgeting processes to scale up the intervention at state level.

Partnership of government and civil society

Desk officers from the State Universal Basic Education Board's (SUBEB) Department of Social Mobilisation (DSM) and CSOs have been supported to work together to activate, train and provide follow-up mentoring support to more than 1,000 SBMCs in the six states, thereby promoting broad community participation in, and demand for, basic education. DSM is the institutional home of SBMCs in Nigeria, and the community engagement and learner participation work is assisting the department to build its own capacity and carry out its key functions, roles and responsibilities. ESSPIN also provides communications and knowledge management support.

Forty-three CSOs with relevant experience were selected from an organisational capacity assessment conducted in the six ESSPIN-supported states. Capacity development for the CGP – to enable members to assess and access communities and then train, mentor and monitor SBMCs – was structured as a process of step-down trainings. (Capacity development workshops for ESSPIN state specialists were stepped-down to CGPs and then to SBMCs as part of the SBMC training and mentoring programme).



SBMC training and mentoring

CGPs conducted a process of ‘community entry’ and sensitisation, including gender and child awareness. Following the training of trainers, CGPs then formed and trained SBMCs. The training covered SBMC roles and responsibilities, partnership and inclusion, communication, managing meetings, school development planning and financial management.

Subsequent mentoring support visits to SBMCs over a 12-month period were supported by continuous capacity development of the CGPs, to enable them to conduct mentoring. Based on the SBMC guidebook, this included reinforcement of SBMC training, child protection and participation, resource mobilisation, inclusive education and gender, communications, advocacy and relationship and change management.

Local Government Education Authority – community response forums

At local government level, forums were supported to bring together traditional and religious community leaders with government officials and local education councillors. Lively discussion in these forums led to developing mechanisms for government responses to increased community demand for education, with shared commitment by all towards improving schools and education delivery within their domain.

Support to the Department of Social Mobilisation

Community engagement and learner participation falls under the SUBEB DSM mandate. ESSPIN works closely with DSM desk officers as part of the CGP, and also assists them to build their own capacity.

DSM’s support for SUBEB in Kaduna focused on how to function effectively as a team and the development of a charter to express DSM’s purpose and values, with commitments towards achieving these.

‘The Social Mobilisation Department (SMD) exists to work with a wide range of stakeholders to promote universal basic education through awareness raising, two-way dialogue and sustainable community participation. Ultimately, we exist for the benefit of the child.’

Statement of purpose from the Kaduna SMD Charter

Left, below and right

All groups living in the community can play a role in supporting children’s access to quality education.



Left

As the ‘gatekeepers’ of the community, traditional and religious leaders play a key role in education and school improvement.

Section 3: Community voice and action

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As mentoring has progressed, there has been significant evidence of increased community engagement and learner participation in school improvement, with noticeably increased involvement of previously marginalised or excluded groups. As SBMCs have become more organised and active, linkages with CSOs are being strengthened and government is becoming more attentive and responsive to the education demands of communities. Progressive, multi-actor partnerships are clearly emerging to influence positive change in the way schools function within the community.

The following case studies highlight some of the changes taking place. They represent Kano, Jigawa, Kwara, Lagos and Kaduna SBMCs and communities.

Below
SBMCs know best how to mobilise the community to support education.



Participation of traditional leaders and community gatekeepers

The involvement of traditional and religious community leaders in SBMC development and their subsequent support have been enabling increased community involvement in education decision-making and school improvement.

The Hakimi (district head) of Pari-Chawai Community, Kaduna State, summoned all his 'subjects' to ensure that the key people had understood the reason for the visit of the CGP and what was expected of them. The Ayuba Zuwan, responded, saying, 'We have been in the dark for a long time but now a new day has emerged.'

In Makarfi LGEA of Kaduna State, the CGP went to find the community leader on his farm. The community leader was very happy to see them and commented, 'I never believed that anyone, particularly government, would come all the way to visit this community in relation to the education of the children.' He vowed to give his support to the programme.

In Albasu LGEA of Kano State, CGPs report an increase in the number of girls coming to schools – as a result of the intervention of traditional leaders. Some schools which had no girl pupils now have girls making up half of classes. Teachers who were not attending have now returned to school because they know the traditional leader will take action if they do not.

SBMC contributions and government responsiveness to SBMC concerns

SBMCs are mobilising resources from a variety of sources, eg:

SBMC and community contributions.

Philanthropists within the community.

Private organisations and companies.

Former pupil networks and associations and other community networks.

Taxing outsiders who come into the community area to cut wood.

