



ESSPIN Annual Report 2014-15: Building Lasting Change

esspin
Education Sector
Support Programme
in Nigeria



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AESPR	Annual Education Sector Performance Report
APC	All Progressives Congress
ASC	Annual School Census
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
C-EMIS	Community Education Management Information System
CKM	Communications and Knowledge Management
CFR	Consolidated Federal Revenue
CS2	Composite Survey 2, 2014
CSACEFA	Civil Society Action Coalition on Education For All
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEEPEN	Developing Private Education in Nigeria (Lagos)
DFID	Department for International Development, UK government
EDOREN	Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ENGINE	Enhancing Growth In New Enterprises
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
GBP	Great Britain Pounds
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HSSRA	Health, Security and Safety Risk Assessment
IDP	International Development Partner(s)
IMEP	Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project
IQTE	Islamiyya, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education
JCCE	Joint Consultative Committee on Education
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LASCOP	Lagos State Civil Society Partnership
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
MAFITA	DFID Programme on Youth and Skills
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievements
MTSS	Medium Term Sector Strategy
M4D	Mobilising For Development Programme
NCE	National Council on Education
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NEQAP	The National Education Quality Assurance Policy
QA	Quality Assurance
RAG	Red, Amber and Green
SAVI	State Accountability and Voice Initiative

SBMC	School Based Management Committee
SHoA	State House of Assembly
SIP	School Improvement Programme
SLP	State Level Programme
SMO	Social Mobilisation Officer
SMS	Short Message Service
SPARC	State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
SSIT	State School Improvement Team
SSO	School Support Officer
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
TA	Technical Assistance
TDP	Teacher Development Programme
UBE-IF	Universal Basic Education Intervention Fund
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VFM	Value For Money

Introduction

1. This annual report covers ESSPIN's seventh year from August 2014 to July 2015. This year was the first year of a two and a half year contract extension which takes the programme to January 2017. This report summarises the programme's activities throughout the year. It highlights key results and challenges and it finishes by looking ahead to year eight. This report is more concise than previous annual reports, but provides access to the usual depth of reporting through links to fuller reports and papers prepared during the programme year.
2. The general elections were largely heralded as a success. APC won the election and power was passed from PDP's Goodluck Jonathan to APC's Mohammed Buhari peacefully on Democracy Day, 29 May. Programme plans were affected by the rescheduling of elections from February to March. Following the election and the transition period, the programme has been affected by the lack of political appointees in government and corresponding impact on decision-making.
3. The final DFID annual review of the original contract was positive with the programme scoring A+ overall and review team remarking that, "ESSPIN has made good progress against output indicators. Targets have been moderately, and in some cases substantially exceeded". In reviewing progress since 2013, the review found the large scale of school improvement rollout based largely on use of state government resources to be an important indicator of ESSPIN's effect on basic education policy, financing and practice. It also acknowledged the "strong understanding of the value and practice of school improvement" amongst stakeholders, from classroom teachers to Education Commissioners, and considered ESSPIN to have a strong platform for achieving its Outcomes by 2017.
4. The 2014 annual review team made 35 recommendations to the programme. These have included the need for the programme to focus on how the results at outputs level will lead to change at outcome level, to realise ESSPIN's intention to work at Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) level and to reflect on the programme's work through a conflict-sensitive lens. They also suggested a number of changes to the programme logframe including (re-)making output 4 focused on community aspects of school improvement, splitting inclusion indicators between outputs and developing better equity indicators. It noted the need to strengthen the Theory of Change and the monitoring and evaluation framework. It required more qualitative data on ESSPIN's impact on state capacity to be collected to complement the composite surveys and finally required a more robust approach to assessing the extent to which the programme offers good value for money.
5. Results from the second composite survey (CS2) showed some excellent results in terms of improvements in schools, head teachers, teachers, school-based management committees and inclusion. Schools that have been implementing the school improvement programme (SIP) are significantly better than other schools in all states, and it is the poorest pupils whose learning outcomes are benefiting most from ESSPIN's whole school development model. Full technical reports and policy briefs are now available on the ESSPIN website at <http://www.esspin.org/resources/composite-survey-2-reports>.

Building lasting change — ESSPIN’s aims for the extension period

6. During the extension period ESSPIN aims to build lasting change. The programme is doing this through four main pillars:

Developing state capacity

Improving the evidence on school improvement and learning outcomes

Leveraging state resources

Political engagement and broad-based partnerships

7. ESSPIN continues to build the capacity of states and LGEAs to make better use of data; to manage and implement school improvement through local institutions, e.g. State School Improvement Teams (SSITs), School Support Officers (SSOs) and Social Mobilisation Officers (SMOS); to build effective partnerships with civil society organisations; and to improve knowledge management through implementation guides.

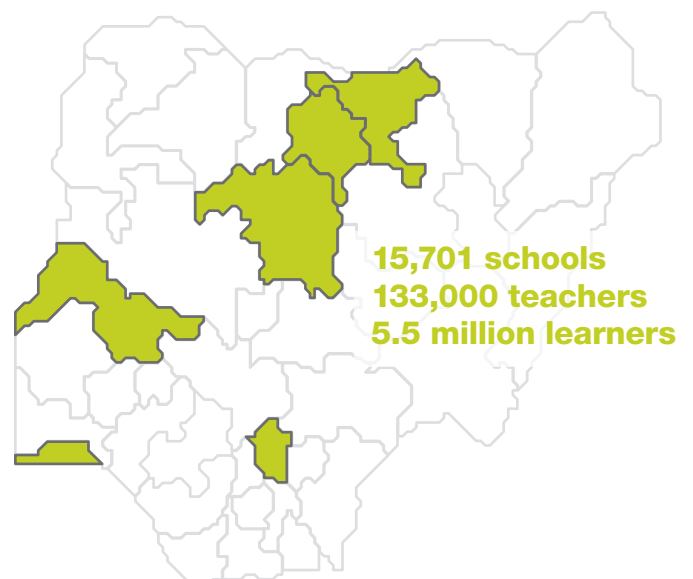
8. Improving the evidence on school improvement and learning outcomes remains imperative. Further evidence on learning outcomes and school quality is generated through Composite Surveys, and key findings and lessons from drilled-down analyses are highlighted. Composite Survey information is complemented by qualitative research and Practice Papers documenting implementation lessons learned by ESSPIN.

9. ESSPIN’s leverage model built on concerted political engagement to secure state government and federal resources for scaling and consolidation of school improvement work remains in force.

10. Political engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including state Governors, Education Commissioners and SUBEB Chairs, legislators, traditional and religious leaders, has grown beyond a risk mitigation measure into an integral aspect of ESSPIN’s delivery model. Partnerships with non-state actors to reach more marginalised children, and with DFID and other development programmes to deepen influence are part of ESSPIN’s modus operandi.

11. In this programme year, ESSPIN continued its work to build lasting change. At the same time the school improvement programme was scaled up to 100% of public primary schools in the six states, using states’ own resources. This demonstrates real commitment from the states to the integrated model which underpins ESSPIN’s technical assistance.

