

# **Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)**

## **Assignment Report**

### **Women's Participation in School-Based Management and Communities within the Complex Socio-cultural Context of Nigeria**

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CGP	Civil Society and Government Partnership
CRLP	Center for Reproductive Law and Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFS	Direct Funding to Schools
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria
LGA	Local Government Authority
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
NCNE	National Commission for Nomadic Education
NEP	Nomadic Education Programme
PD	Positive Deviant
PDA	Positive Deviance Approach
PDH	Positive Deviant Husband
PDI	Positive Deviance Inquiry
PDW	Positive Deviant Woman
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBMC	School-based Management Committee
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
WACOL	Women's Aid Collective
WARDC	Women's Advocates Research and Documentation Centre
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission

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I would like to acknowledge with appreciation the dedication and tireless efforts of the members of the State Research Consultants.<sup>1</sup>

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Emily Coinco

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for the names of State researchers.

## Executive Summary

1. In July 2012, the Education Sector Strategy Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), with Save the Children, commissioned research on women's participation in School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and their communities from July to September 2012. The research was conducted in four pre-selected ESSPIN representative States of Nigeria; Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Jigawa. The research was commissioned to enable ESSPIN to strengthen ongoing work on gender, girl's education and women's participation in school based management.
2. Initial research<sup>2</sup> on SBMC development following the introduction of SBMCs by the federal government in all primary and junior secondary schools of Nigeria (National Council for Education 2006) had indicated the following: there was weak implementation of the policy and confusion over SBMC roles and responsibilities; the national guidelines did not recognise the diversity of the country and the peculiarities of different states; there was a need for capacity development to build the complex skills required for SBMCs to function well, and the participation of women and children was 'highly constrained'. However, the research also revealed a high level of community willingness and interest to support schools, including interest of women and children, given the right conditions. The initial SBMC research forms part of the background for this research, as does the experience and reports of civil society organisations working in partnership with Department of Social Mobilisation staff to activate, train and mentor SBMCs in 6 states between 2010 and 2012.
3. Domestication of the Federal SBMC Guidelines in all States supported by ESSPIN, through a state-led process of community and state level 'visioning', emphasised the participation of children and young people, and women in School Based Management. It is also emphasised by UBEC in the recently revised UBEC guidelines (2011) for the development of School Based Management Committees.<sup>3</sup> These guidelines are now the basis for UBEC's replication of the SBMC model nationally.
4. This research utilised the Positive Deviant Approach (PDA), which intends to learn from women, known as Positive Deviant Women (PDW) and their families, who through their "uncommon strategies, practices or behaviours" enable themselves to find "better solutions" in increasing women's participation in SBMCs and in communities; than their neighbours who have the "same access" to the "same resources" and facing "similar challenges". The PDA is a community driven research, which involved various members of the research communities; traditional, administrative and religious leaders, and representation of a cross-section of civil society. Community members identified a sample of forty positive deviant women (PDW) from the four research States, ten from each State.

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<sup>2</sup>Poulsen, H. (2009). *School Based Management Committees in Policy and Practice: Research Synthesis Report*.

<sup>3</sup> UBEC. (2011). *Revised Guidelines for the Development of School Based Management Committees, Section 3*.



43% of all positive deviant women belong to the marginalised group<sup>4</sup> within their research communities, 52% belong in the lower middle class whilst 5% belong to the higher middle class. Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through literature review, participatory rural appraisals from adult community members from both rural and semi-rural areas, focus group discussions with teenage boys and girls, and in-depth interviews with PDW and their family members as well as interviews with community key informants. Data from this research provides a snap shot into the lives of positive deviant women and their family at a specific given time.

5. The research utilises a two-pronged approach. The first part is learning about the existing socio-cultural challenges women face and their coping mechanisms whilst the second part of the research explores areas in which community members, especially men, may accept and welcome women's active participation. The main objectives of this study were to; establish the factors affecting women's and girls participation in community and education related decision making processes, understand the roles active community women and SBMC women are playing in further enhancing women's participation and girl's participation, determine the wider impact of women's participation in SBMCs in the household and community level and lastly, propose ways of moving forward.
6. SBMCs in Nigeria were set up as part of a process of decentralisation whereby some responsibilities are devolved to authorities closer to schools, community members, including women and children participate in school governance. Between 2010 and 2012, six states domesticated the national SBMC guidelines with technical support by ESSPIN and SBMC training and follow-up mentoring support was rolled out. (Jigawa, Kaduna, Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Lagos). Eight mentoring support visits provided further strengthening to the capacity of SBMC members in addressing a range of education issues related to quality, access to resources and child protection.

#### *Factors affecting women's and girl's participation*

7. Most research respondents describe Nigeria's prevailing traditional, socio-cultural structures and practices as inherently a patriarchal society. Strong evidence collected from research sites show the very definition of a patriarchal community and family structure where the father or oldest male is the supreme authority, where titles, and rights are traced through the male lineage. This social order gives men authority over women and children, which greatly impede women's active participation in community life. There are strongly ascribed gender roles and community taboos, which ensure that women and girls conform to "acceptable" community social values. Men are seen as leaders, family providers, and decision-makers, whilst women's roles and responsibilities focus primarily on child bearing, child rearing and taking care of the home. Women are seen to be subservient to men and are expected to stay home. In Kano and Jigawa, wives are seen as part of their husband's possession. Women's participation in community life is limited to

social events, part of their expected role. As part of their ascribed role, research results indicate that women play an important role in social events; they take charge of social gatherings such as weddings, naming ceremonies, burials, and church activities. The blurring lines between traditional, socio-cultural practices and religious beliefs further reinforce the subservient stature of women within certain families and communities. The lack of a community forum where everyone; men, women and children can equally participate and discuss issues is unheard of. Aside from the lack of decision-making opportunities, positive deviant women also mentioned the lack of time as a key factor that inhibits women's participation in community and SBMC activities. With close to three-fourths of the population living below the poverty level, positive deviant women and children have been forced to provide supplementary financial assistance to their family's income to make ends meet. In the research communities in Kwara, women are the primary breadwinners of their families. Financial independence in Kwara has evidently resulted to stronger participation in community and school activities when compared to Kano where women are greatly dependent on their husbands due to the lack of or limited access to financial resources and low skills level.