In Ikorodu LGEA of Lagos, the CGP/SBMC discovered that about 400 students were learning under the shade of a tree. The CGP/SBMC wrote to SUBEB and the Ministry of Education for assistance. SUBEB approved a two-storey building of 17 classrooms plus toilet facilities for the school. Without waiting, the SBMC went ahead to provide a temporary block of four classrooms to accommodate the students during the rainy season.

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**Women's participation
in SBMCs**

In some communities, women's participation in institutions such as SBMCs is not common. Women and men are not used to sitting together to discuss issues. The SBMCs offer increased opportunities for women's participation, and in some cases their voices are being heard.

Below

Women participate actively in community mobilisation on education for all children in the community.

The CSO Magajin Mallam, working with their government partners in Fagge in Kano State, reported a marked general increase in women's participation in SBMCs since the SBMC training. 'At the initial stage of SBMC formation and development, most of the male participants were not comfortable sitting and discussing with women, but after having a discussion about the role of women through role play and other methods, they came to accept that women are a significant part of the process of children's educational development because of the closeness of women with the child. They also agreed about girl child education and its importance in nation building.'

In Oke Ero LGEA of Kwara State, where SBMCs have set up women's SBMC committees, the committees in most schools have made a point of involving themselves in house-to-house visits to enlighten parents about the Kwara education reform campaign 'Every Child Counts'. This has increased attendance at schools. In Bishop-Smith LGEA, women are doing the same and also checking on teacher attendance and punctuality at the school. The women's SBMC committees are enhancing the participation of women in SBMCs.

Women's sub-committees of SBMCs have also been set up in some school communities in Jigawa State.



Children's participation in SBMCs

Although initial SBMC research indicated that children's participation is generally not accepted, the voices of children and young people are gaining space. Providing opportunities for children to gather together to discuss their education, as well as the formation of children's SBMC committees, strengthens children's ability to contribute meaningfully in matters which affect their education.

Stephen Martins is a 10-year-old boy in Primary 5 at the St Augustine Primary School, Bashua, Shomolu in Lagos State and he represents the children at SBMC cluster meetings. He is confident and speaks surprisingly assertively for his age. He spoke with great concern on the issues of out-of-school children in the area. He told the cluster SBMC group of a situation that occurred when he was sent on an errand for his teacher. On his way back to the school, he saw a group of children about his age who were playing football during school hours. He talked to them about the importance of staying in school and why they should go back. Stephen also helped convince his neighbour's physically disabled child to enrol back in school.

According to Linking the Youth of Nigeria through Xchange (LYNX) CSO working in Shomolu, Stephen's action is testimony to the value of children's participation in SBMCs. Stephen says that including young members in the SBMC promotes a sense of responsibility for their communities and themselves. Stephen is an advocate for youths in his community, irrespective of their age, background or gender.

Below
Children's SBMC committees can strengthen children's confidence in participation.



SBMCs, inclusion and gender

SBMCs have become active in understanding why children in their community are out of school, and taking action at community level to support excluded groups, particularly girls (though in some south-eastern states, out-of-school boys are a problem). Children from nomadic communities, children with disabilities and children who are working (street selling and domestic work) are also often excluded from education.

SBMCs are recognising that children who get to school might still remain excluded because of circumstances within the school and might drop out, so they are starting to monitor school inclusion, protection and quality as well as access.

As the result of SBMCs sensitising the community on inclusive education, Lawrence Alade Eguntola, a boy affected by disability, is one of the pupils now enrolled in Primary 2 in Bani Kaiama LGEA, Kwara State and supported by his peers and teacher.

The SBMC at Yusuf Dantamo Junior Secondary School (JSS) Mallam Madori, in Jigawa, have recruited and encouraged young women as volunteer teachers as an interim measure to tackle the problem of lack of female teachers in schools. Increasing numbers of female teachers in schools can in turn encourage girls to attend, and stay in, school.

‘SBMCs are working and our schools are changing. Teachers who used to abscond from work to go to their farms now come to school in time and the children are learning more.’
Education Secretary,
Kachia LGEA, Kaduna

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**Child awareness, welfare
and protection**

CGP reports highlight SBMC work to address issues of child welfare which form barriers to children’s presence, participation and achievement in schools.

Testimony from girls in one school highlighted that they feel safer in school as they know the SBMC will take action if anyone tries to harm or take advantage of them in or around the school.

In Kwara State, one SBMC has set up a child welfare committee to provide community-wide support for vulnerable children to attend and stay in school.

In Lagos, CGPs have raised the issues of children who are brought to the city to work as domestic helps for families and are not enrolled in school. This is common in Lagos and these children have very little hope of accessing education.

