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Improving Schools, Local Governments and States Through Self Assessment

Practice Paper

Contents

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Education Sector
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Introduction

Self-assessment has been an established procedure for school improvement for many years. The logical framework is now the mainstream approach for planning and managing development interventions. ESSPIN has pioneered a strategy for linking these. It uses self-assessment as an instrument for measuring progress in a development programme, while at the same time motivating those responsible for school improvement at state and local government levels to set targets and review progress in meeting those targets.

One of the main criticisms of the universal logframe is its dependence on pre-determined 'objectively verifiable indicators' and their 'means of verification'. These have to be quantifiably measurable and stakeholders are often not involved in or committed to achieving those quantifiable targets. The approach outlined in this paper tackles these criticisms. It centrally involves stakeholders in measuring their own progress. And it focuses on qualitative improvements that can subsequently be quantified in order to assess year on year changes.

The paper is in two parts. The first part explains how the self-assessment process is organised and its impact on improving educational delivery. The second part focuses on self-assessment as a tool for engaging with local governments and helping them focus on their responsibilities for school improvement.

Self-Assessment Procedures

The starting point is the project or Programme logframe with its Indicators and Sub-Indicators. Instead of searching for quantitative measurements for each sub-indicator, in this ESSPIN approach stakeholders identify the qualitative improvements that can be achieved over an agreed time-frame. The activities needed to bring about those improvements are then specified (they are labelled as "Dimensions" in the ESSPIN system).

Then comes the most challenging element. Each activity is reviewed by stakeholders and Programme teams to establish performance criteria ("status statements"). For each activity, statements are prepared to describe the situations when the criteria are fully met, when they are partially met and when not met at all. For example, in Table 1, the sub-indicator (2.2.2) includes activities (2.2.2.1) that can be assessed as Met, Partially Met, or Not Met.

Below
Literacy: Children attempting to make sentences using flash cards.

Figure 1: Steps in MTSS development

2.2.2	Strengthen financial management systems and procurement processes for efficiency & effectiveness		
2.2.2.1	Support budget tracking and financial reporting		
MET		**PARTIALLY MET**	**NOT MET**
Budgets … are tracked both internally and by external observers using information provided by those organisations and beneficiaries, and the results are available to the public		Budget execution is tracked internally … but the results are not available for external observers	There is no system for tracking budget executions either by Government or by external agencies

The self-assessment procedures are conducted annually, at Federal Government, State and local government (LGEA) levels[1]. At each level, a core team is assembled with expertise in and responsibilities for the work areas covered by each sub-indicator, e.g. planning, human resource management, quality assurance, community involvement etc. The team includes relevant stakeholders from civil society. If possible, it is preferable to use an established group within existing structures, to aid the institutionalisation of self-assessment procedures but the key requirement is for comprehensive coverage of every area being assessed.

A key feature of the ESSPIN self-assessments is that the procedures bring multiple groups together – several Federal agencies, multiple State groups, teams from numerous local authorities. These act as critical friends during the self-assessment workshops, and also share ideas and approaches. Typically, the first stage of a self-assessment workshop will bring together specialists from several States e.g. planners or QA specialists, who will demonstrate their own progress with evidence.

That evidence will be examined critically by fellow specialists, who then (with help from a facilitator) will determine whether the performance criteria have been fully, partially or not met. The production of evidence is crucial to the process. Pre-workshop reviews by participants of the procedures are useful in that they can identify the evidence that must be brought to the self-assessment workshop.

