

**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

Despite years of neglect that have left Nigeria with poor quality public education, there are now indications of Lagos State Government's desire to improve educational services. Efforts are being made to address the problems facing basic education in the state – weak management of education, inadequate implementation of policies, and poor tracking and monitoring of education budgets.

The failure of schools to provide basic opportunities for learning, low teaching standards and inadequate training for teachers are also being looked into.

Similarly, communities are beginning to participate in the governance and improvement of schools. Their involvement had been very minimal with only a few Lagos communities actively involved in demanding for better services and holding government accountable. Now, Lagos communities are beginning to 'own' schools.

## ESSPIN's contribution

ESSPIN has alerted Lagos government to the nature of the problems in the system, and the solutions. The programme adopts an integrated approach which focuses on key elements that work together to deliver quality education rather than tackle problems in isolation.

ESSPIN has helped to restructure and strengthen government institutions and supported them to develop strategies to effectively manage education in the State. ESSPIN has also helped make useful data from teacher and learner assessments and school census available to policy and decision makers.

Support for schools is accompanied by support for communities. This means resourcing selected primary schools to create an effective learning environment for pupils and helping communities to 'own' schools and demand for better services. ESSPIN is promoting community participation in School Based Management Committees (SBMCs).

ESSPIN helped the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to access federal funding, then matched by Lagos state government, to provide an extra 3.6 billion Naira (£15 million) for Lagos schools. This will provide about 800 classrooms, 500 toilets, 50 staff offices, furniture, water and other vital infrastructure to 97 public primary schools.

## ESSPIN Impact in Schools

Pupils are becoming more involved in their learning as a result of the child-centered teaching methods being used by teachers in ESSPIN supported schools. The methods have increased pupil-teacher interaction, made learning more fun, and helped pupils to become more confident and achieve more.

Approximately 40,000 pupils in 35 public primary schools now have access to clean water and improved toilet facilities through their use of 13 toilets and 30 boreholes provided by ESSPIN. Better water and sanitation makes schools more "child friendly" and comfortable places to learn and children spend less time collecting water. And hydrated brains work better! The benefits of clean water and sanitation are generally greater for girls.

Pupils across the state are also adopting the more healthy habits being promoted by the Lagos School Health Clubs – a joint initiative by ESSPIN, PATHS2 and Lagos Government.

There are remarkable increases in school enrolment in many ESSPIN-supported schools, due largely to community mobilisation, infrastructure provision, and the child-centred learning approach. Enrolment at LA Primary School, Iba rose from 581 in 2009/10 to 1,703 in 2010/11 and from 583 in 2009/10 to 830 in 2010/11 at Gbeleyi Primary School.

Government is considering giving money *directly* to schools for minor school projects like repairs and purchases. This recognises the success of ESSPIN's Direct Funding to Schools (DFS) intervention in the 100 pilot schools. For instance, with the DFS a borehole was fixed and six toilets renovated in Oluwole Primary School, Akoka.

All 100 pilot schools are now able to generate a School Development Plan, a necessary tool for prioritizing school needs, doing a school self-evaluation and implementing action plans.

The Quality Assurance (QA) officers, trained by ESSPIN, are ensuring that quality learning is taking place in schools by supporting teachers, rather than critically monitoring and evaluating teachers and school infrastructure.

The majority of primary 4-6 pupils of Ilogbo-Elegba Primary School, Ojo Local Government Education Authority can now read and write, a rather difficult thing for the pupils to do before the SSIT's intervention in the state. ESSPIN is supporting the SSIT.

As a result of inclusive education campaign, an afternoon school programme has been introduced in some schools in Surulere LGEA to cater for children who hitherto are missing from schools.



### Thirst no more

Pupils of Ajenifuja Primary School, Ilupeju, Ikeja drink water from an engine-powered borehole provided by ESSPIN.

