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Household survey on private education in Lagos

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

DFID	Department for International Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDP	International Development Partner
LGA	Local Government Area
NAPPS	National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools
PTR	pupil-teacher ratio

Abstract

1. This report presents the findings of a household survey investigating parental school choice – examining why parents choose private schools in two low-income neighbourhoods in Lagos, one somewhat better off than the other. Parental perceptions of education quality and the schooling market are investigated, establishing that parents make decisions based on extremely limited information on school quality.

Executive Summary

2. Private education has becoming the norm for approaching 60% of children in Lagos State, a trend which is being echoed in other Nigerian states. Parents are abandoning government schools in favour of private education despite many government schools now having manageable pupil numbers and reasonable buildings; they are also much lower in cost than private schools. In this context the study examines parental school choice to understand the drivers of this continuing abandonment of the public sector in favour of a relatively expensive alternative.
3. This study builds on a recent report on private schools serving two neighbouring low-income areas and it is through those schools that the sample families were found; the characteristics of the schools are detailed in Härmä 2011c). From this background knowledge of the schools being selected, parental perceptions of the schooling sectors were then explored.
4. Parents were found to perceive government schools as being of poor quality, with many respondents unwilling even to consider enrolling their children. Schools are seen as unresponsive to parents, and parents feel that government sector schools cannot be expected to be accountable and so do not request or seek improvements to government schools. Government school teachers are seen as lacking in motivation and unwilling to give due care and attention to the pupils in their charge. Learning at these schools is believed to be extremely limited.
5. Parents choose private schools as a result of holding these perceptions. They see private schools as being accountable to parents as *fee-paying clients*, and believe learning levels to be satisfactory. They are deeply concerned about the level of care and attention given to (and therefore also the safety of) their children while at school, and feel that private school teachers look after their children better.
6. Parents profess to feel that teachers' formal training and qualifications are very important, along with the quality of infrastructure (this was the area most commonly cited as lacking) and whether the school is approved or not. In practice the majority of sampled parents had selected schools that fulfilled none of these criteria - or at best only very partially (partially

in the case of teachers as no school hired qualified, trained teachers only, but most had at least one). Considering interview and focus group discussion responses, it appears that the key factors are location (as parents would not usually consider schools outside of their immediate surroundings) and price. Parents then tend to choose the school with the best teaching (based on very informal methods of quality assessment) and infrastructure that is within their price range. A key factor appears to be that the school is *not a government school*.

7. In terms of access and equity, respondents believe that there are many out of school children in their communities, some due to poverty and others due to parental 'ignorance' and lack of concern. It was found that many respondents living in slum accommodation had relatively large incomes, which may help to explain their private school choice. However, even the poorest private schools will be unaffordable to those earning at or around minimum wage level.

Introduction

8. Nigerian children are by law entitled to (and in theory compelled to attend) basic education consisting of 6 years of primary school and 3 years of junior secondary, with schooling at the primary level being ostensibly free of cost. However many state governments are failing to provide education of sufficient quality to satisfy their constituents, with Lagos State proving no exception. Despite considerable state tax revenues, the public education system is losing pupils to the private sector. Individuals across the state have spontaneously decided to open schools, serving their local communities and ensuring that the quality is sufficient to justify, in the minds of parents, paying for schooling instead of taking the 'fee-free' option.
9. The nature of the schools serving one slum area, Makoko, and its neighbouring community, Iwaya, was explored in a recent ESSPIN study (Härmä 2011c). As interest in this area of enquiry has grown, so too DFID-ESSPIN felt it would be worthwhile re-visiting the same study area to investigate why parents choose private schools, and how, in a context of competition between myriad different school options, parents manage to select a *particular school*. Their perceptions of government schools are also of interest, as it appears that most parents have attended such a school themselves but are choosing something else. It is perceptions of the fee-free option that leads to a desire to use private schools and so this issue is discussed below.
10. The sample neighbourhoods appear to be poor, however the research revealed that several families earning surprisingly high incomes choose to stay rather than move out. This might be for a variety of different reasons, including community ties or proximity to work, however it means that assessing whether or not these schools are truly serving the poor is a complex task. It would be useful to understand poverty in the area even more deeply,

however an initial start, focussing on a sample of private school parents, is made in this study.

Purpose of the consultancy

11. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) is becoming increasingly interested in non-state provision of education which targets the poor, or relatively poor. It is known that many of the schools are operating in sub-standard conditions, leading to criticism of the sector. In a context where the state government is failing to deliver education of an acceptable quality but at a very low overall cost to parents, and where comparatively expensive private education appears to be popular, it is of interest to examine parental school choice-making. This study is part of DFID's drive to gather evidence on the low-cost private schooling phenomenon in several country contexts.

The key research area:

- (i) Parental school choice in a thriving urban education market

The research questions:

- (ii) Why do parents choose these schools over fee-free government schools?
- (iii) How do parents perceive the schooling options open to them?
- (iv) How do parents make choices between several nearby schools?
- (v) Are private schools really 'affordable' or are great sacrifices made to access them?

Structure of the Report

12. The next section of the report details the methodology, context and rationale for the study and is followed by the main section of the report discussing the key survey findings fleshed out with details from the focus group discussions. The penultimate section examines the equity and access considerations before a final concluding section. Annex 1 provides the fieldwork instruments while Annex 2 details the research team.

Methodology, context and rationale

13. DFID-ESSPIN works primarily with the government school system, however interest in private education has increased over the course of the first half of the programme and a solid evidence base is sought. Lagos state is the key focus with regard to private education in Nigeria, having 12,098 private schools in the 2010-2011 school year (Härmä 2011a), with numbers appearing to be growing year on year¹. The previous ESSPIN study of private

¹ While it is also known that private education is spreading in other Nigerian states, particularly in the southern half of the country, Lagos appears to be the epicentre of this phenomenon.

education in Lagos focussed on issues surrounding private provision of education from the proprietor's perspective (Härmä 2011c), whereas this study examines private schooling and the market from the perspective of the parent (or client).

Low-cost private schools as the focus

14. Non-state providers of education can take many forms and be run by a variety of actors including faith-based groups, charities, communities and those commercially driven. The type of private school that is growing in Nigeria is the small school owned and run by a private individual, funded through school fees alone, with these fees being kept as low as possible to achieve the broadest possible client base. These fully-private, un-aided schools are distinct from some schools in Nigeria which have benefitted historically from grants-in-aid (mostly mission schools, see Adelabu and Rose 2004), and have complete autonomy in terms of management, hiring and pedagogy. The private un-aided sector in Nigeria is now highly heterogeneous and varies significantly in scope and quality, encompassing the elite to the low cost.
15. For the most part, the only alternative in the study areas are government schools, owned, funded, run and managed by the government, with little-to-no autonomy at the school level. Government schools are necessarily government-approved irrespective of standards. However private schools can (and should) be disaggregated by approval status. It is illegal to operate a private school without government approval and it is also against government regulations to operate for profit (Adelabu and Rose 2004). In reality many approved schools do not fulfil the approval guidelines (Tooley et al 2005 also indicate that some schools gain recognition without fulfilling criteria). Government schools are nominally free, while monthly fees and a range of other direct costs are payable at private schools. These are on average lower in unapproved schools than in approved schools.
16. DFID's key interest with regard to education is to get disadvantaged children into school, and to ensure that these schools are offering good quality education to all children and are not discriminating on any grounds. For this reason the research focuses on a geographical area perceived as being broadly poor, and examines school choice between poor, low-cost private schools.

The study area

17. In this study it was intended that parental perceptions and choices be examined in a context of schools which were already documented and well-known to the researchers. Therefore the same study area was used as in (Härmä 2011c), and parental perceptions of these study schools are presented here.