8. Low or lack of education was an important factor in limiting women's participation. Positive deviant respondents saw education as equating to being knowledgeable and having exposure to "the modern" world. Education is seen as a source of vital information. 24.2% of male and female positive deviant respondents never went to school; of this number 81.3% are women. For those that were not fortunate to be educated or with low education levels, respondents stated it has resulted in a life of regrets and low self-esteem.
9. Yet, in spite of all the challenges women face in having a voice, positive deviant women have been able to overcome these challenges, often times, with the help of their family members. Like-minded religious leaders in Kano and Kwara as well as and traditional leaders in Jigawa have come out in support of women's active involvement in education work, which extends to activities in the community.
10. Positive deviant women indicated that there is a noticeable slow paradigm shift in their communities in terms of girl's education but that much work still lies ahead. Studies indicate that girl's generally drop out of school after completing primary school. Early marriage in many of the research communities is fervently practised, it is seen as a natural part of life and not as a problem. The age for early marriage, usually between 12 to 16 years old, coincides with the age girls are said to drop out of school. Unless the factors contributing to the inhibition of girl's and women's participation in communities and school activities are immediately addressed, women's or girl's participation will not see any improvement and may even get worse in the coming years.

#### ***Women and School Based Management Committees***

11. In the domestication of SBMCs, women have a 20 to 30% representation in SBMC board also referred to as the "Executive." For the purpose of this research, the term

“Executive” will be used to refer to the main people occupying the positions of SBMC Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary (Head Teacher), Treasurer, and Press Relations Officer unless otherwise noted. The strategy in Nigeria of creating SBMC women’s committee is further enhancing the meaningful participation of women in SBMCs by giving more women an opportunity to join and actively participate in school activities. Of the positive deviant women identified by community members, 77.5% of the women are SBMC members whilst 22.5% are non-members. Of those that are SBMC members, only a handful of PD women occupy positions in the Executive. Majority of the PD women involved in SBMC activities are members of the SBMC women’s committees. Due to the low number and the position of the women in the SBMC structure, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of direct contribution SBMC women have in decision making processes although it is apparent that the present range of women’s participation is progressing from the first stage of being mere recipients of information into being consulted, having a direct involvement in activities and in some cases working in collaboration with partners in addressing education issues.

12. Prior to the establishment of SBMCs and SBMC women’s committees in ESSPIN supported states particularly in Jigawa, Kano and certain parts of Kwara, women’s participation in schools and community activities were generally unheard of. Women were mostly home, caring for their children, their family, and the household. In some communities in Kwara, women were busy with their trade. Research findings show that the establishment of SBMC women’s committee groups have given women an opportunity to “be relevant”. Presently SBMC women committee group members are engaged in various school activities in their communities. Based on responses gathered from community members and positive deviant SBMC women’s committee members, women in their communities are now involved in conducting education awareness campaigns, fund raising, house-to-house visits, and school visits, and ensuring that teachers are in class teaching children amongst others. Other activities mentioned by positive deviant women also included informal counselling of young girls in their community on the importance of education and moral values. SBMCs and SMBC women’s committee members have been recognised by positive deviant respondents and key community resource people as the main actors in increasing student enrolment in their school communities.
13. The impact of women’s participation is not only limited to the school environment of children, nearby communities are also benefiting from improvements of school facilities. In at least one research community in Enugu, Kwara and Jigawa, fundraising conducted by SBMC women’s subcommittees resulted to a matching fund from ESSPIN for a borehole. These boreholes are presently supplying water not only to the entire school population but also to community members as well. Other SBMC members have also provided their time and resources in improving schools. In Jigawa, a male SBMC member who is a carpenter by profession made desks and chairs to contribute to the school. In several instances there have been reports of positive deviant women informally contracting seamstresses in the

community to mend children's uniforms at their own expense. To encourage more girls to go to school, the SBMC in one research community in Jigawa provided uniforms to girls in school, boys were said to get their uniforms in the second round of fundraising. As highlighted by positive deviant women in, the legitimacy of their work in their communities is directly related to the tangible results seen by questioning community members.

14. Women's active participation in SBMC activities is still misunderstood by certain community members. The misunderstanding may be traced from the little importance certain community members place on education or the lack of understanding why positive deviant women make certain sacrifices in spite of the many challenges they face. One common struggle mentioned by most women across the four research sites is the battle against frequent insults, ridicules and jeering they receive while conducting SBMC related activities in the community.
15. In Jigawa, PD women stated that the constant ridicules and jeering they received from other community members for conducting house visits, fund raising and education advocacy campaigns lessened when new uniforms were provided by the SBMC to girls in their school. In pockets of research communities, people supporting women's involvement in education believe that women should be involved in education and school activities because this is a task concerning children thus is seen as an extension of women's role in raising their children.

#### *The way forward on Women's Participation*

16. To increase women's participation in community and school activities, below are selected recommendations:
  - Working with men as partners: The power of change lies with the men, gatekeepers of communities and families. Positive change in behavioural attitudes, practices and altering gender roles in response to changing times through higher women's empowerment and participation may only be achieved if it is done working in partnership with men. It is recommended that State partners working on SBMC development in States, including both Government and civil society forge strong linkages to like-minded men and women at different levels of society who believe in advancing women's empowerment and participation in school and in communities.
  - Community-wide SBMC forum: It is recommended that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), working in partnership with the Government, particularly the Social Mobilisation Department of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) continue to foster an inclusive community wide SBMC forum at LGEA level where men, women, and children can all equally take part in and be heard in a public dialogue.
  - Improved access to quality adult literacy classes: There would be great value in linking SBMCs to the State Agency for Mass Education in each state, as well as in linking

SBMCs, CSOs and Government partners to Second Chance Schools set up by Government in some areas to assist them in helping girls who have dropped out of school due to pregnancy or other reasons, to finish their education. In areas where adult literacy classes are not available, there is an urgent need for SBMCs link with the State Agency for Mass Education and the Ministry of Women Affairs for Adult Literacy Programme to advocate for “*quality*” adult literacy programmes.

- Improved access to skills, livelihoods training, and microfinance: Empowering women begins with breaking the cycle of poverty. Access to resources and knowing the proper use of resources is true empowerment. Empowering marginalised women is giving them lifelong skills and financial independence through the provision of a training package of skills training and livelihoods programmes combined with information on microcredit schemes, the market, budgeting and savings schemes. It is recommended that SBMCs and women’s groups link with microcredit organisations and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Social Development Departments in each State.
- Early marriage or child marriage: It is recommended that CSOs and Government partners discuss early marriage as part of their mentoring support sessions to SBMCs and communities in relation to girl’s education’s enrolment, drop-out and transition to higher grades. It is also suggested that SBMC women’s committee member’s advocacy campaigns focus on the benefits of keeping girls in school at least until secondary school, or beyond if possible.
- Providing leadership opportunities to women: It is recommended to States that for the review of the SBMC policy guideline book, rotating leadership roles be introduced in SBMCs by the third year and that all positions be open to qualified women.
- Ensure quality training of SBMC women committee members: Members of SBMC women’s committees are in the frontline of school activities in the community, it is recommended that CSOs conduct a training needs assessment for the newly developed committees to address their emerging needs. It is further recommended that **States** continue to quality assure SBMC training by CSOs and Government partners in roll-out to new schools and LGEAs.