A useful second stage in the procedures is to bring the provisional ratings to a group comprising each individual unit (Federal agency, state or LGEA). The specialists then present their ratings to colleagues who are not specialists but 'users' or beneficiaries of the planning, finance or personnel management sections.
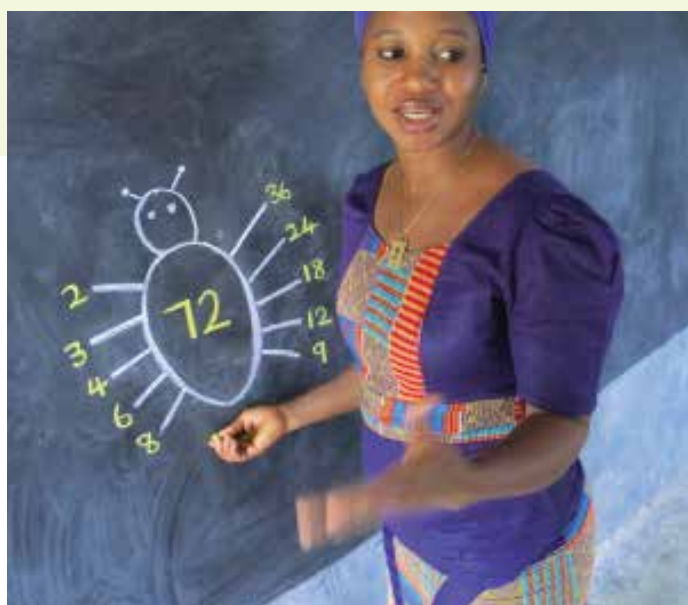
[1] In Nigeria, local government education authorities (LGEAs) are responsible for basic education, subsidiary to State Government agencies (SUBEBs – State Universal Basic Education Boards).

Self-Assessment Challenges

They reflect on the evidence and ratings and if necessary adjust the latter in the light of their experience – again using evidence. In the age of the smartphone, additional evidence can be instantly sent to the workshop as required.

In order to measure changes from previous years – or to set baselines – the qualitative ratings need to be quantified. A simple scoring system is used: 2 points for each 'fully met'; one point for a 'partially met' and no points for 'not met'. Aggregated scores for each sub-indicator can then be determined and comparisons made with previous years, with other agencies (states, LGEAs etc.) and between the sections within each agency – e.g. the score as a percentage of the possible maximum score for the Planning department in comparison with Human Resources or Quality Assurance sections.

A draft report for each state or Federal agency is then prepared, using the workshop ratings and evidence. The report is reviewed by participants and amendments proposed (using evidence) for inclusion in a final report. The results of the assessment are then used by State, Federal and local government agencies, along with the Programme teams, to identify priorities for forward planning purposes and to provide a baseline against which improvements (or otherwise) can be evaluated at a later date.

Below
Learning is taking place: Children practice during a question and answer session in class.

The priority for every development programme is to ensure that its work is sustainable. This in part can be achieved by the institutionalisation of operative and effective systems that make use of the components developed and supported over the programme's lifetime. Self-assessment is one such component. A key test of sustainability has been the extent to which the State Government agencies have been able to extend the self-assessment procedures to local governments. The LGEA self-assessments conducted in 2015 were conducted by their SUBEBs, albeit with ESSPIN support. But only one state took on responsibility for the whole process, including writing the final self-assessment report. By 2017, all states will need the skills and motivation to take on these responsibilities.

The Problem with Local Government

A related challenge is to maintain the focus of self-assessment on school improvement. The day-to-day responsibilities of senior officers at federal, state and local government agencies can be distant from the problems faced by schools. Self-assessment provides an opportunity to re-focus on those problems. However, the overall impression from the self-assessment workshops is that the urgent replaces the important and that federal, state and LGEA sections tend to operate as separate 'silos', with insufficient coordination & synergy between the various components and no obvious focus on school improvement.

In some ways, the very success of a development programme can obscure the central purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Federal and state government sections and officers have improved their efficiency, using a number of new instruments and practices, now being extended to local governments. Large amounts of reports and other documents are now being produced – but their impact will remain small until the key policy and decision makers can use summary reports with action points that they can digest. This is now a priority if the efforts being made to prepare such a large volume of documentation are not to be wasted.

The local education authorities are the Cinderellas of the education system in many countries (including UK). They are under-resourced, blamed for most of the problems of the schools and the system and burdened with responsibilities without the powers to tackle them. The Nigerian LGEAs are extreme examples of this. Limited resources, low morale and confused responsibilities between education and local government agencies all contribute to a strong sense of disenchantment.