18. There was found to be what the researchers considered moderate to severe poverty in the area, as well as individuals earning relatively high wages who nevertheless choose to reside in the slum. The latter type of family could be explained by the attraction of being a local 'big man', status which would not apply if a family were to move out to a more expensive area; alternatively families may continue to live in the area due to proximity to their work. Information was gathered on household income and assets, however it was found that most respondents could not answer questions on their spouse's income, even where the respondent was the head of the household. Therefore information on income is less than complete, however information on assets, savings and debts is considered reliable. A study aimed at more thoroughly understanding the poverty of the area would need to take account of this, ensuring that all earners contributing to the household's running costs are interviewed.
19. It must be noted that the sample households for the most part will not be representative of their communities as the ability to pay for private school tends to indicate somewhat better socioeconomic status than that of the poorest in society. This study started from the schools and moved to the household, meaning that there is no comparable data from government school and possibly out-of-school children's households. In terms of impressions from over one year of returning to and working in this area, Makoko is for the most part poor, while the entire appearance and impression of Iwaya is better, and school costs in the latter neighbourhood were found to be correspondingly higher, with more approved schools attracting more highly-educated parents than in Makoko.

The available schooling options

20. In Makoko parents can choose between public and private schools; these models are very different. Private schools tend to be small, serving highly localised communities. They are informal in their appearance with often makeshift buildings, however they follow the standard curriculum and are highly formal (and conventional) in their approach to teaching. All schools, government and private, tend to use didactic methods of rote learning.
21. In contrast to this model where children often go to a school within five minutes' walk from their homes, government schools tend to be grouped together in compounds serving many hundreds of children. In Makoko there are three public primary schools in one compound on the outskirts of the slum, meaning that from the far side of the neighbourhood the walk is relatively long, particularly for smaller children. There are other public schools on the opposite side of the study area as a whole, on the edges of Iwaya, again meaning that the middle of this combined area is un-served. For those living in 'houses-on-water' access to public education is much more difficult, entailing a canoe trip from their homes on stilts out in the lagoon and then a walk. The Makoko public primary schools are large and substantial

storied buildings with large classrooms, although there is no sports field, the toilet facilities are non-functional, and the compound suffers from flooding².

22. These schools were at one time over-crowded, however at present they have a highly favourable pupil-teacher ratio of 30:1. There is an emerging trend of families 'voting with their feet' and choosing to exit public schools; this is taking place in a context where the population of Lagos State is estimated by the United Nations to be increasing by approximately 2.9% per annum. Table 1 details the drop in enrolments over the last three years. The head teacher of Adekunle Primary School reported that the three schools are serving approximately 1,500 pupils in the 2011-2012 school year³.

Table 1: Enrolments at public primary schools serving Makoko, 2008-2011

	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Adekunle Primary School	1,084	877	774
Makoko Primary School	620	594	438
Aiyetoro African Primary School	697	389	395
Totals	2,401	1,860	1,607

Source: Lagos State Government (2010 & 2011)

23. The private schools available were found to be typical of the low-cost private school sector more generally. Schools are often housed in structures that do not meet government regulations, including flimsy shelters, houses, flats, sheds and shops. They are usually owned by an individual proprietor, and the teaching staff is usually a combination of trained teachers and those who have no prior experience or training. The choice for parents is generally between a government school or a neighbourhood private school which, more positively, is close to home, has good class-sizes and which may be observed to have more teaching activity. The growth in private schools evidenced through the Lagos Private School Census Report (Härmä 2011a) and the decline in pupils at public schools suggests that parents prefer private schools and are acting on this preference.

Sampling and survey methodology

24. This study is a small-scale household survey which follows on from the ESSPIN study of private schools in Lagos (Härmä 2011c). The proprietors of schools surveyed in November 2010 were asked whether they were willing to participate in this round of research by providing the contact details of parents whose children attend their school. Twenty-seven schools provided the details of parents to be interviewed, while schools serving the communities ('houses-on-water') on the Lagos Lagoon were not included due to the

² Interview with Head Teachers of all three primary schools, October 2011.

³ *ibid.*, the interview took place very early in the school year while admissions were still being accepted.

logistical difficulties of possibly having to return to schools and homes repeatedly and the need to use canoes for mobility and translators to communicate with French and Egun-speaking parents. Two other schools from the original study are not included; one because there had been a fire which has resulted in the school having only 12 pupils and the other because the proprietor was unwilling to participate in this phase of the research. In addition two schools that did initially cooperate did not agree in the end to provide the requested number of parents' details (four parents).

25. To select parents, the researchers selected six children's names randomly from the school register, selecting the first, last and middle names from classes primary 3 and primary 4. Only four parents were interviewed; two extra names were selected as substitutes for cases where the parents were either unavailable or refused to participate. Where a school was found not to operate one or both of these class levels, the closest available level was used instead (i.e. class two or class five).
26. It was originally intended that schools would provide the necessary information for the researchers to locate children's homes. However proprietors uniformly acted as gate-keepers, refusing to provide parents' address details, stating that it would embarrass parents and that it was an 'improper' thing to do to visit parents at home. It was explained by the researchers that this is done in many countries and has just recently been carried out in Kwara State, however proprietors were firm and stated that parents would be worried by outsiders being sent to their homes, or that they would be embarrassed if their living rooms were found to be full of flood water. This standpoint entailed a change to the research plan and meant that observations of the household and what this could tell about poverty levels was not possible (although questions were asked about the home instead).
27. Some interviews took place within homes (where parents invited researchers to come home) however these were very few in number. Proprietors were willing to allow the researchers to randomly select children whose parents would be interviewed from the school registers, and then called these parents to the school. Some interviews then took place in a quiet spot in the school premises or just outside (but always separate and out of hearing of anyone connected to the school); some took place in the parent's workplace, while few, as mentioned, took place in the home.
28. The data collection team consisted of the Specialist and one assistant working as a unit, while two other researchers worked independently. Data was collected through the use of a structured interview schedule, with parents interviewed once only. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, depending on how interested the respondent was in discussing the relevant issues. The final day of data collection consisted of two focus group discussions (FGDs), one held in Iwaya and one in Makoko, both of which were audio recorded and then translated and transcribed. The aim of the FGDs was to get a broader perspective and to discuss issues in depth, and so groups were made up of private school

parents, government school parents, and also those sending some children to each school type. The Iwaya FGD was less successful as the school proprietors in that area were less able to gather a varied group of parents for the discussion. Despite advance planning only a small group of parents assembled; however the discussion was still worthwhile and possibly tighter and more focussed than the larger, more varied group (and discussion) in Makoko.

29. The purpose of the study was explained to all study participants and verbal consent was granted in all cases. Some respondents declined to provide income information but were willing to provide answers to all other questions. The questionnaires were piloted with minor alterations and additions made as a result. A straightforward approach to analysis is adopted for this study; the questions dictate methods which are essentially descriptive (discussed below).

The Survey results

Family background

30. A total of 103 families were sampled from the 27 schools. Households have an average of 5.5 members resident and sleeping in the house, living in accommodation consisting of a mean of 2 rooms. Interesting and unconventional family structures and living situations were uncovered, partly due to the cost of living and the difficulty of finding sufficient space in this densely-packed area. Some families were split between single rented rooms at different locations on the same street or alley, with the mother and some children in one room and the father and other children in another room a few minutes' walk away. In some cases mother, father, children, and even nieces and nephews sleep in the same room.
31. In terms of facilities in the home, instead of being able to observe these, the researchers had to rely on asking questions about the household. Surprisingly only 18% reported having no toilet and it is possible that respondents will have over-reported having sanitation facilities due to embarrassment. Thirty-one percent reported having a pit toilet and 51% a flush toilet; this latter figure is improbable, highlighted by the fact that only 16% of households reported having a water source in the house, meaning that wide availability of functioning flush toilets is unlikely⁴.
32. Twenty-nine percent reported relying on mains electricity (NEPA/PHCN) only, while 59% report having both mains as well as a generator. Only 21% of respondents reported owning their own homes, while 49% reported renting long term without having any eviction worries. Another 19% reported renting long term but not having any security of tenure. In terms of assets⁵, a large proportion, 63% of households (although not all of these assets are

⁴ In such cases having been able to observe households would have been extremely helpful.