### *Children’s Perspectives and Way forward*

17. Focus group discussions with teenage children from the four research sites revealed several challenges faced by children in schools. Common responses include the lack of or inadequate teaching and learning materials, low or poor quality education and unsafe school infrastructures, lack of potable drinking water, corporal punishment, child labour, early marriage, far distance of schools from communities, the need to teach minority

groups or nomadic children in their mother tongue and the collection of PTA levies which results to children being sent out of class.

18. The campaign surrounding education has resulted in an increase of children presently registered in ESSPIN supported schools but the changes needed to provide quality education in a safe learning environment is still in progress. Federal and State Ministry Education offices must allocate and invest more money in providing safe school infrastructures, sufficient teaching and learning materials and the appointment of female teachers, especially in rural communities. Below are selected recommendations for issues raised by children:

- PTA levy: Although basic education is free in Nigeria, there are still many direct and indirect costs associated to education. The PTA levy is considered by many teenage children to be a great barrier in their education. Children are frequently sent out of class if they are unable to pay. It is recommended that SBMCs continue to support marginalised children according to their specific context and capacity including those at at-risk of dropping out to pay PTA levies. It is further recommended that States and schools review the rate of the PTA levy according to districts and living standards of communities, and that State Governments continue to consider a policy and mechanism for direct funding to schools.
- Child labour: The report Child Labour in Nigeria, reveals a staggering 15 million children under the age of 14 years are working across Nigeria, many are working long hours and in unhealthy and dangerous work environments. Children involved in child labour are more likely to drop out of school compared to their counterparts. Majority of the FGD children involved in petty trade, hawking and other informal forms of work save their money to pay PTA levies and/or buy school supplies. It is recommended that SBMCs link with the State and Federal Ministry of Youth Affairs and Development, CBOs and Protection Networks within their States to help address different forms of child labour.
- Teaching minority or nomadic children in their mother tongue: Parents of indigenous or nomadic children are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning if education is conducted in their mother tongue. To develop the literacy and verbal proficiency required for academic achievement and improved learning outcomes in secondary school, six to eight years of basic education in mother tongue is essential. Mother tongue education stops after primary 3 under current policy in Nigeria. It is recommended that minority, nomadic children and other children struggling with language of instruction be taught in their mother tongue for their primary years, learning English as a second language.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>CfBT/Save the Children (2009) Language and Education: The Missing Link – How the language used in schools threatens the achievement of education for all

- Corporal punishment: Corporal punishment was mentioned by both children and parents in most of the research sites. Some children consider corporal punishment as a *“normal form of school discipline.”* Both teenage children and parents interviewed complained of the use of *“extreme discipline,”* which has led to altercations between parents and teachers. It is recommended that State partners working on SBMC development, including both Government and CSOs, and teacher training in the education sector assist in the provision of training, mentoring and follow up on alternative ways of class management and positive forms of school discipline for teachers and SBMC members. It is also recommended that the Teacher’s Code of Conduct, which all teachers sign at the point of registration, be widely disseminated across states with particular emphasis on the clause on corporal punishment.
- Positive role models: Positive role models are crucial to all. They provide hope, encouragement and give everyone a chance to dream. It is recommended that SBMCs, CSOs and government partners identify, recognise and support positive role models and spokespersons for education and women’s participation in their own schools and communities.

19. Findings from this research show there is still much work to be done in changing community’s perceptions on the value placed on girls and women. Though there are manifestations of slow change on the value placed in education, advocacy campaigns in sending girls to and keeping them in school beyond primary education is essential to providing them with better future options.
20. Significant change and community-wide impact are seen in women’s participation in ESSPIN supported States through their involvement in SBMC school activities. There is an emerging acceptance of higher women’s participation in school related activities in the research communities. The range of women’s participation is slowly evolving from merely attending meetings into active involvement in collaborative work with various sectors in the community. With the changing roles of women, it is imperative that a community-wide positive behavioural change in women’s and girl’s contributions and value also takes place. This may only be achieved with a multi-dimensional, cross-sectoral approach from all duty bearers, gatekeepers and community members, an equal voice between men, women and children. Recognising that women are generally marginalised compared to men due to their access to resources, truly empowering women will only take place if proper training and financial support is provided in a consistent and systematic manner. Acquiring knowledge, access to resources, a chance to actively take part and contribute in decision-making opportunities is real empowerment. SBMC structures must provide these opportunities to qualified women.

## Introduction

21. In July 2012, the Education Sector Strategy Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), with Save the Children, commissioned a research from July to September 2012 in four pre-selected representative States of Nigeria; Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Jigawa, on women's participation in School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and women's participation in communities in relation to socio-cultural traditions and practices.

## The Nigerian Context

22. Nigeria has an estimated 162.5 million people,<sup>6</sup> which equates to 2% of the world's total population. It has one of the most developed economies in Africa. The country's petroleum industry brings in 95% of the foreign trade earnings and roughly 80% of budget revenues. However, despite the country's continuing economic growth, there has been little impact on its poverty situation. The poverty level in the country is at 71.5%.<sup>7</sup> People living in absolute poverty rose from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9 in 2010. Recent numbers from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics indicate that 61.2% of the population live below a dollar a day. This number is expected to increase as adjustments are made to follow the World Bank poverty line increase to \$1.25 a day instead for the old reference of \$1 a day. Nigeria is ranked 156/187 countries in the Human Development Index.<sup>8</sup>
23. There are 80.2 million women and girls in Nigeria. One in every four women in Sub-Saharan Africa is Nigerian, yet Nigeria is ranked 120/135 in the Global Gender Gap Index.<sup>9</sup> Agriculture is the main revenue for two-thirds of the country's population. Fifty-four percent of women live and work in rural areas of the country. It is estimated that between 60% to 79% of rural work force are women whilst, only five percent own the land they work on,<sup>10</sup> whilst men are five times more likely to own land. One in three jobs in the formal sector belong to a woman.<sup>11</sup> Women are generally involved in low paying, casual, menial jobs, providing unreliable, inconsistent yet much needed financial support.
24. Studies show that education has a direct impact on a person's employability and eventually his or her financial security. Between 1990 and 2008, more men completed primary school (64% men, 49% women). Although Nigeria has seen an increase in the literacy rate of 50% for women, it still lags behind the 72% literacy rate of men. In eight Northern States, over 80% of women are unable to read compared to 54% of men. In Jigawa State, women's

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<sup>6</sup>World Bank. (2012).