Figure 1: ESSPIN in numbers



A year in transition

12. The programme year coincided with Nigeria's political transition with its associated risks and opportunities. Following generally successful elections, the transition has been slow at both federal and state levels. Federal Ministers are still to be appointed and only four out of the six programme states have appointed Education Commissioners. This lack of sector leadership is resulting in slow or no decision-making regarding funding and implementation of school improvement activities. Achievement of 2014/15 school level targets has been challenging as a result.
13. A gloomy economic outlook for Nigeria in 2015 has not helped an already challenging transition period. A global commodity slump on the eve of the elections accounting for declining oil revenues, a drop in external reserves and deterioration in the value of the Naira has forced the new government to declare a 'budget of transition'. This has entailed spending cuts, increased taxation and a 'bailout' package to enable states to pay salaries. The risks to sustainable funding of basic education reforms remain real: UBEC Intervention Funds may be substantially reduced as oil revenues drop, state budgets may be absorbed by recurrent costs leaving little or nothing for programmes, planned budgets to support school improvement may not be implemented in a timely manner as new governments settle in, and salaries may be delayed or jobs cut where available resources cannot cover personnel costs. In northern states, the risks are compounded by the priority of funding security measures that could lead to diversion of social development funds to security.
14. The programme is mitigating some of these risks through a coordinated post election engagement strategy. Key activities include engagement with and briefing of State Transition Committees, cooperation with DFID to access key influencers and communicate key reform messages, highlighting achievements and challenges to date and, in the cases of Kaduna and Kano, engaging directly with the executive council to review strategies and identify quick and medium term wins.

Improving the evidence on school improvement and learning outcomes

15. ESSPIN has an open approach to learning and evidence. Over the last year 56 documents have been added to the website for public access.

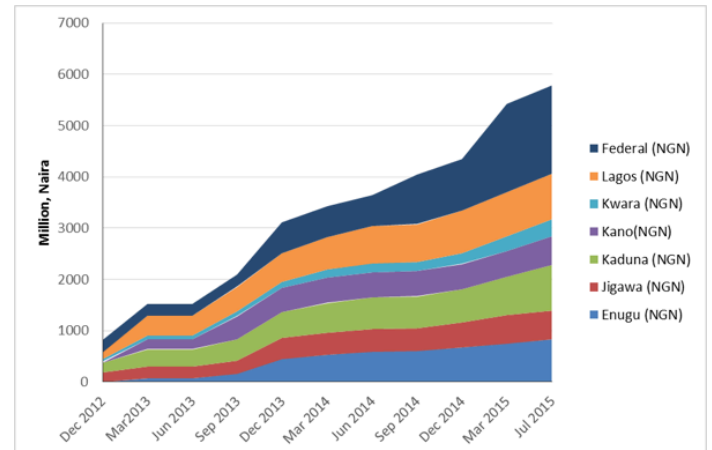
Table 1: Open access web resources

Practice papers	http://www.esspin.org/resources/practice-papers
Community theatre, classroom practice videos	http://www.esspin.org/resources/videos
Composite Survey 2 reports, research summary and policy briefs	http://www.esspin.org/resources/composite-survey-2-reports
Conflict and Education report	http://www.esspin.org/resources/report/362
Lesson plans online	http://www.esspin.org/resources/lesson-plans
Nigeria School Attendance Monitoring System pilot	http://www.nsams.org/
UKFIET conference papers	http://esspin.org/resources/report/388
CIES conference paper	http://esspin.org/resources/report/389
Learning & Evidence Framework	http://esspin.org/resources/report/387
Various consultancy reports (organised by programme and state)	

State funds – a necessity for implementation at scale

16. ESSPIN is now dependent on state funds to implement the programme. State funds have to be available to support the work of School Support Officers (SSOs) and Social Mobilisation Officers (SMOs) at school level as well as other state officials. It also pays for any training that head teachers and teachers received and in some cases supports development of school-based management committee members too.
17. By the end of year 7 ESSPIN had leveraged a total of 5,781m naira (£19.3m) from states towards school improvement activities (see Figure 1. This does not include state expenditure on recurrent costs or capital expenditure. It also does not include contributions made by communities.

Figure 2: Cumulative Financial Resources Leveraged from States and Federal to support School Improvement (Million, Naira)



18. Despite a difficult year, ESSPIN was still able to leverage substantial state funds to support school improvement work. The total was significantly bolstered in 2015 when FME disbursed 20m naira to each state to support quality assurance and school –based management work. In Kano, no funds were leveraged for two quarters which impacted the school level work. In addition, no funds were released to support the IQTE programme. ESSPIN used its own funds to keep the IQTE programme going so that the initiative would not lose momentum and affect the children.

Year 7 LF targets and results

19. ESSPIN has updated its logframe and set new milestones for 2015 and targets for 2016 to reflect 1) the roll out, 2) the advice of the 2014 DFID annual review and 3) the states' and CSOs' revised criteria for targets based on self-assessments. Overall ESSPIN made solid progress against the logframe milestones. The progress is summarised in the 2 below and uses a RAG rating for each of the out come and output indicators by programme and state. Green shows the target was met, Amber shows it was partially met, Red shows it was unmet and Black shows it was not applicable. 78% of targets due have been met (97 out of 125).

Figure 3: Progress against output indicators

Output	1. Federal				2. Institutional capacity										3. School quality				4. Community				
	1.1	1.2a	1.2b	1.2c	2.1S	2.1L	2.2S	2.2 L	2.3s	2.3L	2.4S	2.4L	2.5S	2.5L	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	
Programme	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Enugu	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Jigawa	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kaduna	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kano	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kwara	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lagos	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Key	
●	Met
●	Partially met
●	Unmet
●	Not applicable