They were established only ten years ago and never given the resources and powers envisaged in their original mandates. In particular, the functions of paying salaries, allowances & benefits to all teaching & non-teaching staff and acquiring and distributing materials & equipment to all public primary and JS schools have not been delegated in most states.
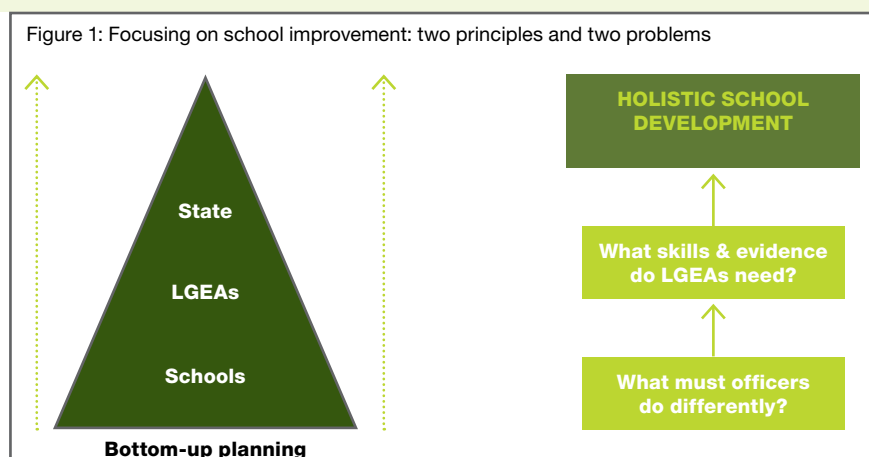
Left
With trained teachers, learning is fun for children.

The functioning LGEA

LGEAs occupy a Janus-like position in the education system, working as agents for the States but at the same time representing their schools and communities. The self-assessment procedures for LGEAs in 2015 identified problems in delivering both of these responsibilities. As agents of the States, the LGEA officers have neither the skills nor the resources to deliver State services locally. The technical capacity of LGEA officers to develop, implement and monitor State policies needs to be enhanced.

In representing their schools and communities, LGEA staff lack the communication systems and planning skills that can, for example aggregate and analyse school improvement plans in order to locate specific problems and meet generic needs. In consequence, as demonstrated through self-assessment, staff lack both the capacity and the motivation to undertake the key functions summarised in Figure 1 – conveying school needs to the state and promoting holistic school improvement. Most LGEAs at present have neither the resources nor the capabilities to undertake their responsibilities in ways that impact significantly on school improvement. There is a general consensus that the LGEA officers do not have the competences needed to manage the variety of tasks required for these systems to operate effectively and to focus on school improvement.

A model or vision of a functioning LGEA offers a starting point, through which the drivers of the school improvement programme are managed and coordinated. The vision builds on the 'fully met' performance criteria in the LGEA self-assessment procedures. It brings these elements together in order to focus on the LGEA as the central delivery point for school improvement in each state.

Figure 1: Focusing on school improvement: two principles and two problems

State

LGEAs

Schools

Bottom-up planning

HOLISTIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

What skills & evidence do LGEAs need?

What must officers do differently?

The LGEA office will be staffed with competent, trained specialists and managers and equipped with sufficient computers, a generator, internet access and transport for visiting schools. In the Social Mobilisation and School Services sections, SMOs and SSOs will regularly visit schools on an agreed visits cycle using available transport, and will undertake the support, training and monitoring tasks for which they have been trained. They will employ the instruments and techniques developed by their SSIT and relevant SUBEB department.

Staff from the Quality Assurance (QA) section will visit schools to review and report on the effectiveness of the school improvement programme according to an agreed visits cycle, using available transport. The QA team will also review the effectiveness of the LGEA itself, with the support of SUBEB QA staff and report of ways in which the LGEA can operate more efficiently and effectively.

SSO, SMO and QA reports will be completed on time and in the specified format and passed to their section heads and the PRS Section. These will comprise reports on individual school and SBMC visits and regular school cluster reports. The ASU and PRS section will examine those reports, enter them into the LGEA database, look for trends and aggregate the findings according to a prescribed system, using the database. At the appropriate time of year, the SSOs and SMOs will support SBMCs and head teachers in preparing their school development plans. Those plans, as well as indicating the main internal school activities for the next year, will highlight three or four key needs to be met by the LGEA – they will constitute a bid for resources and support.

