

ESSPIN is supporting schools to become effective centres of learning at the heart of the community. We are working to improve the way education is managed at all levels of government and to get more and better resources in schools. ESSPIN is helping Nigeria's children to grow.

Background

ESSPIN has consistently supported the Enugu State government in providing quality basic education. This continues to be the key priority of the Enugu State government as it works towards ensuring that the challenges hampering the delivery of quality basic education services to all children are addressed. These challenges include unstable policies, inadequate funding, poorly implemented in-service education for both head teachers and class teachers and absence of a well-coordinated education quality assurance mechanism.

ESSPIN's contribution

Since May 2011, ESSPIN has provided support to the State government and three partner-Christian-missions to implement a School Improvement Programme (SIP) in 496 public primary schools and 184 non-state schools. While ESSPIN provided much of the funding for the implementation of a two-year pilot covering 91 public primary schools in one local government area and 30 missions schools in six local government areas, the state government and the missions are now funding the roll-out of the programme in 405 new public schools in 16 local government areas. This also includes 154 new non-state schools in all the 17 local government areas.

ESSPIN's support to 496 public primary schools and 184 missions' schools continues to impact the way teachers and head teachers do their work as schools are improving in the way children are learning. It has also impacted positively on the work of the State School Improvement Team Members (SSIT), School Support Officers (SSOs) and Quality Assurance (QA) evaluators. 436 local and state government officials including school support officers, social mobilisation officers and quality assurance evaluators have been trained and supported to sustain education reform at school, local government and state levels.

ESSPIN Impact in Schools

Through ESSPIN's technical assistance and direct programme support activities:

2,086 public school teachers and 1,444 non-state school teachers have so far been trained and supported to competently deliver literacy and numeracy lessons.

496 public primary school head teachers and 184 non-state school head teachers have been trained and supported to lead and manage their schools effectively.

40 State School Improvement Team (SSIT) members have had their capacities developed to provide cluster and school-based training and support for class teachers and head teachers.

Mrs. Ngwaka Stella, a Primary 3 teacher at Uwani River primary School, Enugu South, feels great about the School Improvement Programme (SIP) as her pupils now enjoy learning and working together with other pupils she says:

"My lessons are now lively and the pupils participate actively in performing activities from the lesson plan. The use of songs and rhymes has improved their learning skills. This school improvement programme has truly impacted tremendously on my teaching profession. I now know better what child-centered teaching is all about. Before now I used little or no teaching aids in my class. We have been taught the importance of using a variety of teaching aids to enhance learning."

Pupils are not left out in the impact of the SIP. Ebube, a pupil of Uwani River Primary School says he is now happy going to school as the teacher is now friendly and does not use the cane on the pupils again. *"She uses lots of praise and songs in her lessons"*. Ebube added: *"I had difficulty spelling, but with the lesson on phonics, I now like to spell words. I was also afraid of mathematics class, but now, it is interesting attending the class because we now use lots of teaching aids"*.

The impact of the SIP on head teachers has also been rewarding. Mrs. Comfort Ezeoke is the head teacher of Robinson Primary School, Uwani in Enugu South LGA. Her school is one of the 405 SIP roll-out schools. Mrs. Ezeoke reels out some of the benefits of her school's participation in the SIP: *"There is a very big difference between the teachers attending the SIP workshop and those who are not. On my own part, I now observe lessons very well and give supportive feedback to my teachers. I hold professional development meetings. The school now has a functional SBMC that is helping me to manage the school effectively."*



An SSIT member addressing a Head Teacher and members of the school's SBMC.

ESSPIN Impact in Communities

ESSPIN's work with communities is paying off in many ways; part of which is the way parents and other community members are supporting school improvement. For example, the monitoring and mentoring support given to the SBMCs in the 680 ESSPIN supported public and missions schools through the Civil Society Government Partnership (CGP) is encouraging communities to take ownership of their schools. SBMC members are visiting schools routinely to ensure that teachers are in the classrooms and that children are participating in lessons.

SBMC members are also visiting schools to ensure that children are comfortable in their classrooms. In Central School Umuaga, Mr. Ene Elias, a member of the SMBC, observed an alarming noise generated in the pre-primary classes due to congestion and poor ventilation in the old building. He reported that to the SBMC in its next meeting and they resolved to move the children immediately to a new school building which had been under lock and key.

Mobilising resources to meet the needs of schools is another key result of the training and support that SBMCs have received over the years. At St. Peter's Nursery Primary School, Ogbete, Enugu, the SBMC in collaboration with the church raised over N90,000.00 for the support of physically challenged children in the school. In the same school, an SBMC member awarded one term free tuition scholarship to a Primary 1 pupil Chinaza Aro for high academic performance. At St. Jude's Nursery Primary School, 9th Mile, the SBMC partnered with the church to purchase a piece of land at the cost of N1.2m to serve as playground for the school. Following the SBMC's appeal for support to stakeholders in the community, Enugu State Women Organisation International, Georgia, USA, donated sundry school materials such as exercise books, white boards, packets of pencils, pens and textbooks in various subjects to Community Primary School, Amachalla Ngwo.

One other evolving culture that has also helped in community participation is the hosting of SBMC forums both at the LGEA, Zonal and cluster levels. For example all the nine schools in Affa zone have formed a central committee of the SBMCs with officers elected and they meet regularly to report and discuss common issues and concerns from each of their schools. The education secretary of Ugwunye development centre Mrs. Oluka attends some of their meetings to respond to some issues and concerns emanating from schools. This gives communities ample opportunity to score their performance against agreed benchmarks, recognise and honour community members who have contributed to school improvement. The forum also affords communities opportunities to share ideas on how to address the challenges facing their schools as well as give feedback to community stakeholders.



A community theatre session in Udeanu-Enugu

Transforming Classroom Teaching in Obinofia Ndiagu-the story of Chielo Anthony

*“Indeed I have put up a little notice on my wall and it says **ESSPIN facilitates change!** And you do not need to ask me why because ESSPIN has changed everything about my school.”* says Chielo Anthony, the Head Teacher of Community School, Obinofia Ndiagu at Ezeagu LGA.

Chielo is one of the Head Teachers in Enugu who truly know how ESSPIN’s School Improvement Programme (SIP) has impacted on his work. He now works tirelessly to ensure that his teachers follow the instructions from the trainings meticulously in order to achieve desired outcomes.

“It was different how we had always taught in my school. But now, with the child-centred approach, even the teachers can see the changes in the way the children respond to their lessons now”, says Chielo.

ESSPIN is working with Enugu state to ensure that better and functional systems are established both for training and deploying teachers across the whole state. This commitment is driving change all over the state as education management improves and the teaching skills of teachers continue to enjoy a boost through systematic and structured trainings.

This transformation within the education sector which pays extra attention to basic education will not be complete without the dedication of Head Teachers such as Chielo and his colleagues. Pilot schools have been supported with significant resources from the programme but are now not alone as the state government is determined to ensure that all schools in the state benefit from this reform.

“Things are more practical than before and much exciting now. The difference is clear; and we are using concrete objects unlike before. These are the changes that ESSPIN brought and which is why I have said they facilitate change and I have written it and stuck it on the door to my office”, says Chielo with confidence.



Chielo Anthony, a Head Teacher sits at a meeting with an SSIT and SBMC members.