**SBMCs’ school improvement
and accountability**

SBMCs are having a direct impact on performance in schools.

In a school in Kwara State, the teachers were often absent from class and, when challenged by the SBMC, responded that they had to be absent due to ‘study leave’. The SBMC demanded that teachers provide them with written authority for the study leave, but the teachers could not do so. The case ended with an apology from the head teacher, regular attendance of the teachers at school, and the replacement of one teacher by a very committed female teacher.

In another Kwara primary school, the head teacher was not attending regularly but had promised to turn over a new leaf with the advent of the SBMC. However, after some months he returned to his old habit of not coming to school. The community, deciding he would probably not change, wrote a letter to the LGEA demanding his immediate removal and replacement. When there was no reply from the LGEA, the community hired a bus and went to the LGEA office to press home their request for a new and effective head teacher. The Education Secretary promised them a new head teacher. The assistant head teacher was duly promoted and is now doing a good job in the school.



Monitoring learning

The CSO perspective

Monitoring teaching

'Pupils' reading ability has improved. During our visit to the school, we interview the pupils. We engage them in questions and their responses will tell us the changes.'

Mazadu Audu, SBMC Chairman, Universal Basic Education (UBE) Angwan Maaji, Kaduna

'Before our engagement with ESSPIN, the relationship between CSOs and the government was not cordial. But there now exists a cordial relationship between us. If I go to Kajuru LGEA, the Executive Secretary now listens to me. It gives us an opportunity to reach far communities because of the logistic support we get.'

'ESSPIN is the first organisation that works with us at the community level, focusing on education. The communities had the school but did not know they had responsibilities. Now, they see the school as their own and are contributing to it through the existence of a functional SBMC.'

'On a personal note, I have gained more capacity to do my work. I have my capacity built on advocacy, child participation and gender, among others. Whenever I do community work, I recognise these issues as they arise and help communities to focus on them so that things can be a bit more balanced.'

Faith Irowa, Education Programme Coordinator, Hope for the Village Child Foundation, Kaduna

'Teachers' attendance has increased as the result of SBMC activities. When they see me getting to the school before them they sit up. I threatened to report them to the Executive Secretary. We want to see all the pupils learning and passing out with good results. If the head teacher is not around, I call him and also complain about his absence and that of the teachers.'

'Before the constitution of the SBMC, the school authority was careless. People went to school and did what they liked. But since the SBMC was constituted, things have changed.'

'Pupils were used to roaming about but we met with parents to find out the problem. Some said the pupil refused to go. We educated them and they now report to the head teacher.'

Yohanna Daniel, SBMC Chairman, LGEA Gyengyre, Kaduna

Left

8 million Nigerian children don't go to school – many working or trading instead. SBMCs have a role to play in getting them to class.

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The combined efforts of many stakeholders at federal, state and community level are increasing community involvement in local schools, and promoting a shared responsibility for the provision and management of basic education. Further commitment is required from all sides to consolidate the progress made, and to roll out SBMC development.

National level

At federal level, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is now leading on the replication of SBMC development across all states of Nigeria based on the ESSPIN-supported model.

With technical support provided by ESSPIN, national SBMC guidelines were revised and the training manual adopted. A first level training of master trainers has taken place in four centres of the country, covering 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The workshops were for SUBEB directors of social mobilisation, SBMC state task team chairs and desk officers. These trainers are expected to cascade the training to the remaining members of state task teams, now being formed in all states, as well as staff of the Federal Ministry of Education, the UBEC Department of Social Mobilisation and zonal coordinators.

UBEC has printed and disseminated 10,000 copies of the revised SBMC guidelines and 1,000 copies of the SBMC trainer's manual to all states.

It has also been agreed that SUBEBs should set aside funds for the next stages and levels of training in the process of SBMC development – visioning and adapting the revised SBMC guidelines in all states, training SBMC members, and mentoring and monitoring SBMCs following training. UBEC has also committed funds to support the second level training of master trainers at state level.

Strong state government and civil society partnerships

The community engagement work shows evidence of the potential of civil society and state governments to work in partnership to improve schools, broaden educational opportunity for children, amplify community voices in relation to education, and strengthen the accountability of those responsible for providing education. However, commitment to this partnership for school improvement beyond ESSPIN's support will be critical if this potential is to be fully realised. In Kwara State, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) and the state government to strengthen the collaboration between the state and civil society in achieving education goals.

Working and investing in the Department of Social Mobilisation as the institutional home of SBMCs has created a strong enabling environment for consolidating and replicating SBMC development. Further capacity development and access to resources will enable the department to become more effective in performing its roles and responsibilities.