<sup>7</sup>Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2012).

<sup>8</sup>United Nations Development Programme. (2011). *Human Development Index*.

<sup>9</sup>World Economic Forum. (2011). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2011: Rankings and Scores*. World Economic Forum. Geneva, Switzerland.

<sup>10</sup>Aluko, B.T., and Amidu, A. (2006). *Women and Land Rights Reforms in Nigeria. Paper presented at the 5th FIG regional conference, on Promoting Land Administration and Good Governance*. Accra, Ghana, March 8-11, 2006.

<sup>11</sup>British Council. (2012). *Gender in Nigeria Report 2012*. British Council, Nigeria.



illiteracy is at 94%.<sup>12</sup> More than two-thirds of 15-19 year old girls in northern Nigeria are unable to read a sentence compared to less than 10% in southern States. An estimated 35% or 11 million school aged children are presently out of school (3.6 million in primary school and 7.2 million in junior secondary school).

25. Nigeria's greatest untapped resources are its women and children. To achieve economic growth, social progress, and sustainable development, women and children's rights, potentials and contributions must be recognised. The Government of Nigeria has been a signatory to the Child Rights Act and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) since 1985. In 2004, the CEDWA Protocol was ratified. Although changes have occurred, these have come at a slow pace. The domestication of the Child Rights Act and CEDAW in all Nigerian States will provide a legal framework that will ensure that a girl will have all her basic rights legally protected throughout her lifetime. To date, there are only 23 Nigerian States that have domesticated the Child Rights Act whilst the domestication of CEDAW has still not been pushed in parliament.

### ESSPIN, SBMCs and Women's Participation

26. The Education Sector Strategy Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) is a six-year education, Department for International Development (DFID) UK assistance funded, development programme of 83.5 million GBP from 2008 to 2014. ESSPIN has supported States with the domestication of federal SBMC guidelines (2006) and the establishment and functioning of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) as a vehicle for community voice and participation in education, for improved school governance and accountability. Furthermore, all state specific SBMC policies emphasise and create the space for the voice and participation of marginalised members of communities, particularly women and children. In 2010 and 2011, SBMC training was rolled out in six states; Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Enugu and Lagos. Follow up training was provided with eight mentoring and monitoring visits to further strengthen the capacity of SBMC members in addressing a range of education issues related to quality, inclusive education, access to resources, communication, managing relationships and change, and child protection. ESSPIN is presently working in 1164 schools with an 85% rate of functioning SBMCs. Functionality is measured according to key criteria developed from State SBMC policy guidelines and these criteria are monitored by Social Mobilisation Officers from the Department of Social Mobilisation in SUBEB, the institutional home of the SBMC, who are partnered with civil society organisations to support and monitor SBMC development in the states.

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<sup>12</sup> National Population Commission (Nigeria) and RTI International. (2011). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) EdData Profile 1990, 2003, and 2008: Education Data for Decision-Making*. 2011. Washington, DC, USA: National Population Commission and RTI International.

27. Findings from initial SBMC research (2009)<sup>13</sup> highlighted that where SBMCs had been formed in States, they were not functioning well, and that the participation of women and children was 'highly constrained'. However it also revealed a high level of community willingness and interest to support schools, including interest of women and children, given the right conditions. Two more recent studies on SBMCs commissioned by ESSPIN suggest that although there has been positive change in women's participation in SBMCs since 2009 challenges remain. Stronger participation of women and children in SBMCs remains a predicament. It is recognised that challenges remain in the extent to which women participate and the nature of their participation.<sup>14</sup>
28. SBMC report conducted in 2009<sup>15</sup> in Nigeria stated that national SBMC Guidelines, which clearly stipulates women's membership, was largely ignored. Similarly, recent studies show that the range of women's participation greatly varies in different States, which may be attributed to the country's diverse socio-cultural and religious contexts.

### Purpose of the Consultancy

29. State SBMC policies place strong emphasis on enhancing women's participation in SBMCs and the role that women can play in supporting the education of their children and the community in general. The purpose of this research is to "learn from what States have achieved so far and gain further insights into the factors and nuances which continue to affect the participation of women in SBMCs and education decision-making." The main objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the status of women's participation as it affects education and community decision-making in the socio-cultural and religious context of Northern and Eastern Nigeria. This research further intends to explore the way forward, to further expand, and strengthen women's participation in education and educational related decision making processes.
30. This research aims to answer the following key research question below:
- What are the factors affecting/limiting women's and girl's participation in community and education related decision-making in northern and eastern Nigeria?
  - What part are active women and SBMC women playing in further enhancing women's participation and how are these women supporting the rights of girl's to education at community level?
  - What if any, is the wider or unintended impact of women's participation in SBMCs in the household and community level?

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<sup>13</sup>Poulsen H (2009) Research Synthesis Report: SBMCs in Policy and Practice. ESSPIN

<sup>14</sup>Pinnock, H. (2011). *Performance Analysis of School Based Management Committees: Findings from Programme Data 2010-2011*. ESSPIN. Abuja, Nigeria.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* Poulsen.

- To what extent are ESSPIN strategies under Community Engagement and Learner Participation enhancing the meaningful participation of women in SBMCs and what future strategies can be adopted to strengthen this?

## Structure of the Report

31. The report is divided into four parts; methodology section, findings section, conclusion section and options and next steps. The “methodology section” outlines the research framework and discusses the positive deviance approach. The “findings section” is divided into thematic areas with key discussion points and quotes from research respondents. The “conclusion section” summarises the findings of the research and provides concluding remarks while the section on “options and next steps” presents recommendations on moving forward.

## Methodology and Main Activities

32. As stated in the terms of reference, the research intends to uncover and understand socio-cultural beliefs, values, practices, and experiences of research communities in relation to women’s participation in education in the selected ESSPIN supported States. In answering the questions why and how, a multi-method participatory research approach was utilised in gathering evidence-based quantitative data.
33. A five-day training for researchers was carried out and a pilot of the research tools, after which, the researchers carried out a five-day fieldwork in each of the four pre-selected ESSPIN supported States. To paint a more relevant picture of women’s participation and the socio-cultural context surrounding it in research communities, evidence-based qualitative data was systematically gathered through the following methodologies:
  - Positive Deviance Approach (PDA) with positive deviant women and their families;
  - Participatory Rural Appraisal (FGD) with a cross section of community representatives;
  - Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with teenage boys and girls;
  - In-depth interview (IDI) with community key informants and gate keepers;
  - Feedback or reporting back to community members.
  - As part of the process, translation of the tools into local languages helped respondents to engage

## The Positive Deviance Approach (PDA)

- “In every community, there are certain individuals whose *“uncommon behaviours and strategies”* enable them to find *“better solutions”* to problems than their neighbours who have access to the *“same resources”* and are facing similar challenges.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>[www.positivedeviance.org/www.positivedeviance.org/](http://www.positivedeviance.org/www.positivedeviance.org/)

34. The Positive Deviance Approach (PDA) is a community led, asset-based approach, which is grounded on the theory that existing within each community are untapped people or “assets.” These “assets,” thought of as least likely to succeed, are also known as positive deviants (PD). Positive deviants, demonstrate uncommon practices, behaviours, or strategies that allow them to overcome a specific problem without access to special resources. The positive deviant approach brings about sustainable behavioural and social change by identifying solutions already existing and successfully practiced TODAY by positive deviant individuals within their own communities. Identifying successful uncommon behaviours and strategies of positive deviants, not only raises people’s awareness on different possibilities but also allows communities to develop a plan of action to promote and adapt behaviours and strategies in addressing certain issues specific within their own community.