⁵ A full list of assets was recorded for each household.

owned by the same household), reported having: a generator, some furniture, a kerosene lamp, a cooking stove, TV and radio. The two most common assets, a cooking stove and a TV, were possessed by 90% of households, and even all but one household reporting to be poor were in possession of a TV.

33. Interestingly only 13 percent of households reported being 'poor', while another 36% reported being barely secure, while the largest group, 44%, reported being financially secure. As in the Kwara study (Härmä 2011b), where interviews were for the most part carried out in the households, the circumstances in which people live seem to tell a contradictory story and it may be that people do not admit to poverty due to personal pride or that the abiding local conditions were such that their living conditions were highly similar to their peers', however city living may be supposed to expose people more to the non-poor. In some cases the household's income indicated that the household was not very poor despite their surroundings. Factoring into this picture of households potentially not being as poor as they might seem, a large 79% of households reported having some savings, while 85% reported having no debts of any kind.
34. In terms of occupation or livelihood, in nearly every household there is more than one earner, with petty trading being by far the most common occupation, followed by skilled work such as mechanics. Small business ownership is the third most common (table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of households with an earner in specific types of work

	Petty trading	Skilled worker	Small business	Civil servant	Office/bank worker	Unskilled worker
% households	75	50	36	14	9	4

General perceptions of schooling, and private and government sectors

35. The first question that parents were asked in relation to general views on education was what, if they closed their eyes and simply imagined, would they think should be present in a 'good school'? What makes a 'good school'? It is telling that this was a difficult question for parents to answer and often they could only supply very basic answers. However certain factors do ultimately stand out; it should be born in mind that this parental wish list, and the way in which parents make choices, is formed in a context of no objective and available information on the quality of various schools through examination results, quality assurance reports or any other source.
36. The most important thing to parents, cited in 90% of cases, is that the school must deliver good teaching – although ideas on how this is achieved were relatively thin on the ground. Related to this, children 'should learn very much' at a good school (77%) from trained and qualified teachers (57%). Of great importance to parents is that the school should develop the children in

a holistic sense, and develop the child's confidence and well-being (58%), and that the children should be cared for diligently in a safe and clean environment (53%).

37. Ideally the school would also have good infrastructure and facilities (27%) and be close to home (24%). Discipline should be kept (21%) by motivated and hard-working teachers (18%). A number of other issues were also mentioned in small numbers of cases, with computers being mentioned in 11% of cases, as well as vocational training (7%), religion (9%), sufficient and high-quality books and teaching aids (7%).
38. This first general question on perceptions of school quality established what parents feel are necessary components to a good education, although it must be noted that parents will have come to their views as a result of what they have seen and experienced themselves, which will have been particularly limited in terms of different pedagogies. Parents were then asked about their perceptions of both schooling sectors, starting with government schools. Their views on this sector are instrumental in choosing private education.
39. Parents were generally negative regarding government schools, however 21% of parents reported that they offer semi-good to good quality education, and the most common positive perception (stated by 34% of parents) is that they are affordable. Infrastructure was not commonly mentioned by parents with regard to public (or private) schools, with 11% reporting that they offer good facilities and 8% stating that they have poor facilities. Of note is that despite 21% of households feeling that government schools offer semi-good to good-quality education, only 8 households (7%) had one (or more) primary school child enrolled in a government school (while many had secondary school children in government schools).
40. Negative perceptions of government education are the norm. Fifty percent of respondents stated that teachers are insincere and uncommitted in their work, and simply do not teach. In 37% of interviews months-long strikes by teachers (over the years) were cited as a major failing of the system. Schools were cited as taking no care of children (in 31% of cases); also as being overcrowded (29%); there is perceived to be indiscipline (26%); and touching on competition and markets, 24% of parents stated that it is useless to complain at these schools as they are entirely unresponsive (indicating a lack of accountability). One parent stated that she regularly comes to her younger daughter's private primary school to discuss issues and make complaints and requests where necessary. When asked if she does the same at her older daughter's public junior secondary school she stated 'no, I have not been there since the day I enrolled her'. When asked why, she replied 'because I know they will not even listen to me'.
41. In small numbers of households a range of other issues were mentioned, including lack of proper inspection of schools which has led to declining standards (4%), no healthcare

- facilities (7%), insufficient teachers (6%) and no teaching aids (7%), and that teachers are politically appointed (3%) and do not receive adequate training (3%).
42. Of interest however are perceptions of change in the government sector over the past 10 years. Parents were asked if they had become better or worse, and while half of parents still feel that teaching is nowhere near the required standard, fully 45% stated that there has been moderate to considerable improvement since 2001. This was almost universally put down to Governor Fashola's policies and actions. However over one third, 35% feel that public schools have become moderately to much worse.
 43. Finally in terms of perceptions of the public sector, parents were asked if they would consider sending their children to public school. Fifty-three percent of parents stated that they definitely would not consider it while 21% stated that they already send at least one child to government school (although this is often at the secondary level) and a further 21% said that they would consider it if the quality improved. Only 3% stated that they would if there was one close enough to their home and 2% of parents were unsure.
 44. Positive perceptions of private schools abound, although at only 57% of all parents, those reporting that private schools offer good quality education is perhaps surprisingly low. Another 10% stated that they offer semi-good quality while 5% said the quality is poor. Over one quarter (28%) stated that the schools are affordable (and only 8% stated that they are somewhat expensive while still 'manageable'), that they are close to home (17%) and that they keep good discipline (17%) and children must be neat and tidy (9%). Schools were said to offer a safe and secure environment (8%). The absence of strikes amongst private school teachers was mentioned in 15% of cases, although this factor often came up in other parts of the interview.
 45. Again infrastructure appears to be fairly low on the agenda for parents despite being the most visible proxy of school quality, and perceptions are mixed. Only 6% of parents felt that schools offered good facilities, while 8% mentioned poor facilities and 12% stated that they have 'average quality' infrastructure. Very small numbers of parents specifically mentioned good (meaning small) class sizes (7%), upholding of religion in schools (1%), good teachers⁶ (1%) and that schools will always work well when a fee is paid (1%).
 46. On three subjects, parental opinion and practice differ; the first is on school infrastructure and facilities. Parents were asked if these are important or whether quality of instruction is more important. This is relevant in a context where many low-cost schools have extremely poor infrastructure and yet parents choose to pay for these as opposed to better-built public schools, indicating that it is most likely the quality of the teaching that they are choosing. Only 5 parents (or 5%) stated that infrastructure is always important, while

⁶ It may appear surprising that 'good teachers' were mentioned in so few cases, however it is likely that this should be taken as implied in 'good teaching' which was mentioned in most instances.

- (startlingly) two of these parents had selected one of the two poorest and shoddiest schools in the sample, while another two were accessing one of the best. The majority of 65% of parents stated that while infrastructure is important, teaching is more important, a view which appears to be reflected in everyday practice by most parents. Another 30% of parents stated that education quality and infrastructure are equally important.
47. The second area of divergence between opinion and practice is related to the school's approval status. In terms of the school's approval status, 96% of respondents claimed to know that schools should be government-approved in order to function. When asked if they felt that approval status was an important issue, 81% of parents stated that it was. It should be noted however that no parent brought this issue up of their own accord as something that was important in a school and having a bearing on their school choice. It would appear to have only an indirect impact in that people might aspire to better schools which are sometimes more likely also to be approved schools, while they may have to settle for a poorer school due to cost.
48. There were found to be significant gaps in parents' knowledge on their child's school's approval status, and indeed many parents thought that their child's school is approved when in actual fact it is unapproved. Table 3 illustrates that parents at approved schools may be more aware than parents using unapproved schools: only 14% admitted to not knowing the school's status, while all others answered correctly.
49. In the case of unapproved-school parents only 9% were aware and informed on the issue of private schools' approval status. Over one-third stated candidly that they did not know the status of their school, while the remaining 55% stated incorrectly that their child's school was government approved. This reflects a clear lack of awareness, in many cases, of what government approval actually means, as most of the sample schools could not possibly qualify for this status, even where the application of the rules is 'flexible'. As a result it is unclear what parents take this status to mean, and may point to a very low level of awareness as to what makes a good school and what is lacking in the typical low-cost private school (despite the various issues with school quality cited by parents).

