

**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

Years of neglect have left the Nigerian education system in serious disarray. Amongst the many areas where improvements are needed are access for children of all backgrounds to schools capable of delivering basic literacy and numeracy; and quality evaluations of school performance, i.e. realistic assessments of how schools are doing.

On access in the northern states, many Muslim children attend religious-based schools (Islamiyya, Qu'ranic, Tsangaya Education (IQTE)) but many fail to acquire basic literacy and numeracy and thus cannot progress to higher levels of schooling. In Kaduna, the Ministry of Education (MoE) recognizes that many parents want their children to become literate, but want this to happen within a local religious-based school where they know and are comfortable with the teachers, the content and approach.

As for evaluating school performance, Kaduna is to be congratulated on delivering major reforms of the Inspectorate system, now re-titled Quality Assurance. New instruments, methodologies and reporting mechanisms are making QA 'fit-for-purpose'.

## ESSPIN's contribution

Within Quality Assurance, major achievements include unifying the structure of QA so that there is one central authority which manages all school evaluations, whether Primary, Secondary or in the non-formal sector. New, up-to-date instruments for school evaluations have been developed, including a Self-Evaluation Form which Headteachers and their staff use to assess their own progress. This is an important empowering element. A Bill to establish a Quality Assurance Board is awaiting passage in the House of Assembly.

Within IQTE, ESSPIN has worked with the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and 6 partner LGEAs to identify and train volunteer community teachers who will deliver child-centred literacy and numeracy teaching to children in Tsangaya schools in a cluster-based structure. These schools remain in the control of Mallams, which means the schools are strongly embedded in the local cultural environment - a major reassurance to parents.

For Kaduna, transition from Inspection to Quality Assurance is a reality

A world-wide problem with inspection is that teachers see Inspectors as policing schools, only there to criticize and apportion blame. Kaduna recognized the need for reform if the inspection system was to produce meaningful reports which would help improve schools. Amongst the many problems facing the old Kaduna Inspectorate was its fragmented and ineffective organisational set-up with many different Inspection units.

With the support of ESSPIN, the last 3 years have seen great changes. Through a consultative transition process, MoE is leading its Departments, Agencies and Parastatals (Private School Board, Science and Technical School Management Board, Agency for Mass Literacy, Federal Inspectorate Service and SUBEB) towards a unified, efficient and effective Whole School Evaluation system managed by the Kaduna State Quality Assurance Service (KADSEQAS). Improved evaluation, mentoring and feedback processes are in place, including a self-evaluation tool which allows schools to check their own performance, while QA evaluators are now more professional and focused.

The QA process is anchored by KADSEQAS within a clear operational framework, with harmonized work-plans and joint evaluations of schools (Primary, Secondary and non-formal). Evidence of school performance also comes from parents and the community. QA reports, now stored on an open-access customized data-base, provide information to other units within the Ministry, e.g. School Advisory Services, so that support can be targeted to schools most in need of help. The Bill to establish the Kaduna State Quality Assurance Board is awaiting enactment by the House of Assembly. When passed, this will further strengthen QA management and funding.

On the ground, a very positive change is that schools are now eager to welcome external evaluators as they are recognized as making a contribution to school improvement. 250 schools have benefitted from an evaluation using new instruments, while over 150 QA reports, which must be of a high and consistent standard, have been quality assured. Over 500 evaluation manuals, sets of instruments, and a QA operational Guide and Handbook have been printed and distributed.

Recently retired Director, QA, Mrs Asabe Makeri, says: *“KADSEQA now has 250 evaluators carrying out school evaluations. Out of these, we have selected 34 as Master Trainers. Based on our evaluations, we have produced 156 reports that have been written and edited and, through the support of ESSPIN, we have secured a data base management system where reports are stored and available to the public. We have also secured and renovated a room dedicated for this purpose”*.



Members of the Kaduna QA Task Team working on the Kaduna QA Bill, now with the House of Assembly.

## Volunteer Community Teachers deliver literacy & numeracy lessons in IQTE Schools

ESSPIN, together with SUBEB and selected LGEAs, has developed an IQTE intervention model which sees local community based schools, run by Mallams, using volunteer teachers to teach basic literacy and numeracy. This work is bringing hope to disadvantaged children across Kaduna. In the six LGEAs involved, (Makarfi, Kudan, Kajuru, Kachia, Kagarko and Jema'a), approximately 3,150 almajiri boys and 1,320 hard-to-reach girls have already benefited.

