



# Community voices transforming education across Nigeria: A summary of ESSPIN's work with School-Based Management Committees

## Practice Paper

### Contents

- |          |                                       |          |                 |          |  |          |   |
|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|--|----------|---|
| <b>2</b> | ESSPIN's SBMC development model       | <b>4</b> | Scale and reach | <b>6</b> | Early data on SBMCs' role in enrolment | <b>7</b> | Community priorities changing policy and practice |
| <b>5</b> | Direct impact on children's education |          |                 |          |  | <b>8</b> | Sustainability and scale-up                       |

## ESSPIN's SBMC development model

Nearly 3 million children in Nigeria have better access to quality education through ESSPIN's development of School-Based Management committees (SBMCs). SBMCs strengthen education governance, bringing children into school, mobilising community support for school improvement, and holding government accountable for delivering education.

In 2009, ESSPIN found that few SBMCs were active or sustainable outside small projects, and that SBMCs' potential to raise enrolment and improve learning was not being realised.

ESSPIN's system for training and managing SBMCs is developed and led by Save the Children UK. It is offered to public schools in often hard-to-reach areas. SBMC membership is activated in communities after a process of visioning the role and remit of SBMCs at state, district and community levels.

A harmonised policy is developed from the priorities of stakeholders at these three levels, which sets the remit of SBMCs in that state and ensures support from all sections of society. Civil society organisations (CSOs) with strong community trust play a key role in developing SBMCs.

### Below

SBMC provides opportunity for women and children to raise active voice for advocacy, school development, planning and community mobilisation.

### Right

Civil Society Organisation support the development and mentoring of SBMCs in communities.



### Left

Members of an SBMC meeting in a community to plan and manage the school.



SBMCs are given initial training by trained CSO and local government staff working in partnership. SBMCs then start work-increasing enrolment, mobilising community and government resources for schools, monitoring teacher attendance and behaviour, and building support networks for education. SBMCs are trained to manage and record a range of funding types transparently.

SBMCs then receive 8-10 mentoring visits from trainers, with at least one visit per term. Each visit involves further training, plus advice on ongoing challenges, to boost SBMCs' motivation and adaptability.

Training focuses on making education safe, welcoming and healthy for children; on long-term resource mobilisation, change and conflict management; and on relationship building.

SBMCs set up women's and children's committees, to ensure that women's and children's ideas are prioritised in school development planning, advocacy and community mobilisation.

SBMCs are monitored by their CSO and government mentors against performance indicators based on SBMC policy guidelines, using monthly reports integrated into the education system.



**Left**  
Teaching and learning are improved in schools where SBMCs monitor activities of teachers and pupils.



**Above**  
SBMC create a platform for community members to contribute to school improvement.



**Left**  
Community members support infrastructural development in schools, thereby providing pupils with better learning environments.

## Scale and reach

Reports send information on community needs and education efforts to government and civil society, for use in planning and advocacy.

SBMCs conduct forums at local and state level to raise common education challenges, often informing government of issues they were unaware of. This helps the voice of communities reach much further than individual schools.

From 2010 to 2014, 10,437 SBMCs have been supported through ESSPIN. 1151 were supported using ESSPIN funds, with 9286 reached using state government and federal funds, with ESSPIN technical advice. CSOs are contracted by government in an innovative partnership which builds collaboration between civil society and government, while retaining CSOs' independent voice.

Most SBMCs comprise 16 members, 30% of whom are women. 167,000 SBMC members are being reached in ESSPIN-supported states, in schools covering an estimated 2,087,000 primary school children. 1,002,000 of these are girls.



**Left and below**  
Communities through SBMCs compliment government's efforts to ensure schools are safe for children to learn in.



## Direct impact on children's education

Over 2.2 million GBP was mobilised by ESSPIN-trained SBMCs from their communities and networks between 2012 and 2014. This money was spent on helping children go to school and improving learning environments.

By April 2014, monitoring by CSOs and government showed that all SBMCs had reached 75% of performance targets.

In over 70% of school communities, SBMCs mobilise community support and resources (time, funds, labour or equipment) for school improvement. 70% of SBMCs are mobilising communities to enrol out-of-school children and reduce drop-out.

3,115 SBMCs met advanced performance criteria, reaching 623,000 children. They are consistently active in school development planning, mobilising community and government support, and helping vulnerable children stay in school.

Reports show SBMCs negotiating with caregivers to prevent early marriage and sexual abuse, and negotiating re-entry to school for pregnant girls. SBMCs' monitoring of teacher attendance has reduced lateness and absenteeism, and schools moribund due to absent teachers or occupation by gangs have been re-activated.