In line with the annual planning cycle, the Education Secreatry (ES) with her section heads will prepare the annual LGEA action plan, using the M&E analyses of the database and related information including QA reports. The plan will draw upon the annual census data specific to the LGEA, the SUBEB comparative analysis of LGEAs and the annual, institutionalised LGEA and SUBEB self-assessment processes, so that distinctive features and specific needs of each specific LGEA can be identified. The plan will also make use of the M&E Unit's aggregation of school development plans from every school and will be informed by the requirements of the SUBEB and the forthcoming year's priorities as specified in the SUBEB strategic plan and the MTSS. The plan will also include the LGEA's own human resource development needs including training and mentoring, along with the support activities needed to help schools implement their own development plans. The Finance section will cost the action plan and submit the costings to SUBEB.

After the state budget has been published and the SUBEB informs each LGEA about its budget allocations for the new financial year, the ES and section heads will prepare sectional work plans. These will specify the activities by month or quarter for each section and the resources required to deliver the work plans. Regular meetings between ES and section heads will monitor the progress of the sectional work plans and report as necessary to SUBEB on progress and requirements. Section heads will hold regular meetings (at least monthly) with their staff to receive reports from section staff and review the extent to which the work plan is being delivered. The section work plans will include the acquisition (normally from SUBEB) and distribution of materials & equipment to all schools for which the LGEA is responsible, a process to be monitored by the QA section.

The ES will meet regularly with the other LGEA ES's and the SUBEB Executive Chairman. These meetings will help to identify issues affecting all LGEAs and those specific to single or a small number of LGEAs, requiring remedial action by SUBEB. The ES will also meet regularly with the Local Government Chairman and Council members. The LGEA plan will be shared with the LGC and the LGC invited to contribute to achieving the plan, through specific grants and/ or a regular stipend. The LGEA will have identified potential philanthropists, NGOs and CSOs, with whom the ES and section heads will meet to identify priority activities within the LGEA plan that these individuals and organisations might wish to support. The LGEA will also report regularly to donors on progress in delivering the plan and specifically on the areas supported by those donors. Transparent budget tracking activities, undertaken with the help of trained CSOs, will inform the public on the resources available to the LGEA and the uses made of them.

Engaging with LGEAs

Throughout the year, all LGEA staff will benefit from training and other forms of professional development according to personal PDPs agreed at the annual performance review and appraisal. The training will focus on the contributions that individuals make towards school improvement but will include office management, report writing, IT and communication skills as necessary. The LGEA HR section will have responsibility for managing the professional development programme, along with the recruitment, promotion, disciplinary and redundancy procedures according to merit and as specified within the LGEA mandate. SUBEB will exercise its personnel management responsibilities transparently and appoint teachers, officers and Education Secretaries according to clear criteria. The LGEA will take on full responsibilities from SUBEB for all mandated activities stated in the State Universal Basic Education Act. This will include the provision of housing and related allowances as incentives where the recruitment of high quality staff presents major problems.

This vision of a functioning LGEA is a long way from current realities and presents a major challenge to all those seeking to improve basic education in Nigeria. The ways in which development partners and the Nigerian Government agencies can contribute to achieving this vision are considered in the next section.

The self-assessment exercises conducted by States with ESSPIN support in 2015 identified some issues specific to individual States and to particular groups of LGEAs. However, the overall impression was of generic needs that can and should be addressed by specific engagement strategies. The central objective of these strategies should be to enable LGEAs through their officers to impact on the quality of education in their schools, to improve access to schools and inclusion of all excluded groups, and to do so in ways that are sustainable through institutionalised resource provision policies, encompassing finance, personnel, policies & processes.