### **Positive Deviance and Women’s Participation**

35. The positive deviance approach was adapted for this study to gather information and stories related to successful women’s participation in SBMC and in research communities. Generally, community members view active women in a positive light. It is important to note however that due to cultural and traditional beliefs and practices in Kano, active women are viewed in a negative light for challenging traditional practices and being non-conformist. Caution had to be taken specifically in Kano, to use a more neutral word to present the concept of positive deviant women. Given that active women in their communities are more often than not, frowned upon for stepping beyond acceptable community norms of how women should act, it was agreed that the word “active women” was the terminology to be used to introduce the PD concept.
36. Being a community led approach, 80 community members (50% men, 50% women) from a cross-section various sectors within society participated in a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) from rural and semi rural research communities. During the PRA, activities focusing on gender, gender roles and culture and existing socio-cultural practices that inhibit women’s active participation in communities were conducted. Important key messages for community members were that gender roles are results of economic, historical, socio-cultural forces, which by definition are constantly changing. It was further emphasised that society is made up of people and that people are capable of change. The activities conducted became a platform for reflection and discussion on present changes of gender roles within their own communities. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also held with teenage boys and girls exploring their thoughts on education, women’s participation and challenges they experience in school. A total of 64 teenagers aged 8 to 16 years old (32 boys; 32 girls from rural and semi-rural research States) participated in the initial FGDs.
37. A wealth ranking exercise was conducted as part of the PRA, after which the premise of the positive deviance was introduced. Community people were encouraged to think of women that belong under the “poor” and “lower middle class” category in the wealth ranking who

encounter the same problems as everyone, yet are still able to become actively involved in the schooling of their children and in the community. Participants were asked to come up with qualities of a positive PDW in their community. A group consensus was reached by rural and semi-rural communities members per state on the qualities of Positive Deviant Women (PDW). Based on the wealth ranking and the qualities of PDW, ten (10) positive deviant women were identified in each state, in total forty (40) PDW took part in the research States. A total of 27 husbands, male elders or male relatives living with PD women were studied for their positive behaviours, practices and coping mechanisms in relation to women's participation, which may be replicated in a wider scale but are unique when compared to the prevailing community norms and behaviours. Daughters with ages ranging from 14 to 19 years old were also interviewed whenever possible to learn about the impact of their mother's activities on the children. Family members of PDW were interviewed to provide a context of the PDW home environment that may or may not help the women in overcoming challenges they face. To determine existing community support structures in women's participation, ten interviews were conducted with key informants, community gatekeepers, and community duty bearers in both the semi-rural and rural research communities per research State.

38. Information from both the PD women and their husbands/elders was collected on the following: a) the profile of the PD women and their family, b) challenges faced by the PD women and their family, c) motivating factors PD women and their family and d) coping mechanisms of PD women and their families. PD respondent's perceptions on possible ways of addressing present challenges in women's participation in their communities were also explored. Results of data gathered from all activities were presented back to the rural and semi-rural research communities with the participation of a wider audience. Presentations led to a community dialogue involving, men, women, and children. In 75% of the research communities, voluntarily initiated, community led action plans were developed. An estimate of 250 people attended the debriefings in all four-research states. (See Annex 3 for Samples of Community Led Action Plans).

## Research Tools

39. A total of three questionnaires were used for the positive deviance approach. Questionnaires were translated into local languages as part of the five-day training for field researchers. Target questions and key messages for each activity during the PRAs and FGDs were translated into local languages as well. This approach maintained the grounding and integrity of the PD research to ensure that the same questions were asked across all research States. Translated research tools were piloted and revised as needed after feedback from the research team.

## Data Analysis

40. All activities were recorded using voice recorders supported by questionnaires (for in-depth interviews with PDW, their family member and key informant interviews from various community members) and flipcharts (for PRAs and FGDs). Researchers kept field notes in most activities mentioned above. Thematic analysis was undertaken through data verification, coding and recording transcripts per State. A number of data collected during in-depth interviews was analysed using the PASW version 18 for Mac (also called SPSS for Windows). Triangulation was utilised in ensuring the validity of all data gathered.

## Research Phases

41. This research involves four phases. Below is a description of activities conducted within each phase.
- Phase One – The consultant conducted a rapid literature review and a five-day training with a twelve-person research team. This was followed by five-day pilot of research tools and methodologies in Kwara State consisting of participants from both semi-rural and rural communities from Kwara in August 2012
  - Phase Two – The research team, supported by SBMC Desk Officers conducted the field research in four States (Enugu, Jigawa, Kwara and Kano) as well as the transcription of interviews between August to September 2012.
  - Phase Three – Data verification, thematic coding and analysis, PASW data input and analysis, research team debriefing and submission of draft report.
  - Phase Four – Finalisation and submission of report

## Training of Researchers

42. Eight field researchers, five women, and three men were hired for this research. The field researchers were supported by four ESSPIN State Specialists, three men and one woman in their research states with two technical support staff from ESSPIN Abuja. Fourteen people together with an LGA representative attended a five day training on facilitation, the art of questioning, the positive deviance approach, gender, gender and culture, wealth ranking. Research field activities were simulated with the research team to prepare them for the fieldwork. Part of the training was the translation of all questionnaires for the PDI, the target questions for the PRA and FGA as well as the key messages for each activity.
43. Researchers participated in a training, which was broken up into three parts. The first part was a four-day training followed by the research pilot and ending with one-day general team debriefing. After the four-day training, the field researchers were divided according to state research teams for Enugu, Kano, Kwara and Jigawa. Each state research team was composed of one man and one woman, except for Kano where the state researchers were both women. The pilot was conducted for four days in Kwara where teams were assigned to work in specific communities. After the pilot and part of the researcher's training, a

debriefing was conducted. The debriefing gave the entire research team time to share findings and deliberate ways of further improving the actual research implementation. It further gave the field researchers an opportunity to clarify and address questions faced during the pilot.