Key results

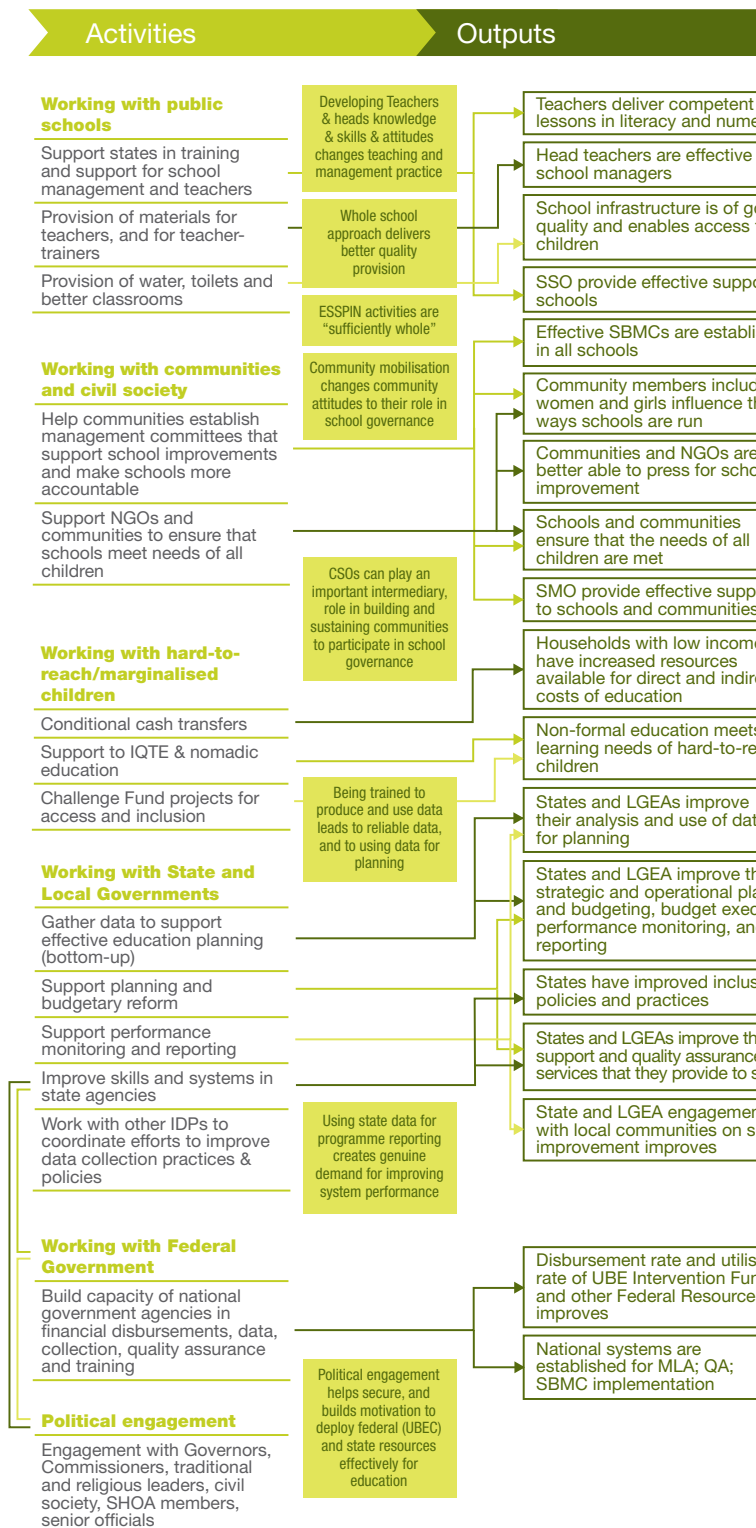
20. ESSPIN has made great progress during the first year of the extension phase, despite a number of challenges. The programme has laid a good foundation for sustainability post-2017. This section highlights some of the key highlights over the past year.
21. ESSPIN's Theory of Change was expanded to include intermediate steps in order to better link programme outputs with outcomes. The intermediate steps include:

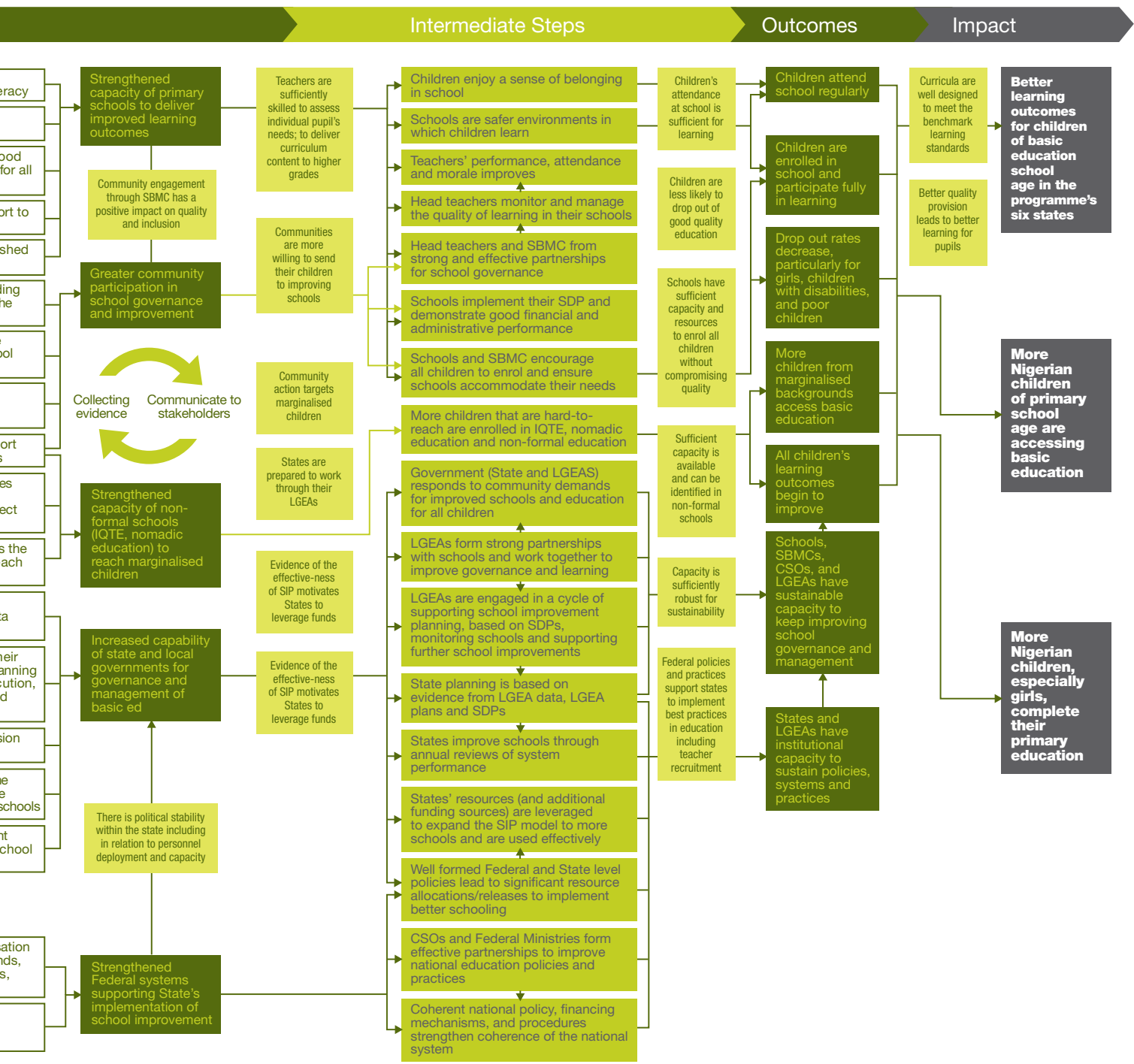
Children enjoy a sense of belonging in school

Head teachers and SBMCs form strong and effective partnerships for school governance

Government (State and LGEAS) responds to community demands for improved schools and education for all children

States' resources (and additional funding sources) are leveraged to expand the SIP model to more schools and are used effectively





1

The 2015/16 ASC will be led and managed by the states, with ESSPIN only providing support if absolutely necessary. The objective is to ensure continued conduct of ASCs and sustenance of the standards achieved beyond ESSPIN.