## ESSPIN Impact in Communities

ESSPIN encourages and supports the establishment of School-Based Management Committees (SBMC) to engage communities in school governance and improvement. The remarkable impact of SBMC interventions is being felt daily in many Lagos communities.

SBMC members and parents of pupils in Folu Primary School, Ibeju-Lekki LGEA set up a Community People's Police to check loiterers, truants and out-of-school pupils. The school's population increased from 100 to 400 pupils within a session.

In Ojo Local Government Area, SBMC advocacy to the LG Chairman helped to secure two speed boats to provide daily transport for 15 teachers and about 1,000 pupils attending eight primary schools in a riverine area.

The Abijo community set up Children Traffic Officers to help pupils cross the notoriously dangerous Lagos – Epe Expressway and help reduce accidents involving school pupils.

The SBMC of St Kizito's Primary School Ifako Ijaye convinced the CHRIO Foundation, an NGO, to build a 24-hole toilet facility and a water borehole at the school

An NGO provided two classrooms and a head teacher's office to Adeba Primary School, Ibeju Lekki as a result of the SBMC and Parent Forum School Self Help Campaign.

At Odogunyan Junior Secondary School, Ikorudu, where over 400 pupils were learning under trees, the SBMC secured approval from SUBEB and the Ministry of Education for a two-storey building of 17 classrooms. In the meantime, the SBMC mobilised N750,000 to erect a temporary shelter for the pupils.

The SBMC of Community Primary School, Egbe in Alimosho LGEA spoke out on behalf of the school about the poor state of infrastructure. They contacted the Governor of Lagos State who ordered total renovation of the school buildings and the construction of a new block of classrooms.

## ESSPIN Impact on State and LG Institutions

Lagos Ministries, Departments and Agencies in the education sector are now able to develop Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSS) and Departmental Work Plans on their own, having been trained by ESSPIN. The M&E and Education Management Information System units are also now able to monitor MTSS activities and conduct an annual school census with little or no external support.

The current head of SUBEB, supported by ESSPIN, has clamped down on corruption in government contracting and improved the independent monitoring of education spending.

The Lagos State Government is to institutionalise and replicate the State School Improvement Team (SSIT) – a school improvement approach introduced by ESSPIN – as a way of improving teaching and learning in public schools in the State.



Improving school infrastructure  
Construction of new block of classrooms for pupils of Community Primary School, Egbe made possible by the intervention of the school's SBMC

## Case Study – Improving Lagos schools bit by bit

After many years of neglect of the basic education system in Nigeria, there are now increasing efforts by government and various partners to develop and improve the quality of education Nigeria children are receiving. Although the continuing poor state of many schools may suggest that progress is slow, some education players in Lagos State are beginning to see changes and improvement in schools.

*“We have been witnessing some changes in our school lately. They may seem little but they have brought improvement to our school”,* said Mrs S. A. Owolabi, Head Teacher, Ajegunle Primary School, Agege.

Owolabi has been the head teacher of Ajegunle Primary School since 2009. Since then her school has been benefiting from a wide range of school improvement support from ESSPIN through its integrated approach to improving many different components of the school system.

*“I received trainings in school leadership and management sponsored by ESSPIN. These have helped me to plan and manage the school effectively. Teachers in the school have also been trained. Teaching is now child-centred. Teachers talk less now and allow the pupils to do more of the classroom activities. They also teach only subjects they specialise in, not any and every subject”,* said Owolabi.

Indicating other areas where changes are happening, Owolabi added *“Our infrastructure is also improving. We received some funds from ESSPIN which we used to repair two classrooms for 114 pupils. The pupils find the rooms more attractive to learning now”.*

She explained further that the Agege community has started to show interest in the school, an important element of school improvement. For instance, artisans near the school helped with the painting of the two classrooms, other artisans did some repairs, and the Baale of Ajegunle, the community leader, provided a colour television as a learning aid.

*“There are many other challenges in the school – poor security, poor toilet facilities, inadequate classrooms – but at least the school is improving, bit by bit”,* the head teacher concluded.