## Research Sites

44. To capture the diversity of the country, it is believed that learning from the pre-selected ESSPIN supported research communities may provide an understanding of similar trends happening in other areas of the country with similar situations. The pre-selected ESSPIN communities are as follows:

State	Rural Community	Semi-rural Community
Enugu	Abor	Ngwo Uno
Kano	Yanshana	SabuwariGandu
Kwara	Venra	Kaiama
Jigawa	Dole	Birniwa Tasha

## Scope and Limitation of the Research

45. Upon initial discussion with both ESSPIN and Save the Children, it was agreed that in some research States, the percentage of women in decision-making roles within SBMCs is relatively small. To have a wider range of information about women's participation in decision-making process in relation to education, the group agreed to extend the research to include women within the research communities who may not necessarily be in leadership roles within the SBMCs but are actively participating in school activities. It was also agreed that all women within the school catchments considered by community members as "active women" may be part of the research.
46. This research intends to provide a glimpse of present trends and practices within the pre-selected research communities in a specific given time. Findings from this research do not intend to make generalised statements based on a small sample size, rather it hopes to show a picture of present and emerging trends and learn from positive uncommon behaviours, strategies and practices of positive deviant women which may be replicable. This report merely provides a foundation in understanding the socio-cultural context women and girls live in, from selected ESSPIN supported States, which may help understand other similar, yet unrepresented communities in the country. This report does not intend to detail the decision making process in SBMCs nor the community.

## Findings

47. This section of the report lays out the findings in direct response to the key research questions. The finding of the Positive Deviant Inquiry are divided into the following categories:

- Characteristics of the PD Families;
- Factors Affecting Women's and Girl's Participation in Schools and in the Community;
- Challenges Women Face in Participation;
- Specific Challenges of SBMC Positive Deviant Women in Education
- Strategies Used by PD Women and their Families to Overcome Barriers;
- Reasons Why Men Changed their Minds
- Benefits of Women's Participation;
- Women's Participation in Decision Making in SBMCs;
- Children's Views on Education

48. The Positive Deviance Inquiry (PDI), uncovered strategies that women, families, and communities are using in overcoming many barriers to women's participation in communities and education, which may be replicated by others. It provides a snap shot of a specific time within the lives of women in the community.

### Characteristics of Positive Deviant Women and their Families

Data below indicates characteristics of PD women and their families:

- 77.5% of PD women are SBMC members whilst 22.5% are non-members;
- Only a handful of PD women occupy positions on the SBMC board, also known as the Executive;
- 77.5 % of women interviewed are married, 17.5% are widowed, 5% are divorced;
- The majority of PD women from Kwara are the primary breadwinners;
- Children of PD families have been sent to school or are in school;
- 94.4% of PD women have people who encourage their participation in school activities;
- 75.8% of positive deviant men and women went to school<sup>17</sup> (88.5% men, 67.5% women);
- All PD women were able to identify a role model they look up to;
- All PD men agree that women's participation is important in education and consider their wife's participation a source of family pride;
- All PD families believe that education is important for a brighter future;
- 67.2% of PD men and women believe that the benefits of sending both girls and boys to school are equal

49. Of the 32.8% (men, 33.3% and women, 32.5%), who stated that they do not believe that the benefits of sending both girls and boys to school are equal, only one male stated that it is more important to send a boy to school for economic reasons. Others believed that educating the girl child is more important to prepare her for a better future. Some quoted the hadith or an Islamic holy saying or re-emphasised the benefits of educating girls...

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<sup>17</sup>PD men and women may have gone to school but did not necessarily complete (primary) school.



- “To me, educating a girl child is more important than educating a male child...because even our hadith says that educating a woman is equivalent to educating a nation in that an educated woman is able to impart positively on her children, take care of her parents and siblings and her community better. Whereas, a man will only care for himself and his immediate family alone.” (PDW, 35 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).

...while others talked about the changing times and how communities are starting to perceive the contributions of an educated girl or woman as a family pride.

- “...an educated woman enables her to bring up her children as responsible people. She is also able to help her community; she is an asset to her husband and her children. Educating a girl is educating a whole nation.” (PDW, 46 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).



Discussion on the role men and women play in their children's education

### Factors Affecting Women's Participation in the Community and in Education Related Decision-Making Processes

Reported socio-cultural practices inhibiting women's participation in the research sites which results to the low value placed on women are as follows:

- Traditional practices;
- Ascribed roles and responsibilities;
- Blurring lines between traditional practices and religion;

### *Prevailing traditional practices*

50. Nigeria is a nation shrouded by a strong belief in traditional socio-cultural practices passed on from generation to generation. Beliefs in these practices are ingrained in the fabric of society as stated by all research respondents. Some of these beliefs may also contribute to the root causes of a limited or a lack of women's participation in the community and education decision-making processes. Historically described as a patriarchal society,<sup>18</sup>Nigeria's prevailing traditional, socio-cultural structures and practices may be traced from this social construct. Strongly seen during this research is the very definition of a patriarchal community and family structure where the father or oldest male is the supreme authority, where titles, and rights are traced through the male lineage. Given this social structure, men have authority over women and children, which greatly impede women's active participation in community life. There are strongly ascribed gender roles and community taboos, which ensure that women and girls conform to "acceptable" community social values. Reports indicate that unconformity brings shame to the family, and in extreme cases, societal exclusion; as in the case in Kano, explained earlier in the report.

- "It is the cultural beliefs and lack of exposure which resulted in the ignorance and illiteracy of our parents from time immemorial. This has a negative influence on us...it has been sustained by some religious beliefs which seem to place the women at a disadvantage." (PD husband, 49 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

### *Ascribed roles for men and women*

51. Findings indicate that in all communities across research States, men were seen as leaders, family providers, and decision-makers, whilst women's roles and responsibilities focused primarily on child bearing, child rearing and taking care of the home. Women are seen to be subservient to men and are expected to stay home. In Kano and Jigawa, it was reported that women are said to be "owned" by their husbands.

52. Another ascribed role for women mentioned across the research States relate to social gatherings such as weddings, naming ceremonies, burials, and church activities. These social community activities are said to be mainly organised by women. Reports show, that this is the only time, women are able to make decisions on their own without the need for approval from their male counterparts. It is seen as women's affair.