Developing state capacity - Improving the chances of the so-called data revolution

22. As the last **Annual School Census** scheduled to be supported in the lifespan of ESSPIN, the 2014/15 ASC is particularly important to the programme. A sustainability strategy was therefore developed and deployed¹. The strategy involved:
-
- discontinuation of the use of ESSPIN ASC software and the use of UIS Open Source ASC Software promoted by UNESCO and UNICEF to guarantee continued IDP TA support for ASCs in the states;
-
- ESSPIN-UNICEF collaboration and joint engagement with FME/NEMIS on the use of UIS ASC Software in Nigeria to get government endorsement and buy-in; and
-
- ESSPIN-UNICEF joint training and capacity development of a core team of states' EMIS staff for the use of UIS software.
23. All six ESSPIN states conducted 2014/15 ASC covering all public and private primary and secondary schools and using the questionnaires provided by FME/NEMIS and funding from the states. Enumeration was completed on schedule by the end of March in five states – Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and Kwara. Lagos was slightly delayed, but was able to complete enumeration of over 12,000 private schools for the first time, in addition to its public schools.
24. The **Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) Management Database** was first piloted in five LGEAs in Kwara. This year, ESSPIN rolled out the LGEA database to the remaining LGEAs across Kwara and an additional 16 LGEAs across Enugu, Kaduna, Kwara and Lagos. The database is helping LGEAs to store, manage and analyse their data more easily which will mean they are better able to make decisions to support school improvement. Once the states have selected the LGEAs, facilities are checked, software supplied and then training is provided. Although initial problems were encountered relating to IT literacy at LGEA level, by the end of twenty-three LGEAs were populating the database with information with SSO and SMO reports, school data from the ASC, teacher administrative records, and quality assurance reports.
25. The **Community-Education Management Information System (C-EMIS)** is a community-based approach to improve education planning and resourcing. It uses community knowledge on challenges with education to improve local and higher-level education planning and resource management. ESSPIN first piloted C-EMIS in Kwara in 2013, in early 2015, ESSPIN conducted a second pilot in Jigawa. The data collected highlighted some of the key barriers to education experienced by children, articulated by children, their parents and their teachers in Kwara and Jigawa states. Through C-EMIS, communities also provided estimates on how many children in their locality are not in school.



2

See: ESSPIN quarterly report Jan- March 2015
<http://www.esspin.org/index.php/resources/report/368>

3

<http://www.esspin.org/resources/composite-survey-2-reports>

Tangible support for teachers

26. The **Nigeria School Attendance Monitoring System** (www.nsams.org) was piloted with support from Charlie Goldsmiths Associates in three LGEAs in Kaduna and Lagos.² Teachers sent SMS reports using mobile phones with information on the numbers of pupils attending school each day. The online system allows individual users to generate reports at school, LGEA and national levels. The data from the system could be used by the school, community and LGEAs to identify the reasons for this and work to develop more tailored solutions to increase regular attendance. However, there were some problems encountered during the pilot e.g. not all teachers submitted reports every day which meant that data sets at the school level were incomplete. These issues would need to be resolved in order to make this a robust and meaningful management tool. In year 8, ESSPIN will consider whether such a system could be rolled out more widely and cost-effectively for states.
27. The second composite survey results were released³. In total eight reports were produced, as well as a research summary. Overall the reports paint a dire picture of the education system in Nigeria with low literacy and numeracy learning outcomes for grade 2 and grade 4 learners. It showed stark wealth differences with pupils from the richest 20% of households doing twice as well as those from the poorest 20% of households. Yet, this difference is less pronounced in ESSPIN-supported schools, where poor children's learning outcomes are much higher than other schools. More positively, performance on indicators assessing school quality, teacher competence, head teacher effectiveness and school-based management committees all improved more quickly in ESSPIN-supported schools than other schools. Reports have been shared with some state partners, however large-scale dissemination can not take place until education commissioners and other key stakeholders have been appointed.
28. ESSPIN has continued to support teachers in classrooms with guided lesson plans for literacy and numeracy. This online prezi provides details on the lesson plan development process. In total 357,600 lesson plans were delivered to teachers across the six states.
29. ESSPIN is now designing and delivering customised training based on states' needs and demands identified by reporting data and technical-focused discussions with state officers. Our state partners are now able to evaluate what is happening inside classrooms through lesson observations and data from SSO reports. They are then using this information to make specific requests to ESSPIN for targeted technical support on issues they would like help with. So far the learning team has developed training on dealing with very large classes, positive behaviour management, identifying pupils' learning needs and adapting lesson plans to meet those needs, and effective assessment of pupils at different levels.

Working more closely with LGEAs

30. By July 2014, ESSPIN had provided water supplies to 388 schools, sanitation facilities to 379 schools and classrooms to 32 schools. Since August 2014, the programme's focus has been entirely on maintenance and sustainability of infrastructure using community resources. Systems are in place to attend to breakdowns promptly and effectively. This is working well and is evident by over 95% of the 388 water supplies being fully functional at any one time.



31. In 2014/15 ESSPIN reviewed work with LGEAs to date and developed a four-phase LGEA engagement strategy based on a model of a functioning LGEA and on the ESSPIN underpinning principles of school improvement dependent on strengthening of governance and holistic development. The first phase involves establishing ESSPIN's internal engagement systems (Phase 1), political engagement with SUBEBs and LGEAs (Phase 2), focusing on the school-LGEA interface (Phase 3) and information management (Phase 4). Discussions with states on implementing this strategy are ongoing but affected by the lack of political appointments. As described in paragraph 28, the LGEA database, part of Phase 3, is now in 32 LGEAs across five of our states.

32. For the first time, LGEAs conducted in-depth self-assessments on their institutional capacity. This clearly demonstrates that the process of self-assessment is owned and internalised by the state governments. State officials brought together groups of LGEA representatives to assess themselves using the same criteria as the states. Results of this initial assessment were higher than expected. There are two possible explanations for this. State facilitators may be less strict when scrutinising LGEAs evidence and so give more generous grades. Alternatively, the extent to which institutional reforms at state level had trickled-down to LGEAs may have been underestimated.

33. In the past year, ESSPIN provided capacity development to social mobilisation departments in LGEAs in Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, Kwara and Lagos. LGEAs identified their own capacity gaps and ESSPIN developed bespoke training to support them. The training included areas such as improving interpersonal communications, relationships and team cohesion, performance management and evaluation, time management, monitoring and evaluation, and job descriptions for key offices.

34. ESSPIN has commissioned for the first time an assessment of its capacity building work at state and LGEA level as part of its learning and evidence agenda. The State Capacity study is a joint effort involving ESSPIN, EDOREN, IMEP and DFID

Communities

35. Government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) reached a mutual understanding of partnership and on common procedures for consultation and decision-making in relation to the consolidation fund, disbursement, monitoring and reporting, review, financial procedures and cooperation in the delivery of the consolidation activities. Six Memoranda of Understanding were signed to this effect by ESSPIN, state Government and 57 CSOs. The CSOs are further institutionalising SBMC development under the Department of Social Mobilisation and strengthening civil society and government to continue to partner together to support community engagement in basic education.
36. By the end of the programme year, 11,023 schools had functioning school-based management committees (SBMCs), beating the 2015 target by over 500 schools. According to SBMCs' own records (verification in process), communities mobilised an estimated 202 million naira to improve schools across the six states in 2015.