Table 3: Percentage distribution of parental understanding of schools' approval status

	Did not know	Said 'approved' correctly	Said 'unapproved' correctly	Said 'approved' incorrectly	Said 'not approved' incorrectly
Approved schools	14	86	0	0	0
Unapproved schools	36	0	9	55	0

50. A final area where parents' views are contradictory to their choices is teacher qualifications: only 43% of sample private school teachers are qualified (Härmä 2011c) and despite 97% of parents stating that formal qualifications and training for their children's teachers are important to them, they continue to choose private schools over government schools. These preferences of parents that find no outlet in actual choice are presumably thwarted due to lack of availability in the given 'price range' of schools they can afford.

Parental preference and school choice

51. It is perhaps surprising that in a survey of private school parents only 87% of respondents stated that their preferred school type is private. It may be more surprising that 7% stated that their preferred school type is government; parents did not explain why they would not be using only government school in these cases, however it may be because the child's other parent chose the school. In relation to this point, 17% of parents reported having to send some of the children in the family (this would also include secondary level pupils) to government school because they could not afford to send them all to private schools. The same proportion reported that it is due to cost that they do not send all of their children to their preferred school type.
52. Table 4 details the reason for choosing the selected school for every primary school-going child in the family; there was a total of only 9 children attending government schools and 149 attending private schools. Quality of education was the most commonly-reported reason for choosing schools whether public or private, while closeness to home and affordability are the next most commonly reported factors. This is in contrast to ESSPIN's study of private education in Kwara State, where quality was cited in the case of private school choice in 64% of cases, but affordability (38% of cases) was most often cited for government school choice; school quality and closeness to home were each cited in 21% of cases as explaining the choice of a government school (Härmä 2011b, p. 23).

Table 4: % households citing the main reasons for choosing a specific school

	School quality	Closeness to home	Affordability	Recommendation	Relationship with owner/HT
Government	44	33	33	11	1
Private	77	31	28	22	15
All schools	75	31	28	22	15

53. Only 17 children in the sample had ever changed school sector, only a handful of whom changed to government school, usually due to the cost of private education. Fourteen children had changed from government to private school, with the search for better education quality being the reason for 8 of these, and closeness to home being the reason for the remaining 6.

54. Parents were asked both what is good about the school they have chosen for their child, and what problems there are with the school. The key factors that parents feel are good about their school (in order of importance) are good teaching and learning; good, caring and hard working teachers that do not go on strike and keep firm discipline; children are learning very well at the school, and in a safe environment which is close to home. It is also very important to parents that the staff be responsive to concerns and complaints; also the relationship with the proprietor is considered important.
55. In terms of problems with the chosen school, the most frequently-cited complaint is regarding infrastructure and facilities (in some cases parents explicitly mentioned health facilities, toilets or playgrounds as lacking; they are absent in most cases). In 13% of cases teachers were mentioned as a problem, in that their numbers were insufficient or that they should be more highly qualified.
56. Of interest is the wider range of issues with private schools that came out when specifically asked in what areas they would like to see their child's school improved (95% of parents stated clearly that the chosen private school *does need to improve*). The formal training and qualifications of teachers were mentioned in 24% of cases, while in answering other questions parents seemed to feel that the quality of education on offer is very good, with most parents reportedly being satisfied (32% of cases) and even 'very satisfied' (62%) with the school. Eleven percent of parents reported that the actual quality of teachers also needed to improve, separate from the issue of formal qualifications. In 71% of cases parents said they would like to see the facilities improve, with (echoing previous mentions) more furniture, more outside area/play space and a safer environment. Many said that their schools lacked the funds necessary for this type of development.

The education market and the school-parent relationship

57. A large majority of parents (85%) perceived that the market is expanding, with private school numbers having grown considerably over the last 10 years; 3% (inexplicably) felt that school numbers have decreased while the remainder of parents were unsure. It was an area of interest to explore whether parents felt that this was a positive or a negative development in their area; the context is important in two respects. Firstly the Universal Basic Education Law (2004) in Nigeria states that all children should benefit from free and compulsory basic education, meaning that Lagos state is failing in its legal obligation at the present time. The second contextual aspect of importance is the fact of this failure: the government education system is failing in terms of both quality and coverage/capacity (universal access), however in light of reducing numbers of students in the public sector which have brought pupil-teacher ratios down to highly acceptable levels in many schools (Lagos State Government 2010 and 2011), it is arguable that to parents, quality failures are more significant. In the eyes of parents, pupil-teacher ratios are not serving as a useful

proxy for education quality, and due to wide-ranging failures, parents are having to buy educational services and are missing out on their right to free primary education.

58. When asked how they feel about having many private schools in their area, the majority (70%) stated that it is a good thing to have abundant choice in education provision; a separate group of parents (17%) felt that many of the schools springing up are 'mushroom schools' of bad quality, and that this is not a positive development, with the implication that the specific private school chosen by the respondent was not one of these 'mushroom schools'. Fifteen percent of parents felt that the growth of private schools showed only that the government is not living up to its commitments – 'not doing its job'. Apart from this 15% of respondents, most parents did not seem to connect their need to pay for primary education at private schools (when by law they should receive good quality education for free) with government's failings, a perspective which would of course require parents to have a firmly rights-based view of their children's education. In reality they seem to judge the growth in the market purely in terms of their immediate context in which government schools are not performing at an acceptable level.
59. Private school parents tend to have quite a lively relationship with the schools they choose, with this being key to the relationship of accountability between schools and parents. Parents pay fees in return for education for their children and, crucially, *the right to have a say* over how the school functions. Parents often bring concerns and complaints to the proprietor on a spontaneous, informal basis (69% of parents reported doing this), and schools also have parent-teacher associations (PTAs), with 90% of parents reporting attendance. Parents also very commonly have formal, arranged meetings with proprietors, or stop in to speak to them when they bring their children to school. An overwhelming 97% of parents said that the school listens to their complaints and responds appropriately, taking action where this is possible. Only one parent said that the school listens but does not act, and two other parents said that they had never tried to communicate with the proprietor.
60. Parents showed varying degrees of awareness regarding competition between schools. FGD participants stated that all parents should have a choice between schools and that competition is a positive thing. They stated that fees should be competitive and were extremely aware that more players in the market should mean lower fees to parents. It was pointed out that land is still limited however (in Makoko in particular), meaning that expansion of existing schools and an increase in the overall number of schools will be difficult. Parents reiterated the importance of having a school close to home, with the response coming from most respondents that no one (at least in Makoko) would consider sending their child to a school far from home. Responses indicated therefore that parents want competition in terms of quality, price and proximity to the home; however parents could not explain how schools compete for their business (unlike in Kwara, Härmä 2011b). Indeed some parents stated clearly that they do not know about other schools; they were

aware that other schools exist (and in large numbers) but state that they do not know about other schools' quality.

61. If not highly aware of competition between schools for their business, parents are aware of the available options, getting information on different schools from their friends, relatives and neighbours⁷. FGD respondents reported that parents frequently discuss education and school choices. In addition to discussing schools they have had experience with and swapping stories, parents engage in informal testing of pupils from different schools within their community. Adults will ask children to read texts and do sums by way of comparing which children can do what both by class level (comparing a boy in class 5 from that school with a girl in class 3 from this school) and by school and school sector. While potentially embarrassing to particular children, this method is widely used by parents.