53. Findings also indicate that women's participation at the community level is limited to jobs related to fundraising, organising social events, and cooking for labourers during construction projects. On the other hand, women's participation in education and school activities has greatly increased. A common perception of PD women and their families in all research States indicate that women should be involved in education because it deals

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<sup>18</sup> Aina, I.O, (1998). *Nigerian Women in Society and Development*.Dokun Publishing House Ibadan.

with children. This leads back to the traditional role of women as being the primary caretaker of child in their communities.

- “(Women should be involved) because it creates (an) avenue for women to help in contributing towards community development. (PD husband, 54 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).

### *Blurring lines between traditional practices and religion*

54. A finding in mainly Muslim communities is the practice of women’s seclusion, which is generally attributed to religious teachings. Cultural practices blur in with religious beliefs making it difficult to distinguish between the two. The potent mixture of cultural and religious beliefs and practices give it a powerful stronghold. Going against such teachings become difficult and dangerous unless done so by a religious leader.

- “Many men are presently hiding behind the cloak of religion....saying women should not do certain things...women should not participate and stay home...this is not true. The prophet Mohammed (PBUH) did not say this...” (Imam, semi-rural community, pilot, Kwara).

55. When asked to give examples of the challenges women faced in terms of participation in their communities and in schools, below are examples of the responses:

- “...not attending meetings because their husbands prevent them...saying they don’t want their wives to mix with other men since this contravenes *Islamic rules*.” (PD husband, 55 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).
- “...it is only the Hausas amongst us that will not allow their wives to participate but the Boko Baru men will not disallow their wives...” (PDW, age unknown, Kwara)
- “...religion and some men...their husbands are the most common problem women face in our community...some men ...still believe that religion does not allow women to be seen in public among other men discussing...they do not allow their wives to engage in any activity...they (the wives in purdah) do not actively participate in what women are doing the in the community.” (PDS, 25 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).

56. The purdah system is widely practiced in research communities visited in the Kano, Jigawa, and Kwara States. Purdah, which translates to veil, “involves the seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing (including the veil)....”<sup>19</sup> Allegedly, females wearing the purdah give their families a concept of higher social status and prestige.

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<sup>19</sup>Accessed Sept. 27, 2012 at [http://departments.kings.edu/womens\\_history/purdah.html](http://departments.kings.edu/womens_history/purdah.html)

57. Due to the strict seclusion of women in purdah from the world of men, SBMC members reportedly conduct house visits to help raise the parent's awareness, on the importance of sending children to school. The house visits also provides SBMC women a chance to communicate more in-depth with women in purdah. Allegedly, there is a lower enrolment rate for children from these families. The seclusion of women inhibits their exposure to learning first-hand about the importance of girl's education and other community issues affecting their children and their lives. The lack of information further increases women's dependence on their husbands.

- "In the beginning it was our ignorance and illiteracy which was responsible for why we (men) did not allow women to participate in SBMC. But I want to tell you that, *"yandaido mage yabudehakaidoberayabude,"* (our eyes are now open)... we now understand women can contribute." (PD brother-in-law, 50 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

58. Change is slowly taking place. There is a fine line between religion and culture, and there is a point where the two crosses. The conflicting, representative quotes above provide a perfect example of the blurring lines between cultural practices and religious practices which may greatly inhibit or support women's participation in many parts of Nigeria. The quotes strongly suggest that it is not necessarily the religion that inhibits women's participation in community life and eventually in schools; it is the interpretation of teachings within that religion. The quotes also show that there are enlightened people who are able to separate religious practices from cultural practices. There is hope for change and there are like-minded individuals within communities who may be a resource to assist in changing perceptions on women's participation and in education, especially education for girls.

59. Traditional practices, ascribed roles and responsibilities, and the blurring line between religion and cultural practices are all contributing factors in impeding women's participation. The lack of women's participation in community life directly relates to how women participate in schools. In general, women's participation in community life is still limited whilst reports show some advancement in women's participation in schools. Women's participation in school activities are conducted through the of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) women's committee. Although women are active in awareness raising campaigns and other community activities related to education, it is difficult to ascertain the full extent and nature of their participation in the actual decision making process in the SBMC Executive.

### Challenges Women Face in Participation

Limited or lack of women's participation in the community and in schools can be attributed to one or more of the following factors listed below:

- Decision-making;

- Lack of time;
- Low or lack of education;
- Early marriage;
- Low or no access to financial resources;
- Little or no access to information.

### *Decision-making*

- “Women can be the head in women’s group...she can be in the women’s meetings but not in the whole community meeting...they can be members, finance, secretary or treasurer but cannot be the head. A woman is the minister of finance here in Nigeria, but no matter how educated a woman is, she might not be bold....even if women are bold and capable, they respect men...it’s a cultural thing that when men and women are gathered, men should lead.” (PD brother-in-law, 75 years old, rural community, Enugu).

60. This quote describes the prevailing perception amongst almost the majority of the men interviewed in the semi-rural and rural research communities. Leadership by women over men is seen as disrespect to men, “women can lead themselves” is another common phrase that came up. This belief seemed to be generally accepted by both men and women in all research communities.
61. Interestingly, when asked the question, “Who decided to send your child to school?” 75.7% of all positive deviant women stated that “both” (the husband and wife jointly) made the decision, whilst only 24.3% of positive deviant men agreed with this statement. A little over half of positive deviant men stated it was the husband who makes the decision to send children to school. Only 16% of the positive deviant men identified the women as the source of the decision compared to 5% of all women respondents.
62. Across research States, the percentage of all respondents who answered that the husband made the decision to send the child to school, the breakdown is as follows: Kano - 36.4%, Jigawa - 36.4%, Kwara - 22.7% and Enugu - 4.5%. After further probing with the women, in many cases it was later stated that, “the father made the final decision, I just supported it.” There was no significant difference in the trend of responses between the rural and semi-rural research communities in all research States. As seen with the PD women, change in decision-making patterns within families structures only occur when a woman is widowed or divorced.
63. Even in Kwara State where most of the women are financially independent, the main breadwinners, and the ones that mostly support the schooling of their children, only 16.7% of its total respondents identified women as the decision maker in children’s education. Particular to Enugu, 32.4% of all Enugu State research respondents identified both parents

as making a joint decision in sending children to school compared to less than a quarter from the other States.

64. This traditional leadership and decision-making role is also reflected in the women's community life. Traditional structures are mostly, if not always,<sup>20</sup> composed of men. A men's group, also seen as an extension of the traditional structure, an important decision-making body for the community's economic and social endeavours, such as land ownerships, communal land sales, jobs and other important issues. Because women are not invited and not part of the "men's group" meetings, they may be less informed of important issues happening in the community affecting their own lives. Women conduct their own meetings separately. Across the four States, women's groups plan community activities that are then "sent for approval" to the men's group. In cases where women would like to raise issues, representatives are selected to raise their concerns in the men's meetings, after which, things are "deliberated by the men."