Improving foundations for better education across Nigeria

37. ESSPIN supported the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to successfully develop two national policies to strengthen national systems for education quality assurance and school-based management (SBM). The National Education Quality Assurance Policy (NEQAP) has been endorsed and approved by the Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) and National Council on Education (NCE). The final draft of the National SBM policy is being prepared for presentation to the next JCCE and NCE sessions for endorsement and approval.
38. ESSPIN supported a ministerial committee on Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) to finalise its draft National MLA framework and submit to the Federal Ministry of Education. The framework summarises the recent history of MLA exercises in Nigeria, considers the appropriate objectives for MLA exercises, analyses how those can best be achieved in the Nigerian context, and concludes with key recommendations for consideration through the stakeholder consultation process.
39. ESSPIN facilitated improved collaboration and working relationships between UBEC and FME through its joint UBEC-FME engagement approach. This has resulted in a roll out of school-based management in the 36 states and FCT, and plans to do same on quality assurance, with sustainable government funding through UBE-IF . From the Teacher Professional Development fund, each state will receive 10m naira per year for SBMC development and 10m naira for quality assurance.

Supporting vulnerable children (Child protection/Inclusion)

40. A conflict and education research conducted in 2014 in Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna highlighted the types of conflict and violence that schools and communities experience, identified key triggers and drivers through the eyes of various stakeholders, including children, and drew recommendations for conflict-sensitive education planning with implications for children, communities and state providers. The report was disseminated and validated by government, civil society and community stakeholders at both federal and state levels. Stakeholders were unanimous in calling for stronger flow of information from community to state to national level, capacity building for government institutions on conflict-sensitive planning, and better coordination amongst institutions responsible for emergency management.
41. In response to the conflict and education report recommendations around mechanisms for reporting conflict and violence in and around schools, ESSPIN supported each state to develop its own state specific reporting and child protection mechanism. Three key actions were common to the states: set up mechanisms for recording instances of abuse and violence experienced by children in schools and communities, provide capacity building for school, LGEA and state personnel, and draft Children's Charters for adoption in schools through SBMCs.
42. The programme year recorded evidence for the first time that the teaching provided to marginalised children in IQTE centres and nomadic community schools was effective. Results indicated how children from non-traditional schools were progressing through primary and transiting to junior secondary schools. These included children from Islamiyya, Tsangaya and Qur'anic Education (IQTE) schools in Kaduna and Kano and nomadic schools in Jigawa. In Kano, 368 children from supported IQTE centres passed the 2014/15 JSS transition examinations. In Kaduna, 10 children from IQTE centres in Kajuru LGA passed and a philanthropic organisation undertook to pay their JSS registration fees. In Jigawa, 7 children from nomadic community-run schools passed the JSS transition examinations. It is the first time that children from IQTE centres in Kaduna and nomadic community schools in Jigawa have been encouraged to sit the JSS transition examinations.
43. Two surveys of out-of-school children were conducted in Jigawa and Enugu with technical assistance from ESSPIN. The reports will provide valuable data for helping the two state governments to better plan and fund specific interventions for marginalised children.



Partnerships for education development

Climate change and resilience

44. The DFID Topic Guide: Education, Climate and Environment includes a case study on ESSPIN's work on climate resilience and sustainability. Mott MacDonald/Cambridge Education sponsored the official DFID launch of this topic guide as part of its value-added key supplier relationship. In addition, ESSPIN is drawing upon the experience of Mott MacDonald's climate resilience team to develop appropriate case studies for primary 5 and 6 lesson plans. These are scheduled to be in schools in year 8.
45. DFID is increasingly interested in developing solar energy capability in developing countries, including Nigeria. Discussions of feasible options and planning are expected to include the Nigeria team in year 8.
46. The programme year witnessed expansion of ESSPIN's network of development partners as old relationships were strengthened and new ones cultivated. The Teacher Development Programme (TDP) and DEEPEN, both colocated with ESSPIN, continued to share business support services and technical approaches, notably around VFM, impact surveys, CKM and political engagement. In addition, ESSPIN and DEEPEN successfully collaborated in Lagos to persuade Lagos State Government to include private schools in the 2014/15 ASC. In Jigawa, ESSPIN and TDP continued to work to common frameworks for teacher training and support, school and classroom delivery, use of lesson plans, and stakeholder coordination, including SUBEB.
47. The productive partnership with UNICEF on ASC planning and implementation is summarised in paragraph 32. In addition, the two organisations have worked with UBEC to harmonise mentoring and monitoring instruments for SBMCs, ensuring that states benefiting from UBEC's national replication of ESSPIN's SBM model utilise common support materials. In Enugu, UNICEF continued to support provision of hand-pumped boreholes in ESSPIN focus schools in three LGAs.
48. ESSPIN continues to closely collaborate with EDOREN through the bi-monthly Education Portfolio Meetings and specific pieces of research. Towards the end of year 7, on behalf of ESSPIN, EDOREN commenced a study to better understand how ESSPIN has built capacity in each of the six states. It focuses on ESSPIN's support given to states to:
 -
Fund and manage basic education;
 -
Improve the quality of basic education;
 -
Improve access to basic education; and
 -
Make the education system more inclusive

49. The study explores the conditions under which ESSPIN's activities have made the greatest contribution to improving performance in these areas, the likely sustainability of the progress made; and, crucially, the routes through which its activities at each level of the education system have filtered down to the school level. The final report is due in November 2015.
50. ESSPIN provided in-depth support to Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano state with their Global Partnership for Education preparations and documentations. The three states, along with Katsina and Sokoto will be beneficiaries of the \$100million GPE Nigeria Partnership Project (NIPEP) for basic education improvement.

Table 2: ESSPIN state partnerships

	Enugu	Jigawa	Kaduna	Kano	Kwara	Lagos
SPARC	MTSS, public governance issues	Public sector reform (MTSS, etc)	MTSS, political engagement	MTSS, budget planning		MTSS and AESPR planning
SAVI	Out-of-school children survey, inclusive education	SHoA advocacy, CSO engagement	Policy & legislation, SHoA, passage of QA Bill	CSO/SHoA engagement		Budget tracking with LASCOP (CSO coalition)
ENGINE			Alternative education, out-of-school girls			
MAFITA			IQTE interest	IQTE interest, security		
M4D		Community mobilisation, gender				
British Council					Teacher training (Life Player)	
Albino Foundation			Inclusive education forum			
CSACEFA		Budget tracking, advocacy			International Days, Advocacy, political engagement	
M4D						