Right
Demonstrating talents: Children take turns to solve academic problems in class.
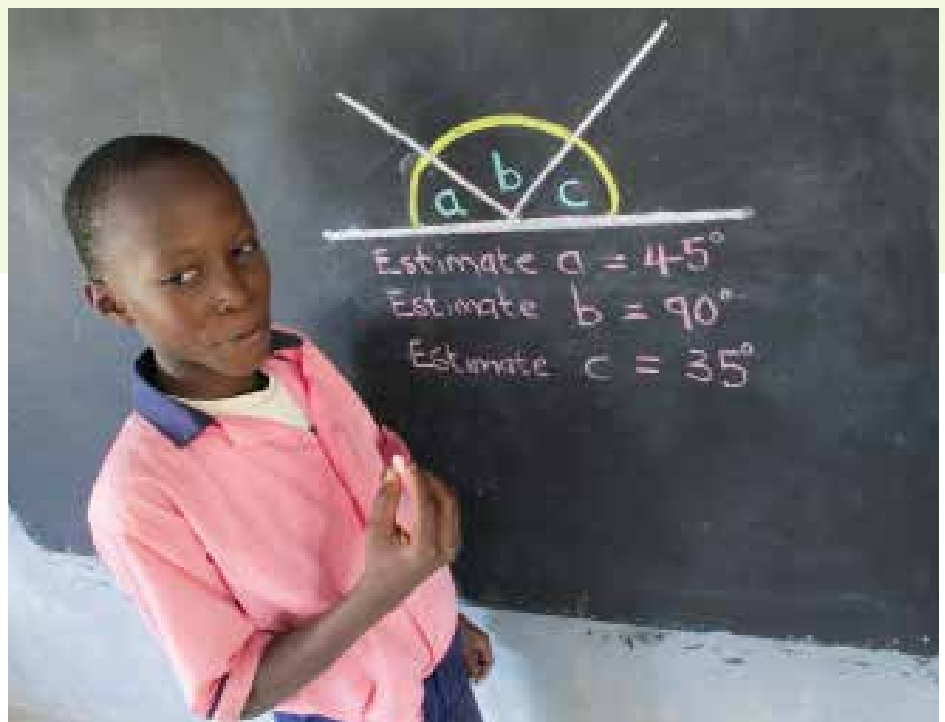
They can be summarised under four headings:

Capacity building: a high priority across all LGEAs. The components of a capacity-building initiative are considered below but capacity-building needs to go alongside reforms in at least three other LGEA operational areas. They are:

Systems & structures: whether the internal operation of LGEA offices is fit for purpose and has the resources needed to reach minimum operational standards.

Communications: reporting mechanisms within LGEA offices, the flow of information to and from schools and state-level institutions, coordinated initiatives across LGEAs and communications between LGEAs and their local communities and other stakeholders.

Information and Data Management: the aggregation of school-based information from school development plans (SDPs), LGEA officer reports and the analysis of that information to identify priorities and build them into an LGEA Action Plan.

Each is considered in turn:

Capacity-Building:

Table 2 summaries some of the key skills needed by LGEA sections. A first step is a clarification of the roles, responsibilities and job descriptions across LGEAs, as part of HRD reforms, backed by a performance appraisal system.

This should be accompanied by a clear recognition of the skills needed to fulfil those responsibilities and low-cost/ no-cost strategies for enhancing those skills and enabling LGEA officers to tackle their daily challenges more purposefully and confidently. For this to happen, any support for LGEAs must be based on some understanding of the daily pressures facing those working in the LGEAs, as they are asked to sharpen their focus on school improvement.

Table 2: Skills development needs in LGEAs

PRS & QA	SS & SM	HR & Finance	ES & Section heads
Data collection & analysis	Report-writing	Budget tracking	Office management skills
Report writing	Mentoring skills	Budgeting & forecasting	Report writing
Interviewing skills	Communications skills	Personnel management	Communications skills
	Classroom observation skills	Performance appraisal	Leadership/ governance
	Interviewing skills		Managing meetings
			Performance appraisal

To that end, capacity building for LGEAs should be about much more than skill development. The everyday work of an LGEA officer is currently shaped not by school improvement concerns but by administrative requirements. Sensitisation to the central importance of working in the LGEA in order to improve schools and benefit children should underpin all LGEA training. Only in this way will LGEA offices develop the commitment to school improvement that is essential if standards of teaching and learning are to be raised. This involves dissemination of good practices across and between states and a clearer understanding of the ways that the LGEA sections collectively contribute to school improvement.

A key objective is sustainability, so that State and other trainers can continue with the LGEA capacity-building programme after the development programme finishes. Underpinning all of these developments is the need to address the problems arising from decades of demotivation and non-recognition across LGEAs. Attitudinal changes are essential if the proposed reforms are to succeed. Long-term strategies are needed to raise the morale and enhance the motivation of LGEA officers, so that that can perceive their value in improving the quality of teaching and learning across Nigeria's schools. These strategies are considered in more detail below under Communications.