Equity in access to private education

Affordability, concessions and fee-free places

62. In terms of school choice for all children in the household, 81% said they do not have to make any choices between various children within the household due to an inability to pay for the preferred school type for all children. However of the remaining 19% of parents, 90% reported that they send some children to government school due to inability to pay for private school for all children.
63. Only 16% of parents interviewed stated that they had asked for either a reduced-fee (concessionary) place or a fully fee-free place for their child, however those who asked were relatively successful, with 69% (11 cases) of these 16 families receiving a reduced fee place, while another 25% received a full fee waiver (4 cases). The remaining families were refused any discount. The small proportion of families asking for a discount may be symptomatic of parents feeling that they simply could not ask, or through embarrassment. Alternatively it could be that parents strategised that it may be better to force the issue by enrolling the child on the understanding that the full fee will be paid, and then failing to pay the full amount, or through withdrawing their children from the school. It was unclear from discussions how often this might happen. This level of reporting of concessionary and free places appears to tally with reports from proprietors and head teachers (table 5).

⁷ In fact it was surprising that parents stated that they had no information on other schools when they are likely to have heard things about other schools in the process of selecting their present school.

Table 5: Concessionary places offered at schools (as reported by proprietors and head teachers)

	Mean enrolment	Mean number concessionary places	Concessionary places as % of total enrolment	% schools not offering these
Approved schools	165	27	16	0
Unapproved schools	155	13	8	8
All schools	156	15	10	7

Source: Härmä (2011c)

64. While most schools charge fees by the term, many parents in the study area have trouble saving an entire term's fees in advance. Where parents are slightly better off, as in Iwaya, they also tend to use more expensive schools, meaning that this issue of budgeting is common across the study area. Schools are entirely willing to take fees in instalments, from two through to however many parents need; it would run counter to their interests to refuse admission to children whose parents could not pay an entire term in advance. While proprietors are willing to take multiple payments, in most cases it appears that parents must eventually pay the full amount, and proprietors are reported as withholding report cards from families that have not paid in full.

School fees, total costs and the minimum wage

65. Tables 6 and 7 detail complete costs and spending on private education, disaggregated by approval status, in relation to the minimum wage. The first column details the basic school fee only, while the second column shows complete costs including the fee, all other costs payable to the school (such as examination fees and PTA fees) as well as all other direct costs to parents such as textbooks, exercise books, uniforms and any other costs. This column represents the true cost (barring any opportunity costs) to parents.
66. The two tables show firstly what proprietors and secondly what households reported. It is more usual to find schools under-reporting the costs, however in this case parents at approved schools (table 7) reported lower average spending on fees than proprietors quoted (table 6), however this is reversed with regard to unapproved schools. The expected trend is seen with regard to complete costs: proprietors' reports were 10% lower than parents' reported spending at approved schools with the divergence much greater for unapproved schools, where complete costs as reported by proprietors were as low as 58% of what parents reported spending. Considered in another way, proprietors reported that the termly fee represents the bulk, or 81% (at unapproved schools) to 82% (at approved schools) of complete costs, while parents reported this as being 56% and 57% at unapproved and approved schools respectively. The reports of parents underline the

importance of considering the complete cost of these schools, rather than simply reporting the fee alone, as commonly done in the literature on low-cost private education.

67. In Nigeria the minimum wage has very recently been drastically increased, from N7,500 per month to N18,000 per month, with Lagos State increasing this even further to N18,780 per month. This rise was only put in place in January 2011 and many government departments have still not put it into effect. In this context it is highly likely that the private sector has entirely ignored the directive (additionally many parents are self-employed meaning that they take home whatever profit they are able to make), meaning that the old minimum wage is likely to be more appropriate for use here and is used as a very rough guideline, although both wage levels are considered in tables 6 and 7.
68. The proportions of minimum wage income required to send a child to private schools are large. Considering the old minimum wage, between 36% (at unapproved schools) and 51% (for approved schools) on average are required to educate one child. A large survey of data from Sub-Saharan Africa finds that it is more usual for poorer families to dedicate between 5 and 10% of total household expenditure to education for all children in the household (Lewin 2007), and it is very common for families to have many children in education at one time. Even the lowest percentage required, that being for unapproved school costs (taking proprietors' reports) as a proportion of the new minimum wage, 8%, would still be relatively high where other children are in the household and are of school-going age.

Table 6: School costs (as reported by proprietors), the minimum wage and household expenditure

	Mean yearly fee in Naira	Mean total cost in Naira	Total cost as % old minimum wage N7500/ month	Total cost as % revised minimum wage N18780/ month
Approved schools	33,750	41,116	48	18
Unapproved schools	15,194	18,705	21	8
All schools	17,377	21,342	24	10

Source: Härmä (2011c)

Table 7: School costs (as reported by households), the minimum wage and household expenditure

	Mean yearly fee in Naira	Mean total cost in Naira	Total cost as % old minimum wage N7500/ month	Total cost as % revised minimum wage N18780/ month
Approved schools	26,041	45,752	51	20
Unapproved schools	18,265	32,483	36	14
All schools	23,978	34,165	38	15

Equity implications

69. The study of private schools in Lagos (Härmä 2011c), from which this follows on, found that there was clear gender parity in enrolments in the sample schools, and this trend was found to apply to the state as a whole, with perfect gender parity reflected in the Lagos private school census findings (Härmä 2011a). However within this study's sample families, there is a larger proportion of girls than boys (table 8). Girls represent 54% of pupils in all categories: government school, private school and all pupils. Considered from a different angle, while all pre-primary boys are in private schools, only 97% of their female counterparts were; however 96% of primary girls but only 91% of primary boys are in private schools, indicating that there is no clear trend. Enrolment data and the views and priorities expressed by parents indicate that there is no significant bias against girls (however Härmä 2011c did find that the very poorest schools on the Lagos Lagoon served, in relative terms, a much higher proportion of boys than girls). Table 9 shows that of the sample children using approved schools, fully 60% are girls while 53% of children at unapproved schools are girls.

Table 8: Distribution of children within sample households by school level and type

	Children in government school	Children in private school	Total children	% in private school
Pre-primary girls	1	29	30	97
Pre-primary boys	0	27	27	100
Primary girls	4	86	90	96
Primary boys	7	70	77	91
Secondary girls	37	9	46	20
Secondary boys	29	10	39	26
Total children	78	231	309	75
% girls	54	54	54	54

Table 9: Percentage of girls in total school enrolment by school situation and approval status

	Approved schools	Unapproved schools	All schools
% girls	60	53	54

70. There are obvious equity implications to reliance on private schools as parents must pay for the schooling of their children, in an international context where free and compulsory primary education, one of the Education for All goals to be achieved by 2015, is held up as

- an important goal. At the present time it is unclear as to how affordable private education truly is for the poor. Many ostensibly poor families are accessing these schools however what is currently lacking is research that explores school choice using a cross section of parents from 'poor' areas. Such a sample would include families using government school as well as no school at all, meaning that school choice across the population could be studied in more detail.
71. As this study's aim was to explore why parents choose private school, the sample consists only of private school families, while some of these do also use government schools, usually for secondary school pupils. In any case, during FGDs parents were asked about whether there were out-of-school children in their community, with the unequivocal answer that there are many. Respondents put this down to poverty in many cases, stating that they know of families that are so poor as to be food insecure. On the other hand are those 'purely ignorant' parents who do not see the value of education when the child could be hawking in the market instead. Some mentioned the perceived lack of job opportunities post-education as being a factor in some parents' decision to save money by not spending on education. This is a matter for further exploration to establish with more clarity how affordable these schools are to the truly poor.
 72. As in Kwara state, parents in Lagos expressed the view that they do not in principle favour private schools, but that they are the preferred option in the context of continuing government failure. 'I went to government school myself, why would I object to government school if the standard was still at the same level?' one FGD participant asked. Many FGD respondents stated that they would certainly return to government school if the quality improved, while some parents were so deeply sceptical that they stated that they would never consider it, under any circumstances that we could describe. When pushed on this point (i.e. asking 'what if all the necessary improvements had been thoroughly put in place?'), one mother states 'I would have to see the improvements very, very well before I would agree...' These views of parents highlighted that the rise of private education is, as in other contexts, a symptom of, and reaction to deep government failure rather than the spontaneous expression by parents of approval of choice in an open and competitive market.