**Above and Right**  
SBMC are actively developing school plans, mobilising community and government supports and helping vulnerable children stay in school.



**Left**  
Children communities are set up within SBMCs to advocate for the needs of their schools.



## Early data on SBMCs' role in enrolment

3,068 SBMCs helped develop inclusive school communities, bringing in the poorest children, disabled children, girls and ethnic minorities, and working with schools to improve all children's learning and retention. Women's and children's participation was rated strong in 2,761 SBMCs.

In 2013 ESSPIN helped government introduce a new system of recording SBMCs' impact on increased enrolment and retention. Early data from Kwara, where SBMCs conducted a retrospective review of enrolment, indicates that between 2011 and 2014, trained SBMCs enrolled 20,262 out of school children. 49% were girls, 327 were disabled, and 26% had been unable to pay costs associated with school.

Scaled up to the other ESSPIN states, these figures would amount to 150,000 out of school children enrolled through SBMC action.

SBMCs in Kwara also enabled 3,144 dropouts to go back to school, 94 of whom were disabled and 49% of whom were girls. 31% had been unable to continue in school due to costs, underscoring that financial barriers to school are still a major challenge. 15% of newly enrolled children were from an ethnic minority group, as were 23% of returning students.



**Left**  
SBMCs are helping to develop inclusive schools communities, thereby ensuring that poor indejent and disable children have equal access to quality basic education.

**Below**  
SBMC members during a planning meeting.



**Left**  
Community efforts through SBMC activities are helping enrol more out-of-school children.

## Community priorities changing policy and practice

Through ESSPIN training, 43 CSOs working with SBMCs have implemented advocacy plans based on SBMCs' concerns. CSOs conducted research with communities to produce evidence, and advocated to secure changes in policy and practice at local and state levels.

Advocacy meetings and events were conducted by CSOs, and CSOs helped SBMCs raise issues at SBMC forums. Government partners reported a range of policies and investment decisions changed as a result of advocacy based on SBMC concerns. Some examples are:

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In Kano all schools are being given boundary walls, as a result of SBMCs and CSOs bringing the importance of protecting school premises to SUBEB's attention.

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In Jigawa, increased numbers of girls' junior secondary schools have been set up in sites requested by SBMCs.

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In Lagos, a far-reaching inclusive education policy and law has been instituted.

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In Kwara, the levy which PTAs (parent-teacher-associations) can charge was halved after SBMCs and CSOs did research showing how PTA levies pushed children out of school.

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### Right

CSOs and communities produce evidences to advocate policy change and practices.



### Right

More girls are enrolled in schools as a result of SBMC actions.



## Sustainability and scale-up

In Enugu, state government began an overhaul of teacher allocation and payment mechanisms as a result of CSOs presenting evidence from SBMCs on teacher absenteeism, misdirected salaries, and ‘ghost teachers’.

These tangible changes show the value of placing CSOs and local government at the centre of supporting SBMCs, in a dual-accountability structure.

CSOs bring community concerns to public and government attention through evidence-based advocacy, while local education staff feed information up through the education system, helping government develop policy solutions.

In 2012 the federal Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) adopted ESSPIN’s SBMC development model. Since then, 705 million Naira has been invested by government in rolling out the approach across 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory. Over 2.8 million GBP has been directed to help SBMCs increase support for education and hold government accountable.

### Right and below

Teaching and learning are improved in schools where SBMCs monitor the activities of teachers and pupils.



### Above

States are now enacting inclusive education policies and laws.



With ESSPIN technical advice, all three stages of the SBMC policy process have been completed in every state, except for Yobe and Borno. 35 states now have an active SBMC state policy.

100 SBMCs in each of these states have active SBMCs, reaching 700,000 children and bringing the current estimate of children reached by SBMCs to 2,800,000.

7-10 CSOs have been contracted by government in 35 states to activate and train SBMCs. State master trainers have been trained using a consolidated manual developed with ESSPIN support, and ESSPIN has supported UBEC to review and issue new SBMC guidelines. UBEC is moving to include permanent funding for SBMC development in Nigeria's Universal Basic Education law.

This action shows a strong appetite for building SBMCs as a key mechanism for school improvement and governance. There is clear confidence at state and federal levels that the model demonstrated by ESSPIN is relevant and sustainable for Nigeria's context, helping all children to get a better education.



**All**  
ESSPIN-supported SBMC Policy Guidebooks, now a model for SBMC development in 36 states of the federation.



**Email**  
info@esspin.org

**Website**  
www.esspin.org

**Twitter**  
@ESSPINUKAID

**Facebook**  
esspinukaid

**esspin**  
Education Sector  
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