Systems & Structures

LGEA operating systems will come under pressure as they take on duties more directly focused on school improvement. Central to 2015 self-assessment findings is the recognition that LGEA capacity must be strengthened so that the LGEAs can provide the necessary support for their schools. Schools are now supported (or at least visited) by SSOs, SMOs and QA evaluators. Their efforts do not as yet seem to impact on providing the necessary resources (human, material and financial) that schools need. And this can in part be explained by the inability of LGEAs to capture the reports from school visitors in ways that enable them to digest the main issues and identify key priorities.

Right
Excited at school:
Children learn in clusters for greater understanding.

Support will be needed to help LGEAs rationalise work processes, set priorities and allocate resources. The reports from the officers, inspectors and evaluators who visit schools are central components of LGEA management systems. In rationalising the work of these officers, systems of quality assurance should be applied to the review of the various reports received by LGEAs. The aim should be that LGEAs have the capacity to review, aggregate and analyse reports using standard formats.

The reports should draw attention to issues currently neglected, or lying outside the mandate of individual LGEA sections but identified through the self-assessment exercises. One such is child protection – a clear LGEA concern requiring LGEA initiatives within the framework of a state-wide policy. A holistic approach will help LGEAs to tackle issues of access and equity through the implementation of child protection strategies – and LGEAs are likely to need initial support from ESSPIN in achieving this. This relates closely to another LGEA requirement – the application (and establishment if needs be) of a clear and operative code of conduct for teachers and administrators.

Communications

Communications with and between LGEA staff need to emphasise the central importance of their organisations in improving basic education, providing motivation and a sense of responsibility that extends beyond basic administrative requirements.

At the most basic level, a communications strategy will enable LGEA staff to know what their colleagues are doing, why they are doing it, and what the expected outcomes will be. Simple low or no-cost initiatives such as regular staff meetings, newsletters and reward systems – posted congratulations and 'employee of the week' techniques can have a strong impact where they never previously existed.

Left
Time to demonstrate understanding: Teachers allow pupils to confirm their understanding of the subject matter.

Mechanisms for communicating and sharing 'good practice' both within the LGEA office and working with schools are further motivators – a clear responsibility for the Education Secretary, although a specialist communications function may need to be established if not already there.

Externally, LGEAs need to communicate their new vitality and importance in raising school standards to a wide range of stakeholders. Some of this will target potential resource providers such as Local Government Councils, explaining how they can offer much more to their children through LGEAs in addition to paying some salaries.

Good communications with SUBEB and other agencies is essential if LGEAs are to fulfil their mandates. Communications with communities and CSOs can spell out how partnerships with them can enrich education and benefit local children, both within school and those currently out-of-school.

Information Management: Data for school improvement

LGEAs occupy a hub position in both relaying needs from schools to SUBEBs and conveying to schools the directives and priorities set at state and Federal levels. LGEAs at present have neither the resources nor the capabilities to undertake these responsibilities in ways that impact significantly on school improvement.

One need is for an Education Management Database (currently being prepared by ESSPIN). The data generated by the annual school census can and should be combined and correlated with reports from LGEA officers including QA reports and information from schools and communities, The purpose of all this data is school improvement – an objective that can easily get lost with the plethora of information. They feed into LGEA planning which not only must shape SUBEB planning but also impacts on the LGEA activities and policies that affect schools, as indicated (albeit partially) in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Planning for school improvement at LGEA level
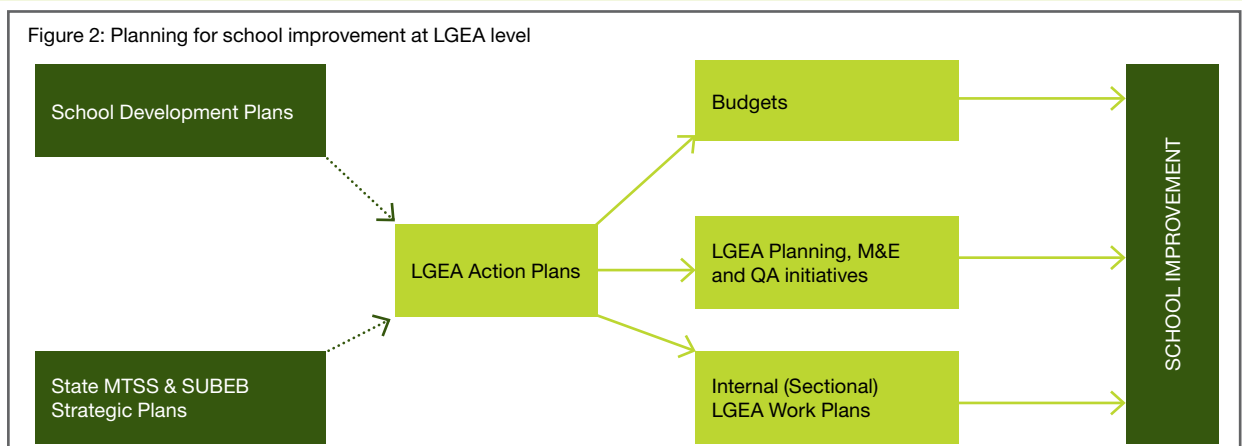
Improving Nigeria's Schools – Some Ways Forward