Conclusions

73. Education is as important to many parents residing in slums as it is to wealthier families. Parents feel that education is essential to the future prospects of their children; it is seen as a foregone conclusion that schooling is essential and so they try to access the best possible schooling. Despite their residence in a slum area (and a slightly better-off area adjacent to the slum), sample families were presented with a wide range of schooling options and therefore have to make active choices. It is this school choice that was the focus of this study – to understand the private education market it is necessary to understand how it functions from the client's perspective: what options are they aware of? How do they judge between the various schools; what information is available? Is there any room for negotiation or bargaining with the service provider (the school proprietor)?
74. This study has sought to answer these questions. The private school market in Lagos (and many other contexts) is like many informal sector markets. While many different options exist, the schools are usually small and highly localised, and they are essentially unregulated and un-assessed by the authorities, meaning that there is no objective and comparable information to aid parents in judging between options. The personality of the proprietor comes through as an influential element in school choice; parents place great weight on the reputation of the proprietor and their relationship with him or her. Parents must make decisions based on their own criteria in the absence of any external assessments of school quality.
75. While parents' descriptions of a 'good school' are imprecise, they are keenly aware of certain elements that should be present in any school, irrespective of the context or whether the school is public or private. Teachers should attend school regularly and perform their duties in a committed manner, in short, they should not be absent due to industrial action for months at a time, and when not on strike they should be hard-working. They should be caring of the children they are in charge of; children should be treated as sensitive individuals rather than as a herd to be managed. These teachers should impart learning to their pupils, with the implication coming through implicitly and explicitly at different times that the teachers should be knowledgeable and properly qualified.
76. Parents professed to place great weight on the formal trappings of education: good buildings, qualified and formally trained teachers at schools that are formally approved by the government. For many the cost of this is simply out of reach; very few slum schools can provide this, with only one Makoko school fitting this description (along with several in Iwaya). All of these elements cost money and so the schools that serve the poorer families in the area tend to fulfil none of these criteria (while they may have one or two qualified teachers) and yet still parents choose to pay for them. The lesson to be learned from this is that parents want to feel that their voices will be heard; proximity to home is extremely

- important; teachers that are more responsible for and caring of the children in their charge are crucial.
77. Where children learn to read and do their sums, the qualifications of the teacher are a relatively low priority in practice. All parental criteria for school choice are then nested within the costs of the various options – FGD participants stated clearly that *all choices are dependent on cost*: parents seek the *highest possible quality* at an *affordable price*. Private schools are not affordable to those earning minimum wage or there about; it was found that some negotiation takes place between parents and proprietors regarding fee levels however this is mostly to do with payment in instalments rather than payment of any lesser amounts.
78. As parents engage in informal testing of children in their community to see which children are doing better than others (a highly flawed but widely practiced means of assessing school quality) it is likely that some sort of unified examination with published results would help parents to make choices. Ideally schools would be assessed by quality assurance staff with report findings openly available; however it is recognised that the State Government currently lacks the capacity to manage this on-going and continuous need. In addition such a source may be cumbersome for parents to access and digest; a summary of findings on all schools would be more helpful to parents. In the absence of any other actor with the resources and the mandate to do this, parents are likely to continue making decisions on schooling depending on proximity to the home, cost and what they hear about the school from neighbours and relatives.

Annex 1: The fieldwork instruments⁸

A1.1 Household questionnaire

Questionnaire number _____ Interviewer: Biola / Wande / Ronke & Jo Date _____ School Name _____

HOUSEHOLD ROSTER Name of interviewee _____ Household member number from below table _____

Details of all members of the household (include those that are permanent residents there, exclude those that have moved away):

Members of household – enter names below, continue on back of page of necessary	Sex 1=M 2=F	Age	Relation to household head	Occupation USE CODES or write details if 'other'	In education NOW? >>>> 1=yes 2=no	if yes, type? 1=public 2=private	Highest/ current level of education
Member 1 Head of Household			HH Head				
Member 2							
Member 3							
Member 4							
Member 5							
Member 6							
Member 7							
Member 8							
Member 9							
Member 10							
Member 11							
Member 12							
Member 13							
Member 14							
Member 15							
Member 16							

Codes relation to head: 1=husband 2=wife 3=mother 4=father 5=brother 6=sister 7=cousin 8=aunt 9=uncle 10=son 11=daughter 12=niece 13=nephew 14=granddaughter 15=grandson 16=other [add 'a' if 'in law']

Codes occupation: 1= trader/vender 2=unskilled labourer 3=small business owner 4=skilled worker 5=office/bank worker 6=civil servant 7=fishing 8=housewife 9=unemployed 10=retired 11=nursery pupil 12=primary pupil 13=JSS pupil 14=SSS pupil 15=tertiary student 16=vocational student 17=infant &/or in KG/creche 18=other

Codes education level: 0=none; 1-6=PRY classes; 7-9= JSS years 1-3; 10-12= SSS years 1-3; 13=currently tertiary student; 14=graduate (degree); 15=doing post-grad; 16=complete post-grad; 17=technical training; 18=KG (any class); 19=Nursery classes (any class)

⁸ In all three fieldwork instruments some answer spaces have been reduced or edited out for presentation here, and formatting may be slightly different.

	Child's member number code from p.1				
	School sector 1= Govt 2=Pvt				
	Has child changed from government school to private school – OR – private to government? 1=yes 2=no If no, skip to A.5				
	If yes, what was reason? 1=search for better quality teaching 2=distance 3=over-crowding 4=cost too much 5= Child's school closed down				
	How did you choose specific school? 1=quality of teaching/learning 2=closeness to home 3=affordability 4=only school in walking distance 5=recommendation from trusted person 6=should be far from home 7=Religious education 8=no strikes 9=shouldn't be at sch where parent teaches 10= Proprietor is very good person 11=Takes very good care of children 12=I like the uniform 13= temporary choice – will be changing				
	Reasons for educating each child 1=get good job 2=set up own small business 3=all children get educated these days 4=become someone in future 5=Don't want kids to be illiterate (like us) 6=to become a good leader				
	What level of education do you want child to reach? (write in number of years) E.G.: 12=SS3; 16=graduate; 17=MA; 20=PHD				
	How many days has child been absent in last 4 weeks?				

PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL YOUR CHILD ATTENDS (Sample School)

	What do you consider a good school to be? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Delivers good teaching ☐ 2 Children learn very much ☐ 3 Qualified/trained teachers ☐ 4 Motivated teachers that turn up and work ☐ 5 Low fees ☐ 6 Small class sizes ☐ 7 English – teachers teach IN ENGLISH ☐ 8 English – taught well AS A SUBJECT ☐ 9 Gives lots of homework ☐ 10 Firm discipline ☐ 11 Has good facilities/infrastructure ☐ 12 Good computer room and IT teaching ☐ 13 Vocational training ☐ 14 Relevant curriculum ☐ 15 Religion in school ☐ 16 Care for children/ safe, clean environment ☐ 17 Good books/teaching aids ☐ 18 Cares for child's overall development and wellbeing ☐ 19 Closeness to home ☐ 20 Cultural programmes / traditional dance
	How satisfied are you with _____ [sample] school? READ OPTIONS TO RESPONDENT Tick 1.	☐ 1 Very satisfied ☐ 2 Satisfied ☐ 3 Indifferent – it's just ok ☐ 4 Slightly dissatisfied ☐ 5 Dissatisfied ☐ 6 I don't know
	What is good about the school? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Good teaching/learning ☐ 2 Teachers attend, work hard ☐ 3 Teachers do not go on strike ☐ 4 Good discipline ☐ 5 Lots of homework is given ☐ 6 Children are learning a lot ☐ 7 Good building/infrastructure ☐ 8 Care for children/ safe environment ☐ 9 Close to home ☐ 10 English – teachers teach IN ENGLISH ☐ 11 English – taught well AS A SUBJECT ☐ 12 Teaches in local language ☐ 13 Good religious teaching ☐ 14 I don't know ☐ 15 long established / good track record ☐ 16 caring staff, responsive to complaints ☐ 17 emphasis on maths ☐ 18 good relationship with proprietor ☐ 19 constant improvement ☐ 20 Proprietor sometimes feeds poor children ☐ 21 Affordable