Issues and challenges

52. The outbreak of Ebola proved to be a significant risk to ESSPIN activities through the first quarter of the year, especially following the Federal Government directive that all schools should close from August 2014. Nigerian schools (unlike their unfortunate counterparts in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) reopened in late September 2014 following successful containment of the virus. However, one month of activity was lost due to the outbreak that eventually claimed eight lives from twenty confirmed cases within Nigeria.
53. In addition to the Ebola outbreak, there were two main security challenges through the programme year: insurgency in the north-east and the 2015 general elections. Throughout the year, three states (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) stayed under a State of Emergency with frequent suicide bombings, frequent raids by insurgents and, going into 2015, a growing and more successful military intervention. Unrest, though, was not restricted to these states. Explosions continued to occur throughout the programme year in:
-
 Quarter 1 (August to October) – in Bauchi, Gombe and Kano States
-
 Quarter 2 (November to January 2015) – in Bauchi, Gombe, Niger, Kano and Plateau States
-
 Quarter 3 (February to April) – in Gombe, Kano and Plateau States
-
 Quarter 4 (May to July) – In Gombe, Kaduna, Kano and Plateau States
- To date, a total of 1.4 million children are estimated to have been displaced by the crisis in the north-east and neighbouring countries Cameroon, Chad and Niger⁴.
54. Throughout this unrest, all ESSPIN offices have remained open and TA visits (International and National) have continued to take place to the three ESSPIN northern states with no security incidents reported impacting on the day-to-day ability to work and function in those states. It has however been necessary to revise communications to school communities and LGEAs ahead of school visits by outsiders in many northern areas, to avoid spreading panic caused mistaken identity as polio vaccinators.
55. Although predominantly peaceful, the elections impacted on ESSPIN's ability to deliver in Quarter 3 of the year. Originally scheduled to take place in February 2015, the elections were postponed until late March/early April 2015, requiring workplan activities to be scaled down. Activities were moved around to keep disruption to a minimum through the uncertain period.
56. There was a scale up during the programme year of the range and volume of lesson plans produced by ESSPIN to support teacher training and better delivery of lessons in states. The total contract value of required print orders was above the threshold for programme procurement (100,000 GBP) and so would usually be procured by Crown Agents on DFID's behalf. However, due to the complexity of the print production and supervision process, the limited number of suppliers which meet the standards required, and the scale and complexity of integrating printing and training schedules at state level, outsourcing to an external procurement agent was not feasible in this case. A procurement waiver was, therefore, requested. Unfortunately, there were delays in obtaining the procurement waiver which meant that print completion was delayed and training activities moved forward.
57. DFID introduced a rigorous and mandatory due diligence process applicable to all third-party organisations utilising DFID funds just as ESSPIN was preparing to launch its SBMC consolidation programme which involved disbursement of grants to CSOs. The due diligence exercise resulted in considerable delays in the implementation schedule, which in turn constrained the scope of activities required to deliver planned targets.
58. As indicated in paragraph 9, the political transition in Nigeria occurred alongside an economic downturn linked to a global slump in oil prices. The impact on federal budgets linked to oil revenues, e.g. UBEC's Intervention Funds which is 2% of annual Consolidated Federal Revenue (CFR), was direct and negative. For programmes such as ESSPIN, which rely partly on state government and UBEC resources to keep school improvement work running, this proved an added challenge and risk.

Better value money

Annual spend

59. ESSPIN actively monitors and manages these important risks and others in systematic ways to ensure that its responses remain appropriate in an increasingly fluid risk context.

.....
A Risk Register containing all important programme (logframe) and operational risks is maintained and updated every three months through the Quarterly Report process.

.....
A Health, Security and Safety Risk Assessment (HSSRA) framework is reviewed monthly.

.....
Security briefing collated from live updates from states and other sources is circulated to all staff, consultants and associate programmes weekly.

.....
Weekly meetings are held by state teams to review their risk profiles, identify changes in probability and impact, and (re)plan mitigation.

60. ESSPIN was slightly overspent against its year 7 budget as a result of additional activity in the last quarter of the programme year, reflecting the intensification of effort required to deliver results by the time of the next composite survey. This overspend will be balanced against year 8 and year 9 targets.

61. The breakdown of ESSPIN year 7 spend by output shows output 3 as the largest spend area. This is in line with the ESSPIN extension budget and reflects the impact weighting of outputs in the programme Logframe.

.....
Output 1 spend was higher than planned due to additional but result-oriented work on national QA and SBM policies.

.....
Output 2 spend was higher than planned because states released much lower funding than was required to deliver capacity building activities and ESSPIN compensated so as not to disrupt the annual planning cycle. This was attributable to the uncertainty arising from Nigeria's political transition experienced throughout the programme year.

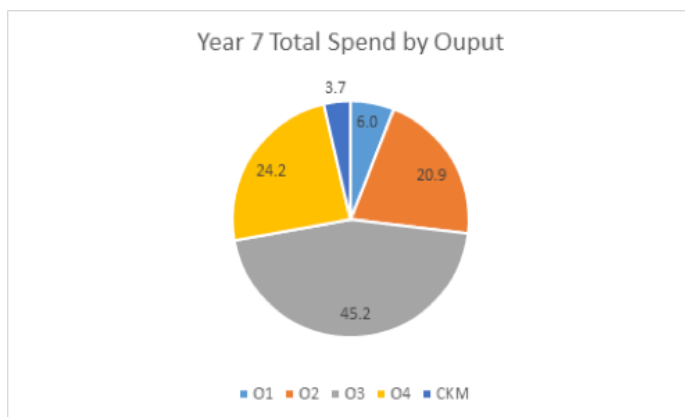
.....
Output 3 spend was lower than planned due to delayed or non-release of state direct costs, attributable to the political transition, failing to release appropriate levels of ESSPIN co-financing.

.....
Output 4 spend was lower than planned due to implementation delays linked to the unforeseen length of time taken up by the due diligence work on grant-receiving CSOs. Delayed state budget releases also played a part.

Table 3: : ESSPIN high level position 2014/15

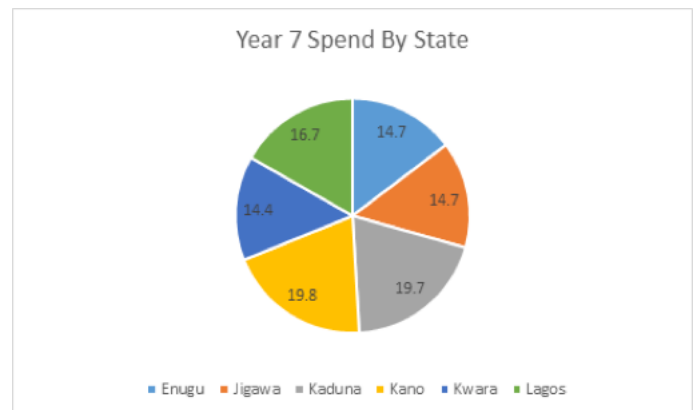
Total Year 7 Budget (Millions)	£12.6
Total Year 7 Spend (Millions)	£12.9
Percentage Spent	102%

Figure 4: ESSPIN spend by output 2014/15



62. The breakdown of ESSPIN year 7 spend by state shows that Kaduna and Kano received the most support. This is in line with DFID’s increased focus on the north, ESSPIN’s differentiated approach to activity funding across states, and the massive scale of the primary schools systems in those two states (over 9,000 schools between them). The level of spend was relatively consistent across the four remaining states.

Figure 5: ESSPIN spend by state 2014/15



63. ESSPIN updated its VFM Strategy in May 2015 to bring it in line with recent DFID guidelines, 2014 Annual Review recommendations, and the ESSPIN Extension Business Case. As a secondary objective, the ESSPIN VFM strategy aims to contribute to the wider discussion on VFM across aid programmes in Nigeria (specifically SLPs), the DFID education portfolio and, more generally, other aid programmes in related contexts. A VFM Self-Assessment was undertaken by the programme in July 2015 to document actual performance against the Strategy. Indicators at the levels of Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Equity and Sustainability were considered broadly on track by ESSPIN’s own internal benchmarking standards.