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Civil society and government can complement each other's efforts to improve education and schools.



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**Ownership, demand
and accountability**

The civil society and government partnership has prompted an overwhelming range of actions by SBMCs and communities to improve schools and include more vulnerable children in them. Almost all SBMCs have been involved in the often innovative mobilisation of resources at local level to support education. Many have turned to demand support from local government or the SUBEB and have received a positive, and sometimes very significant, response. This supports the SBMC research finding that communities are willing and ready to take action and demand their rights in relation to education if they are provided with information and opportunities for dialogue, learning and support.

States have demonstrated commitment to SBMC development by taking ownership of documents produced as the result of the process, including printing and disseminating the SBMC policy document in Kwara State, and producing a Hausa translation of the state SBMC policy guidelines and guide-book in Kaduna.

Strong participatory approaches and processes through all stages of SBMC development have greatly enhanced political will, committees' ownership of schools and government's ownership of state SBMC policy.

**Planning and funding for
school improvement**

SBMCs have been involved in School Development Planning (SDP) processes, and schools have recently received school development grants from ESSPIN to support the SDPs. It is too early to gauge the impact of the school grants and to know whether SDPs reflect wider community concerns. However, evidence shows that though SBMCs can become active on a range of issues in a very short space of time with relevant information and support, community capacity to mobilise resources for their schools is very different in remote, poor, rural communities compared with urban or semi-urban areas. Community-based resource mobilisation cannot be a substitute for decentralised government funding for improvement in all schools.

Below

SBMCs can advocate and mobilise resources for much-needed facilities in schools.



Sharing experience

In keeping with a participatory approach to SBMC development, experience sharing both across states and with federal-level agencies and other international development partners (IDPs), has led to increased possibilities for replication and sustainability. Examples of such experience sharing include: state-led presentations of SBMC development to UBEC in an ESSPIN-supported workshop in Kaduna; the presence of UBEC at the Enugu state-level SBMC visioning and STT orientation; a national-level workshop bringing together all education stakeholders and IDPs; the advocacy and high-level engagement of the STTs with key education managers and honourable commissioners; and a study visit by Enugu state and local government officials to Kwara on Kwara's education reform process, including SBMC development.

An evidence base for voice and accountability

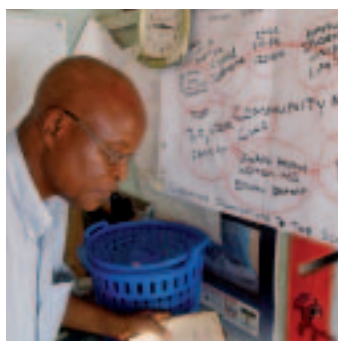
The documentation by the CGPs of their work at community level across more than 1,000 school communities has produced an enormous database of SBMC and community challenges, and solutions to achieving quality education for all children in the community. This qualitative data and evidence provides a broad base for advocacy and the raising of community voices on school improvement and education for all to state level, as well as key information for government planning.

Access and equity

The setting up of women's and children's SBMC committees to enhance participation of commonly marginalised groups in SBMCs is helping wider participation to become a reality. Women and children are now generally represented on SBMCs, and many SBMCs have representation from the Fulani community. While genuine participation is still variable, there are signs of women and children becoming more involved in SBMC decision-making processes. SBMCs, communities, schools and local government have also become more aware of issues of exclusion and dropping out from school, including less visible issues such as disability, child protection and welfare, and feel more confident and committed to engaging with these at community and school level.

Left, below and right

SBMCs and communities can help to ensure that all children benefit from education.



Section 5: Future challenges and plans

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SBMCs are newly-fledged institutions. Sustained support from strong government and civil society partnership is critical to ensuring that they remain fully functional, widely representative and well established in the longer term. As the SBMC development model is replicated by the federal government across new states, and by state governments within current ESSPIN-supported states, initial intensive and sustained approaches will be crucial.

Without this, there is a risk that SBMCs might become elitist and exclusive institutions which only represent the voice of the few. Achieving equity targets will require more sustained support which takes into account the cultural and contextual differences between and within states.

SBMCs and communities have quickly become very active in school improvement and supporting their children to access, participate and achieve in education. However, sustaining this momentum is dependent on a number of factors, including the extent to which the necessary levels of government funding can be decentralised to schools in the longer term, and whether the partnership of civil society and government will take root in states. While SBMCs have been able to mobilise resources, in some cases on quite a large scale, and while ESSPIN has provided school grants in the short term, momentum will be lost without addressing the issue of more direct funding at both state and federal level.