One important but problematic form of information is data on out-of-school children and excluded groups. Techniques pioneered by ESSPIN such as C-EMIS should be supported in order to identify more clearly those not benefitting from basic education, so that strategies to improve access and equity can be based on solid evidence.

An immediate priority should, therefore, be to develop and enhance the skills needed to generate, aggregate and analyse incoming data, and to use that data for the preparation of costed LGEA action plans. Given the volume of data reaching LGEAs, a review of the relative significance of that data, setting priorities and proposing sampling strategies is needed. Standard summary formats for QA, SSO & SMO reports and school development plans would assist the aggregation process and ensure that they did not duplicate each other – and that the information collected was directly related to school improvement.

The approach to self-assessment at Federal, State and Local Government levels outlined in this paper is one of a portfolio of strategies that can be incorporated into a comprehensive and nationwide school improvement policy. Although it is no panacea on its own, its value is that it draws attention to the deficiencies of system governance and management at the three levels responsible for the public school system.

School improvements at the school level are necessary but not sufficient. They need to be accompanied by parallel strengthening of the governance system at State, Local Government and Federal levels. And self-assessment involves the key players at each level in a direct and hands-on analysis of the problems, needs and necessary improvements.

The focus in this paper on the local government level demonstrates what can and should be achieved there. A more detailed analysis would draw on the lessons of self-assessment at State and Federal levels. This final section attempts to link the three levels by pointing to steps that will integrate more effectively the efforts at each level.

Working with SUBEBs

The approach advocated for holistic LGEA improvement calls for an equivalent State response. LGEAs are constitutionally and organisationally an integral part of the SUBEB. Any engagement strategy for LGEAs must, therefore, also involve close consultation with the relevant SUBEB.

An initial message is that, by not permitting LGEAs to fulfil their mandates, SUBEBs are missing opportunities to enhance their impact on school improvement. Work with SUBEBs should, therefore, focus on promoting areas of devolution to LGEAs that will improve the quality of information needed by SUBEB to develop school improvement strategies. The State agencies (SUBEB, Ministry of Education etc.) should establish and operate cross-Departmental support teams to work with LGEAs as trainers, mentors and consultants

This could be supported by reviewing the operational effectiveness of SUBEB departments while SUBEBs establishing or updating their strategic plans. SUBEB-LGEA linkages would be improved by institutionalising current ad hoc working and reporting arrangements. This could include:

the internal review of LGEA work on a regular basis by SUBEB Directors collectively;

the requirement that SUBEB departmental work plans specify the working arrangements with the relevant LGEA section; and

the establishment of more formal feedback mechanisms than currently exist for SUBEBs to review and act upon LGEA action plans, and to respond more systematically to the many challenges raised by LGEAs for SUBEBs to deal with.

Left
What time is it?
Pupils in primary 4 are expected to tell time understandably using 'quarter to' and 'quarter past'.

Working with Development Partners

A major and initial contribution to school improvement by Development Partners would be the introduction and support for establishing self-assessment procedures at each relevant government level. Guidelines, instruments and templates for this are available from ESSPIN.

A matrix that stakeholders and development partners can use together to promote LGEA engagement is demonstrated in Table 3. In this case the checklist takes three development priorities – quality, access & equity and sustainability. For each of these, strategies are proposed at three levels – technical, managerial and political. The activities required to deliver these initiatives then form Dimensions in a self-assessment framework. Each Dimension can then be examined in depth by stakeholders to establish the status statements for each Dimension that will inform them whether the performance criteria are met, partially met or not met.