	What problems are there with the school? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Not enough teachers ☐ 2 Poorly qualified teachers ☐ 3 De-motivated teachers ☐ 4 Poor English instruction ☐ 5 Too much corporal punishment ☐ 6 Not enough punishment/discipline ☐ 7 School keeps irregular hours ☐ 8 Poor infrastructure/environment ☐ 9 Not government approved ☐ 10 Too expensive ☐ 11 Child not learning enough ☐ 12 Not enough care taken of children ☐ 13 No/insufficient religious teaching ☐ 14 No problems at all ☐ 15 no school bus ☐ 16 no sports ☐ 17 no toilet ☐ 18 over-crowded ☐ 19 send kids home without notice ☐ 20 poor quality books imposed on students ☐ 21 children expected to bring cleaning materials ☐ 22 No teaching aids ☐ 23 no health facility ☐ 24 No problems at all ☐ 25 Finance – prop has problems paying salaries ☐ 26 I don't know
	Is it important to have good facilities and infrastructure, or is quality of teaching more important? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes, infrastructure is always important ☐ 2 Quality teaching is most important, facilities 2nd ☐ 3 Quality teaching and infrastructure equally important ☐ 4 Infrastructure doesn't really matter ☐ 5 I don't know
	How much do you think your children are learning? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Learning very much ☐ 2 Learning just enough ☐ 3 Not learning enough ☐ 4 Not learning at all ☐ 5 I don't know
	Do you know if your child's school's teachers are qualified and formally trained as teachers? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes, I know they are qualified ☐ 2 Yes, I think they are qualified ☐ 3 Yes, I know they are NOT qualified ☐ 4 Yes, I think they are NOT qualified ☐ 5 Not all are qualified ☐ 6 I don't know
	Is it important to have qualified and trained teachers? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes, formal qualifications very important ☐ 2 No, as long as teachers hard working / doing well ☐ 3 I don't know
	What type of interaction do you have with the school? Tick all that apply	☐ 1 When taking kids to school ☐ 2 Formal meetings with head teacher ☐ 3 Spontaneous meetings with head teacher ☐ 4 PTA meetings

		☐ 5 Never or very rarely ☐ 6 School calls when child not doing well ☐ 7 Other _____
	Does the school listen to your concerns/comments /suggestions? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes, they engage with parents & respond ☐ 2 They listen, but there is no change ☐ 3 They don't really listen to our concerns ☐ 4 They refuse to hear us at all ☐ 5 I don't know, I've never tried to communicate

SCHOOL CHOICE – SCHOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU, AND AFFORDABILITY OF SCHOOLS

	What school types do you know about in your community? READ OPTIONS OUT TO RESPONDENT Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Government school ☐ 2 Community school ☐ 3 Private – Secular ☐ 4 Private – Religious ☐ 5 I don't know
	Which are close enough to your home that you would consider sending your child? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Government school ☐ 2 Community school ☐ 3 Private – Secular ☐ 4 Private – Religious ☐ 5 I don't know
	What is your preferred school type (if all were equally available/close to you)? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Government school ☐ 2 Community school ☐ 3 Private – Secular ☐ 4 Private – Religious ☐ 5 No preferred type, QUALITY COUNTS ☐ 6 I don't know
	Do you have to choose between children in your household because you can't afford all children at a private school or other good school? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Yes, we send some to public school ☐ 2 Yes, send some to cheaper pvt school ☐ 3 No, we don't make choices ☐ 4 N/A (1 primary aged child in HH)
	If you are not sending any of your children to your preferred school type, why is this? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Cost – too expensive ☐ 2 None of preferred type close enough ☐ 3 Public secondary is acceptable ☐ 4 reason connected to particular child ☐ 5 preferred type deteriorated ☐ 6 no pvt sch available at relevant level ☐ 7 spouse insisted on school ☐ 8 N/A
	Which of these schools could you afford/have a choice between? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Government school ☐ 2 Community school ☐ 3 Private – Secular ☐ 4 Private – Religious ☐ 5 I don't know
	Have you ever asked for a concession/reduction/free place at a private school? Tick 1. If no, go to C.9	☐ 1 Yes, asked for reduced cost place ☐ 2 Yes, asked for full waiving of fees ☐ 3 No
	If yes, what was result? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Received reduction in fees from sch ☐ 2 Received full fee waiver ☐ 3 Didn't agree to reduce, but then took what I paid (reduced amount) ☐ 4 Refused to take any lesser amount ☐ 5 Other _____

	How do you perceive private schools in the area? Tick all that apply. DO NOT READ OPTIONS	☐ 1 Affordable ☐ 2 Expensive, but manageable ☐ 3 Too expensive; unaffordable ☐ 4 Good quality ☐ 5 Semi-good quality ☐ 6 Poor quality ☐ 7 Very bad quality ☐ 8 Good facilities ☐ 9 Bad facilities ☐ 10 average facilities ☐ 11 Overcrowded ☐ 12 Too far from home ☐ 13 Close to home ☐ 14 I don't know ☐ 15 good discipline ☐ 16 students must be neat ☐ 17 sports ☐ 18 safe and secure ☐ 19 no strikes ☐ 20 learning always faster due to fee paid ☐ 21 good class sizes ☐ 22 Good hours of operation/late enough ☐ 23 Religion not sincerely upheld
	Have private school numbers in your area changed in the last ten years? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Many more; more schools opening ☐ 2 Some schools have opened ☐ 3 No change ☐ 4 Somewhat fewer private schools ☐ 5 Many fewer schools ☐ 6 I don't know
	How do you feel about having many private schools in your area (whether or not there are now)? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 It is a good thing – lots of choice ☐ 2 It would be a good thing to have choice ☐ 3 I don't like it – government schools should serve all / bad for govt schs ☐ 4 shows government schools are not doing their job ☐ 5 I can't afford private; doesn't affect me ☐ 6 So many springing up, many small and very bad quality. Not good thing ☐ 7 I don't know
	How do you perceive government schools in the area? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Affordable ☐ 2 Expensive ☐ 3 Teachers do not teach/insincere ☐ 4 Good quality ☐ 5 Semi-good quality ☐ 6 Poor quality ☐ 7 Very bad quality ☐ 8 Good facilities ☐ 9 Bad facilities ☐ 10 Overcrowded ☐ 11 Too far from home ☐ 12 teachers appointed politically ☐ 13 strikes ☐ 14 indiscipline