Effectiveness

64. Unit costs per child benefiting from school improvement and per school improved are two of ESSPIN’s cost effectiveness measures. As programme results increase and the level of delivery is maintained, these unit costs continue to reduce.

65. The leverage of state funding is essential for the sustainability of the programme and despite the political uncertainties for much of the year, ESSPIN has continued to ensure that the amount of DFID funding needed to generate this additional funding has continued to fall.

Figure 6: Cost per child benefiting from school improvement

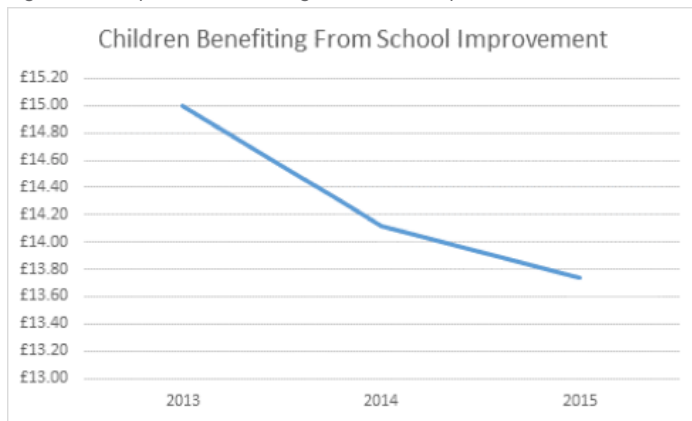


Figure 8: Trend in ratio of DFID to state spend on school improvement

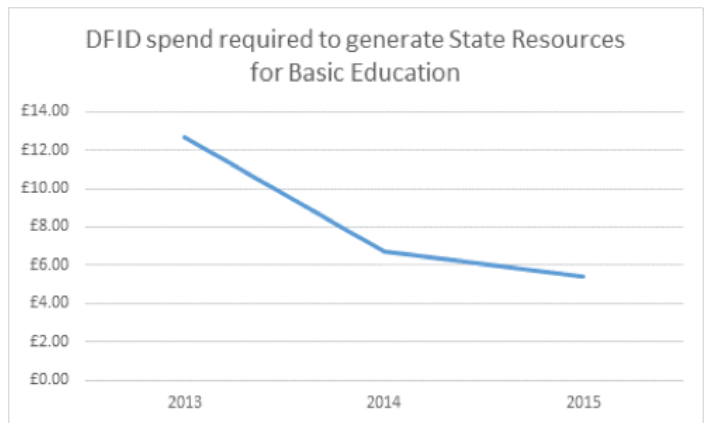
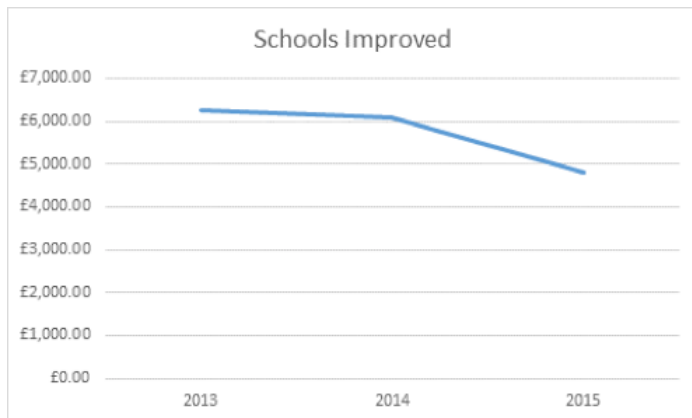


Figure 7: Cost per school improved

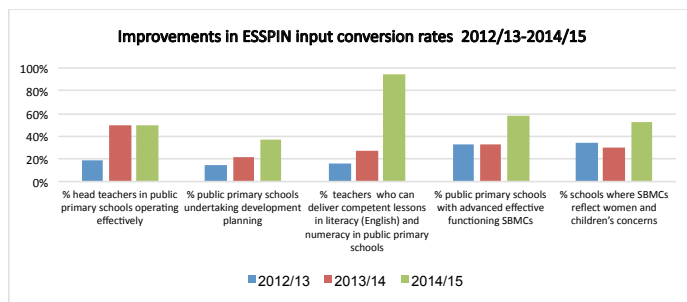


As ESSPIN continues to consolidation and deepen in states, the expectation is that these costs will decrease even further.

Efficiency

66. ESSPIN's VFM approach at the level of efficiency is measuring how well inputs are converted into outputs with a view to improving the conversion rate of inputs to outputs (and inherently the cost per output result). Conversion rates for most of the inputs, four out of the five key SIP indicators in the graph below, have been improved.

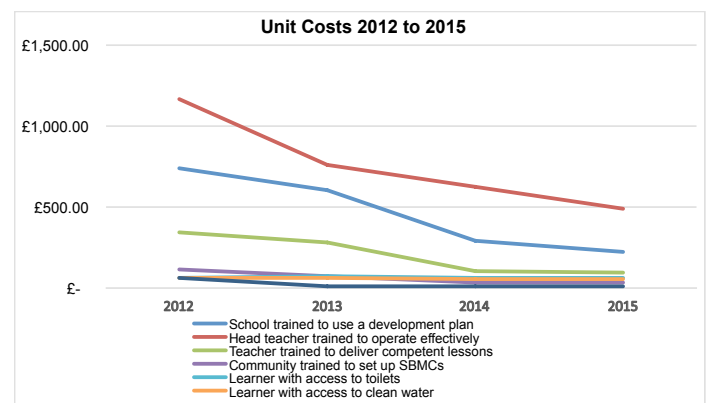
Figure 9: Efficiency trends 2012/13 – 2014/15



Economy

67. ESSPIN tracks unit costs of key cost drivers in the programme through Quarterly Reports. A comparison of unit costs of key cost drivers over time shows a positive downward trend which is likely to continue as ESSPIN further consolidates and deepens the school improvement programme.

Figure 10: Economy unit costs 2012 - 2015



68. Over the course of ESSPIN, there has been consistent decline in the level of international TA usage relative to national TA. This is a deliberate result of systematic transfer of skills and responsibilities to national staff and state partners and this trend is expected to continue as ESSPIN enters its last year.