When the performance criteria are quantified, year-on-year progress can be assessed both horizontally and vertically. The approach also identifies those who have responsibilities for achieving improvements in each cell of the matrix.

Table 3: A checklist of initiatives for LGEA improvement

	Technical	Managerial	Political
Quality	Identify and promote no-cost/ low-cost quality improvements Streamline work of QA evaluators	Develop & apply LGEA self-assessment framework Support SUBEBs in using M&E-based feedback from LGEAs	Develop ISD-type school quality index by LGEA Cluster LGEAs with similar needs & provide needs-focused support from SUBEB & ESSPIN
Access & Equity	Strengthen M&E functions in LGEAs for ASC & other reports analysis SDPs, SSO & SMO reports to include school resource data/estimates. Support LGEA staff to identify children's needs within and outside schools Support & respond to out-of–school surveys & identification of out-of-school children	Identify & support LGEA officers with designated access & equity responsibilities & provide job descriptions	Develop strategies for low-performing LGEAs Strengthen state committees on inclusive education to impact on LGEA actions Develop child protection policies
Sustainability	Build office management skills	Review LGEA management systems & working arrangements Identify ways for streamlining & institutionalising management changes Streamline school visits & reporting systems	SUBEBs to allow LGEAs to fulfil mandates SUBEBs to resource LGEAs by need and monitor LGEA resource management Support LGEAs in resource generation & effective utilisation strategies

Integration

Improved working relationships between SUBEBs and LGEAs are just one example of the need for more effective integration across the whole education system, including Federal-State linkages

Three forms of integration are needed:

Internal integration, so that the separate components of a system are ready in time and of a standard to enable the subsequent components to function – as in the annual planning cycle when budgets must be approved in time for expenditure to take place early in a new financial year. LGEAs need to be able to integrate the many sources of information reaching them in order to deliver the required services to schools and SBMCs.

Horizontal integration requires that the cross-institutional linkages within and between systems operate effectively, so that the Sections and Departments within LGEAs and SUBEB work together. At State level, self-assessment has pointed to areas where the PRS, School Services and Social Mobilisation Departments in the past have inhibited such integration and should work more closely together. At Federal level, self-assessments have highlighted the need for the Federal Ministry of Education's departments to work more closely with UBEC.

Vertical integration involves a seamless focus on school improvement at each level in the system – Federal, (UBEC & Ministry), state (SUBEB and Ministry of Education), local (LGEA and LGC) and schools/ communities (including SBMCs). The efficient and effective delivery of LGEA functions is crucial for such integration. One challenge is to achieve integrated bottom-up planning, so that school needs, prioritised in school development plans, are aggregated and analysed at LGEA level, whose LGEA action plans derived from this analysis then contribute to SUBEB planning and to the necessary resource provision enabled through the MTSS and annual budget. Conversely, the challenge to SUBEBs is to direct and monitor LGEAs in their delivery of school improvement work and to develop the necessary capabilities within LGEAs to ensure that this is institutionalised.

Left
Identify the words:
Children learning to trace words from sentences.

The vision underpinning this paper is of a seamless system from Federal Government to schools, focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in every school in the country. Self-assessment is only a small part of the work needed to achieve that vision. But it can be an important component, because it does focus centrally on the activities needed to improve schools and the performance of each government agency at every level in delivering those activities.

All this requires resources. The self-assessment reports identify and prioritise resource shortcomings. They can also indicate ways that LGEAs in particular should be supported and encouraged to seek funds from sources other than SUBEB e.g. from community, private and LGA sources. Devolution of resources to LGEAs needs to be accompanied by thorough monitoring to ensure that LGEAs are indeed making proper use of their resources and of lower level evidence in their planning.

Finally, the state and LGEA self-assessment reports identify examples of good practice in specific states and LGEAs. The self-assessment workshops provide opportunities for sharing these experiences but participation is limited. 'Best Practice' guides such as this paper present opportunities to draw attention to these initiatives and 'best practice' examples across all states and LGEAs – and not just the ESSPIN-focus states. This would contribute a valuable post-ESSPIN legacy that would help to achieve the Holy Grail of Sustainability.

Left
Tenses: Pupils learning new tenses that lead to correct sentences.

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