The cluster model adopted by ESSPIN is proving effective in dealing with *almajiri* boys, who now stay in the area where they are under the control of their Mallams. This has reduced fears of the boys being taken away and put into dormitories where the Mallams might not be able to reach them.

A key feature of the model is that the schools are embedded within the community. The Mallams and parents are keen for the children to become literate but want this to happen in their local environment where they know who the teachers are and can trust the teaching content. The model is clearly popular - the Mallams are embracing the approach; young men and women are keen to volunteer their services as teachers; and the parents are releasing their children to attend classes. A specific advantage of the approach is that it offers young mothers with a secondary school certificate the chance to be volunteer teachers. This is empowering, offering these women a chance to be active and useful.

A specific success story involves the Gadan Mallam Mamman community in Kachia, where the community set up a committee to see to the integration of their Tsangaya. The community insisted that their female children and, in some cases, their wives be included in the scheme. A community spokesperson quoted the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): *"Educating the girl child is an asset because when you educate a woman, you educate a nation"*. The community has dedicated one block of four classrooms with blackboards and play area as the learning centre, while the village head has provided a store for the school's teaching and learning materials.

To support further roll-out of the scheme, a team of Master Trainers, drawn from School Services and Social Mobilisation Departments of LGEAs where the intervention was piloted, has been formed. These trainers have developed into experienced facilitators and mentors who train volunteer teachers and School Support Officers (SSOs) on basic child-centred methodology and class management.



Girls from Jema'a LGEA learning basic maths in a Tsangaye School. The teacher has undergone training with other volunteer teachers from Kachia, Jema'a and Kagarko LGEAs.

## Case Study – Mr Armaya’u Umar, Senior Social Mobilisation Officer in Makarfi LGEA

Mr Armaya’u Umar has worked in Makarfi LGEA since 1989. He began as a teacher, was promoted to be a Head Teacher, then made a District Education Supervisor and in 2009 he was appointed District Education Officer for Gazara. Following a reorganization of Departments in a corporate planning reform exercise supported by ESSPIN, Mr. Armaya’u Umar was appointed Senior Social Mobilisation Officer in 2011. Well before ESSPIN started its productive partnership with Makarfi LGEA in 2009, Mr. Armaya’u had shown his worth by working hard to promote SBMCs in his area. He proudly recalls one success, *“I was able to persuade the Old Boys in my District to work with the community to support SBMCs. One Old Boy even donated N250,000 of his own money, while I also managed to put in place an arrangement where the Old Boys agreed to pay a small monthly sum to support SBMC activities”*

Since 2011, Mr. Armaya’u has also been closely involved with ESSPIN’s IQTE and general social inclusion work in Makarfi LGEA. He has attended many of the various training programmes and awareness programmes which ESSPIN has delivered, including those related to Whole School Improvement, Head Teacher & Teacher Training.

Makarfi is predominantly a Moslem LGEA, and Mr Armaya’u sees a strong connection between the IQTE pilot work which has been taking place in his District and the issue of out-of-school children. He says:

*“There are many out-of-school children in my area. If, through the training of volunteer community teachers, we can get some of these children into school it will be a good thing. In one community area alone, we know there are more than 500 children not in school but who are keen to attend”.*

Having undergone a Training of Trainers programme, Mr Armaya’u is now actively supporting a roll-out of ESSPIN’s IQTE programme, working with facilitators from Kajuru and Kudan who all participated in the first ESSPIN-led IQTE training cycle. Mr Armaya’u is one of a team of 6 Facilitators who have just led a major 3-week workshop for over 100 new community volunteer teachers from Kachia, Jema’a and Kagarko. Mr Armaya’u says:

*“I am proud of the facilitation work I am now doing with new volunteer teachers. I know they enjoy my sessions. I even believe the work we are doing can help bring crime down – we will give the young men who might otherwise turn to crime something more positive to do in their lives”.*



Mr Armaya’u Umar, Senior Social Mobilisation Officer, Makarfi LGEA.