Figure 11: International and national TA usage

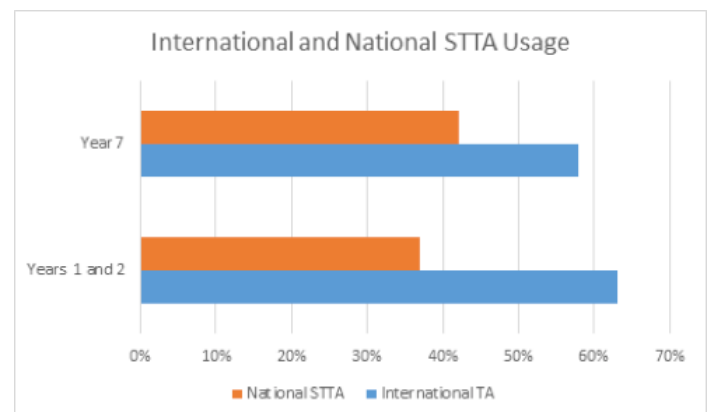
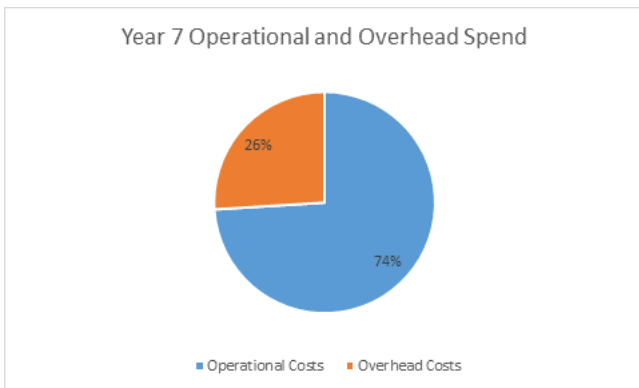


Figure 12: Programme and overheads spend

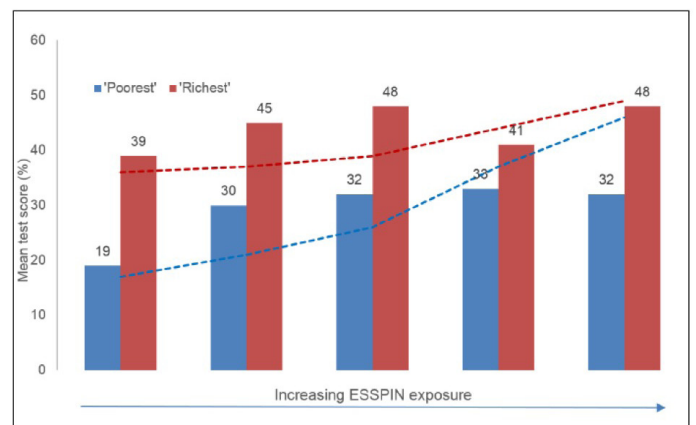


69. This split does not currently reflect the resources leveraged from state governments. Although a total of £12.8m was invoiced to DFID in year 7, the net cost of activities delivered was £17.6m, with an additional £4.8m leveraged from the six state governments. This would return a net programme to overheads ratio of 81% to 19%.

Equity

- 70. The DFID value for money guidance for education programmes recommends monitoring equity through disaggregating logframe results by factors such as gender, wealth quintile, regional and marginalised and vulnerable groups. The Composite Survey 2 Gender Inclusion report⁵ details many of the equity related indicators and summary highlights of equity related indicators from CS2.
- 71. There is evidence that the poorest children are benefiting disproportionately from ESSPIN’s classroom interventions. Treatment schools are associated with smaller wealth disparities than the control ones.

Figure 13: Reduction in effects of wealth inequality on learning outcomes



- 72. Other equity indicators considered by the CS2 Gender Inclusion report include mean test scores by gender and differential in urban-rural test scores. No statistically significant differences were found in test scores of boys and girls in ESSPIN and non-ESSPIN schools, suggesting parity in learning achievement. ESSPIN schools were found to have a smaller differential in rural and urban test scores than non-ESSPIN schools, although the gap even in ESSPIN schools remains significant.

Looking ahead

Education system costs

73. ESSPIN still aspires to capture education system costs as required by its Extension Business Case. However, this is only possible where national and state expenditure data is available in a timely manner and reliable. This is not yet the case. ESSPIN will continue to support improvements in the capacity of states to analyse and report cost and results data through the Annual Education Sector Performance Review process.
74. In line with its post-election engagement strategy with new administrations, the programme will be alive to new policy directions highlighted by newly appointed officials. Officials are still being appointed and two ESSPIN states, Lagos and Kwara, do not yet have Commissioners. APC Governors are expected to require their Commissioners to deliver on the APC campaign manifesto, with universal school feeding being the standout promise. Kaduna state is already working in this direction and is at the stage of detailed costing of a school feeding intervention. DFID is leading on engagement with the Kaduna state Governor but ESSPIN has proactively supported with needs assessment and planning information, including on school feeding. In Kano, the programme decision to reallocate the balance of funding for a girls CCT pilot to a new girls education initiative aligned with the new government's interest in investing in girls education. Implementation is expected to commence early in year 8.
75. Year 8 presents ESSPIN with only one more academic year within which to help states deepen their school improvement programmes and strengthen the foundations for long term sustainability. A Sustainability Plan, currently being developed, will outline plans to strengthen three identified planks of sustainability: resources (financial and human), technical capacity and knowledge management. These planks will be addressed within core workstreams including teacher and head teacher development, SBMC development, IQTE, infrastructure and data management. In addition, project closure plans for all six states will be reviewed on the evidence of results, political commitment and extent of institutionalisation, and DFID's own future priorities in terms of thematic and geographical focus.

76. ESSPIN's year 8 workplan is effectively about consolidation. School improvement interventions will be deepened to further develop the capability of schools to improve. The 2014 Composite Survey found that although learning outcomes were declining across board, there was significant evidence to demonstrate that ESSPIN intervention schools were improving in overall quality. Deepening school improvement measures will give more schools, particularly those that came into the programme only within the last year, the time and support to improve and, with the right level of resources, help to arrest the decline in learning outcomes in the medium term.
77. A number of new initiatives introduced in year 7 and found to be relevant to the needs of states will be kept in the year 8 workplan, although scope of implementation will depend on level of resources available. Such initiatives will include a learning materials pilot based on the use of electronic tablets for teaching and learning, incorporation of climate resilience activities into some existing work, further rollout of the Nigeria School Attendance Monitoring System (NSAMS) initiative, and strengthening of conflict sensitivity and child protection.
78. Finally, the ESSPIN Extension Business Case acknowledges that "Although implementation of the SIP is necessary and essential, on its own it is not sufficient to bring about the intended outcome... Complementary and parallel improvements are needed in the management, oversight and service delivery systems and processes which are being used by the three levels of government"⁶. Composite Survey 2 findings bear this out: while the ESSPIN school improvement programme remains effective to the extent that intervention schools are improving in quality, learning outcomes in states are in overall decline. Indications are that this is at least partially to be expected, due to success in expanding access to many more children, resulting in higher pupil:teacher ratios, as well as success in assisting the poorest and most marginalised children to attend school thereby depressing the average level of attainment. In response, education governance structures need further strengthening at state and local government levels. SUBEBs and LGEAs, specifically, require sustained capacity to provide resources for and support schools facing these stressors. Scaling up the school improvement programme to all schools in all states was an important first step; the even bigger challenge is year-on-year consolidation of improvements in an ever-expanding set of schools that meet the quality standard. This is the core business of government, the basis of lasting change. ESSPIN will continue to ensure that this message stays at the forefront of all reform dialogue.

Email

info@esspin.org

Website

www.esspin.org

Twitter

[@ESSPINUKAID](https://twitter.com/ESSPINUKAID)

Facebook

[esspinukaid](https://www.facebook.com/esspinukaid)