		☐ 15 teachers are not trained ☐ 16 other parents do not buy books ☐ 17 no teaching aids ☐ 18 insufficient teachers ☐ 19 no health facility ☐ 20 bring students to farm to work there ☐ 21 no inspection of schools has led to decline ☐ 22 Unresponsive to complaints ☐ 23 No care taken of kids at all ☐ 24 I don't know
	Have government schools changed for better or worse in the last ten years? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Much better ☐ 2 Somewhat better ☐ 3 No change ☐ 4 Worse ☐ 5 Much worse ☐ 6 I don't know
	Would you ever consider sending your child to government school? Tick 1. If yes, skip to C.16	☐ 1 Yes, if quality improved ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 Yes, already some children in govt sch ☐ 4 I don't know ☐ 5 Yes, if one was close enough to home
	If no, why not? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 No teaching / learning there ☐ 2 Because government schools are for the poor/ those who don't care ☐ 3 I don't know
	Why do you think people want to run private schools? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 To serve the community; schools needed in the community ☐ 2 For profit/to earn a living ☐ 3 For political influence/ make a name ☐ 4 because government is failing ☐ 5 I don't know
	Is your child's school government-approved? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 I don't know
	Do you know what it means for a school to be government approved or unapproved? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes [respondent understood] ☐ 2 No [respondent didn't know about it]
	Does approval status matter to you? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 I was not even aware of this issue
	Do you think your private school needs to improve? Tick 1. If no, skip to D.1	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 I don't know
	If yes, what does the school need to improve? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 The quality of teachers ☐ 2 Better trained/qualified teachers ☐ 3 Better buildings/facilities/infrastructure ☐ 4 Better furniture ☐ 5 More teachers (of any type - numbers) ☐ 6 Better textbooks ☐ 7 Better curriculum ☐ 8 More outside/play space ☐ 9 Safer environment

		☐ 10 Sports ☐ 11 Funds for school development ☐ 12 meaningful inspection for approval ☐ 13 health facility ☐ 14 get school bus ☐ 15 smaller class sizes ☐ 16 IT facilities ☐ 17 constant supervision of teachers needed ☐ 18 teachers should get good employment terms/conditions ☐ 19 improve English teaching ☐ 20 PTA should be established ☐ 21 teaching aids/ books ☐ 22 I don't know ☐ 23 Toilet needed
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SCHOOLING COSTS & AFFORDABILITY

	Is it difficult to afford schooling? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Very difficult ☐ 2 Difficult ☐ 3 affordable ☐ 4 Very easily affordable ☐ 5 sometimes difficult
	Have you ever been unable to meet the fees or had temporary trouble paying? Tick 1. If no, skip to D.4	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No
	If yes, what action did the school take? Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Allowed child to stay, asked full payment by a certain date ☐ 2 Allowed child to stay, accepted what we could afford to pay (reduced amount) ☐ 3 Child sent home until paid in full ☐ 4 Child sent home until came with some money (reduced amount) ☐ 5 Child asked to leave school permanently ☐ 6 withhold report card ☐ 7 accept in instalments – full payment

COSTS OF SENDING PRIVATE SCHOOL CHILDREN TO SCHOOL**Make Sure to Specify if Yearly / Termly / Monthly / Daily**

Child household member number				
School child is attending 1=Govt 2=Pvt				
Class child is in				
Main school fee (tuition) per day/ month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
Registration per term/ year /once only at start (delete as needed)				
Examinations per term/ year (delete as needed)				
Afternoon classes / tuition per month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
Development per month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
PTA per month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
Sports per month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
Books Per term/ year (delete as needed)				
Stationary per term/ year (delete as needed)				
Books & stationary per term/ year (delete as needed)				
Uniform per term/ year (delete as needed)				
Transportation per month/ term/ year (delete as needed)				
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (if it cannot be broken down, circle the various items this total includes in rows above)				

FAMILY'S FINANCIAL SECURITY

	Does the household have any savings? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 I don't know
	Does the household have any loans? Tick 1.	☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No ☐ 3 I don't know
	Do you have to save money in any of these areas to pay for school? READ OPTIONS TO RESPONDENTS Tick all that apply.	☐ 1 Healthcare ☐ 2 Clothing ☐ 3 Food ☐ 4 Livelihood/business inputs ☐ 5 Social outings ☐ 6 Education of some children in household ☐ 7 General running of household ☐ 8 Other _____
	Financially, are you.... Read out list of 5 options Tick 1.	☐ 1 Well off ☐ 2 Comfortable/secure ☐ 3 Barely secure ☐ 4 Poor ☐ 5 Very poor ☐ 6 I don't know
	Is your living... Read out list of 5 options Tick 1.	☐ 1 Very vulnerable/uncertain ☐ 2 Somewhat vulnerable/uncertain ☐ 3 Steady but moderate ☐ 4 Quite secure ☐ 5 Very secure, no problems

details of earners in family – enter Naira per month (or other) in cells (or enter details of payment in kind)

Wage earner Enter HH member no.>	Main earner: HH member number	2 nd earner	3 rd earner	4 th earner	5 th earner	6 th earner
Fishing/ fish preparation						
Small business						
Skilled labour						
Unskilled manual work						
Vending/ trading						
Office work/ bank work						
Sawmills						
Other						

Is your home... Tick 1.	☐ 1 Owned ☐ 2 Rented – long term, secure ☐ 3 Rented – long term, insecure ☐ 4 Rented – short term, insecure ☐ 5 Squatting – long term ☐ 6 Squatting – short term ☐ 7 official quarters
How many people usually sleep in the house?	
How many rooms do you have in the house?	

What assets do you own (enter numbers, including 0 where none are owned)?

NOTE – be sensitive and do not mention items that it is obvious the family cannot own

____ sewing machine ____ generator ____ motor bike ____ car ____ canoe/boat ____ a/c ____ pieces solid furniture	____ chickens (1=yes we have some; 0=none) ____ sm livestock (1= yes, we have some; 0=none)) ____ kerosene / gas lamp ____ kerosene / gas cooker (1= yes, we have) ____ tools for fishing/livelihood ____ TV ____ Radio
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Questions regarding the house

	Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:	Option 4:	Option 5:
Location:	☐ Land	☐ Lagoon (boat)	☐ Lagoon (foot)		
Home is:	☐ Flat	☐ House	☐ Shared house	☐ Single room	☐ Other:
Type of construction	☐ Slum	☐ Middle-quality urban	☐ Solid, modern (city type)	☐ On stilts	
Size of house	☐ Very small	☐ Small	☐ Medium	☐ Large	☐ Very large
Overcrowded?	☐ Yes	☐ Somewhat	☐ No		
Toilets	☐ None	☐ Water flush	☐ Pit	☐ Other (specify):	
Electricity connection	☐ Yes, NEPA only	☐ No	☐ Generator & NEPA	☐ Generator only	
Water	☐ Piped water	☐ Communal tap	☐ Paying tap (bore hole)	☐ well	☐ buying sachets
General state of repair of house/condition	☐ Very poor	☐ Poor	☐ Moderate	☐ Good	☐ Very good
Impression of status of HH	☐ Very poor	☐ Poor	☐ Moderate	☐ Comfortable	☐ Well-off

Any notes on above: _____

A1.4 Focus group discussion schedule

Focus Group Schedule

- **Describe what the purpose of the research is.**
 - **Confidentiality – explain that this is.**
 - **Ask if it's ok to record – tell people not to use their full names if they do not want this recorded.**
1. How do you feel about public schools?
 2. Have they changed for better or worse?
 3. How could they improve?
 4. How do you feel about private schools?
 5. Have they changed for better or worse?
 6. How many are there around here?
 - a. Are there several schools close enough to home that they could compete for your child?
 7. Would you like there to be more private schools?
 8. Do you think that private schools competing against each other is good for education quality?
 9. How could private schools improve?
 10. What do you pay to access private schools?
 11. What do you pay to access public schools?
 12. How affordable are public schools?
 13. How affordable are private schools?
 - a. Are there many people in the community who cannot afford private schools?
 - b. Will schools accept any lesser amount once you've agreed on the initial sum (and then can't pay)?
 - c. Will schools agree in advance any lesser amount through bargaining?
 14. How did you choose your child's school?
 15. Do you use different school types for different children in your family?
 16. If public schools were as good as private, would anyone want to use private schools?
 - a. Is it a status issue to use a private school?

Annex 2: Team members

Name	Position	Organisation
Dr. Joanna Härmä	Private Education Research Specialist	ESSPIN
Ms. Abiola Lawal	Researcher	Independent consultant
Mrs. Yewande Adedipe	Researcher	Independent consultant
Mrs. Aderonke Azonobi	Research assistant	Independent consultant

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