ESSPIN's CELP team will continue to understand the challenges and support the consolidation and strengthening of the SBMC model. The team will feed learning and proven best practice into any replication that takes place in states to develop strong, well established and fully institutionalised SBMCs. Further activities will include:

Supporting states to further strengthen and institutionalise the SBMC model within government structures.

Developing the capacity of the SUBEB departments of social mobilisation to: lead and plan for SBMC development; implement programmes based on good practice; and conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Left and below

Community members, including children, know best what the barriers are to children enrolling and staying in school.

Continuing to support civil society to strengthen voice and accountability through SBMC/LGEA forums as a platform for community demand, by working with the media, and by developing the capacity of CSOs to use their evidence base for advocacy – linking community voice with CSOs working at state level. State-level response strategies already developed by local government areas (LGAs), LGEAs and community leaders to address increased community demand will be institutionalised.

Further developing participatory approaches to enhance community-led school improvement and accountability. This will include the incorporation of community gathered data on education issues into planning and budgeting processes, and strengthening the participation of the wider community (especially women, children and other marginalised groups) in SBMCs. Women's and children's SBMC committees will be strengthened and support will be provided to states and LGEAs to identify and highlight gender role models.

At national level, ESSPIN will continue to provide the requested technical assistance to UBEC to replicate the SBMC model nationwide. At state level, ESSPIN will provide technical assistance where states wish to roll-out the SBMC model in non-ESSPIN supported schools and LGEAs.



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With the wide participation of education stakeholders at national, state and local level in a comprehensive process of SBMC development, **there is now much greater clarity on the purpose, existence and role of SBMCs in Nigeria.**

As UBEC replicates the process and model nationally, state-specific SBMC policies and programmes will emerge as **one of the key steps towards school improvement and quality education for all children in Nigeria.**

Support at community level from a well prepared partnership of government and civil society, including the (re)activation training and mentoring of SBMCs, has provided a **catalyst for communities to take action and begin to demand their rights in relation to education.**

The voices of commonly excluded groups, including women and children, are also beginning to be heard and SBMCs are taking action to assist extremely disadvantaged children to access and remain in school.

The momentum of these rapid and impressive developments must be maintained through relevant and sustained support.

There is potential for school-based management, alongside other school improvement measures, to hugely improve education service delivery and education outcomes for children.

With the continued commitment from all stakeholders – government at all levels, civil society, schools, SBMCs, communities and development partners, successes can be replicated and built upon for the benefit of all.

School-Based Management Committees – helping community leaders support their school

Yakubu Shuaib, SBMC Chairman at LGEA Primary School, Magaji Gari, Kaduna North did not used to be concerned about what happened to his school. ‘Anybody could trespass on the school premises – for example ruffians could come and spoil the premises. If the roof blew off, we didn’t care because we believed it was the government’s responsibility.’

He was not alone in thinking this way. However, as a result of the capacity building, mentoring and monitoring conducted by a partner CSO and government social mobilisation officers, Yakubu says: ‘We now know that the schools belong to the community and the government is just there to help. So we have taken it upon ourselves to repair without going to government. There are projects that we normally waited for government to do but today we do it as community effort. We have achieved a lot and in the near future the school will be better. For example, the environment of the school is now beautiful and neat. Broken roofs and chairs are repaired through community efforts. Recently the wind blew off the roof and we replaced it immediately. If we write to the government, it will take a long time to get their response.’

Yakubu and his team are also contributing to increased enrolment. ‘We mobilise the children to get them enrolled and we make sure they attend school on time. We also visit the school to ensure that teachers attend classes. Between 7.30–8.30 am we’ll be at the gate and inspect the register to ascertain attendance.’

‘Our plan is to make public schools more attractive than private schools. I have six private schools near my school and if we can address the problems of the public schools, we’ll get our children back. We have started, but we still have more work to do. We have undergone some mentoring and this has gingered us – we now understand our roles.’

Yakubu is just one of many transformed community members who now advocate for, and support, their local schools as SBMC members. ESSPIN has brought CSO and social mobilisation officers from Kaduna SUBEB together to form a civil society and government partnership. This partnership is developing SBMC members’ skills and providing mentoring and monitoring support. Capacity development includes: understanding roles and responsibilities; child protection and participation; inclusive education; resource mobilisation; financial management; school development planning; relationship management; and advocacy. Significant developments are now happening in Kaduna’s pilot schools.

ESSPIN works in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Enugu and Lagos states to improve teaching and management skills in schools, and the governance of education at federal, state and community level.

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