- "Issues are first discussed in the women's group and later sent to the men's meeting for further deliberation." (PDW, 52 years old, semi-rural community, Enugu).
- "... husbands don't give the women much support...husbands (men) dominate every affair of community decision making." (PD Son, 40 years old, rural community, Kano).



Engaging with men to reduce workload to allow women participate in SBMC activities

65. Respondents from across all four-research States say there is no forum or venue where men and women jointly meet and discuss important community issues. Evidence shows that decisions for community related activities are considered to be a man's job whilst

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<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the past Igwe in one community Enugu was said to have had a woman representative in his council for a *brief period of time*. Unfortunately the thread of discussion was not thoroughly followed up. This was the only time women were represented in the Igwe council.



women's roles are relegated to traditional social activities and traditional ceremonies such as naming, marriages, and others. The lack of a joint open forum to discuss community related affairs that affect everyone's lives greatly marginalises women in terms of access to information as well as access to economic and financial resources. Women's and children's issues are allegedly not always heard nor prioritised in men's meetings where decisions are taken.

### *Lack of time*

66. "Housework in developing countries also consists of continuous, difficult physical labor. A woman is likely to work from before daybreak until dark. Most families can't afford modern appliances, so cooking and cleaning tasks must be done by hand—crushing corn into meal with heavy rocks, scrubbing laundry against rough stones, kneading bread and cooking gruel over a blistering open fire."<sup>21</sup>
67. Majority of the PD women's time is used in unpaid traditional family based labour of collecting firewood, fetching water, cooking, looking after children and then attend to their main source of income. Like all women in the research communities, all positive deviant women lamented on their lack of time to do other things. Given all their expected roles at home, women members of SBMCs sacrifice a great deal to participate in SBMC activities. PD women engaged in petty trading and daily wage earners need to either close shop and lose a day's earning or shorten their workday to attend and participate in SBMC activities. The issue of scheduling meetings other than market days has been addressed in some communities but not all. Considering the daily workload of women, the frequency and length of meetings and other SBMC activities such as house visits and fundraising must also be taken into consideration.
  - "The main problem that women face is time. They don't usually have time for meetings especially on market days. Our market day is once in seven days and so once they do not go to market, to feed might be a problem for the week..." (PDW, 45 years old, rural community, Kwara)
68. For women to continue participating in various SBMC activities, a support mechanism is essential. Having a support mechanism is what helps positive deviant women overcome their challenges when it comes the lack of time. (Further discussed under the section on Strategies used by PD women to overcome barriers).

### *Little or no access to financial resources*

69. Since all research sites are in rural and semi-rural areas, the poverty level in the communities were below the national average and was apparent. 43% of all positive deviant women belong to the marginalised group<sup>22</sup> within their research communities,

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<sup>21</sup>Mullins, J. *Gender Discrimination*. Accessed, Sept. 25, 2012 at <http://www.childreninneed.com/magazine/gender.html>>

<sup>22</sup> The definition used for marginalised group in this sentence is derived from the result of wealth ranking activity conducted by the communities during the PRA. The working definition of marginalised person is the descriptions and definitions used to for a poor person.

52% belong in the lower middle class whilst 5% belong to the higher middle class. PD women belonging to the higher middle class were chosen by their communities due to their story of triumph over socio-economic barriers.

70. Like all women in their community, positive deviant women contribute to their family and community's economies through paid and unpaid labour. Although women are not always poorer than men, but because of the weaker basis of their entitlements, they are generally more vulnerable than men.<sup>23</sup> Due to traditional and socio-cultural practices, women also have fewer options out of poverty.
71. As discussed above, aside from women's hectic family and home-related chores, women also need to earn a living to have extra money. As stated by various women interviewed across research States, women's contribution in their children's education varies. Women in all four-research States are generally said to pay children's school fees such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) levies, giving breakfast or lunch money. Specific to both rural and urban communities in Kwara; women are said to have taken over the men's role in supporting their families and their children's education.
72. Studies indicate that women spend more of their income on their families. "Women's success benefits more than one person. Several institutions confirmed the well-documented fact that women are more likely than men to spend their profits on household and family needs. Assisting women therefore generates a multiplier effect that enlarges the impact of...activities."<sup>24</sup>
73. Majority of the PD women either have extremely limited or no access to financial resources. Access to microcredit is essential in giving women financial independence and lifting them out of poverty. The need for small loans and microcredit programs resonates strongly from PD women in Kano and Jigawa where most women reportedly rely heavily on their husbands and have no or very little access to economic opportunities. Also in Kano, a small loans programme was mentioned by women, unfortunately due to the high payment defaults of women participants it is no longer functioning. A new Government initiative of poverty alleviation for women in Kano is the selection of ten women every other month. Selected women are trained in various skills, after which ten thousand Naira is provided as start-up money. The rural community in Jigawa also mentioned an informal microcredit system for women akin to a savings and loan approach. The microcredit programme runs on women's weekly contributions and is only by membership. Membership requires women to put money in first for a predestined period of time before they can borrow. Whilst commendable, this approach further marginalises those that are in dire need of a financial loan because they have no money to start with. To financially empower women,

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<sup>23</sup>Baden, S., Milward, K. (1995). *Gender and Poverty*, BRIDGE Report, no 30. (Sussex: IDS).

<sup>24</sup>Deshpanda, R. (2001). *Increasing Access and Benefits for Women: Practices and Innovations among Microfinance Institutions – Survey Results*. New York: UNCDF, 2001).



there is an apparent need to have income generating activities, especially in the Northern States. A skills and/or livelihoods training programme and access to microcredit or small loans will be a good stimulus to increase women's empowerment in communities.

74. Two PD women, one in Jigawa and the other in Kano, have started helping young girls learn life skills. The woman from Kano has reportedly taught young girls to do small petty trade business to earn a little income to help supplement their school needs whilst in Jigawa another PD woman started teaching young girls sewing. These self-help groups are personally initiated in an ad hoc manner of assistance for other young girls.

### *Lack of or low education level*

75. Illiteracy is at the heart of women's lower status within all the research communities; this is further compounded by the low societal value placed on women. In 2009 a study of 19 African countries, the completion rate in secondary school for adolescent girls was below 5%.<sup>25</sup> A UNICEF study states that Nigeria has one of the lowest transition rates from primary school to secondary school in sub-Saharan Africa, supporting this is a UNESCO comparative study in 2011 indicating that in Nigeria, girls generally drop out of school after the completion of primary education.<sup>26</sup> The ratio of girls to boys enrolled in the secondary level has worsened since the baseline year of 2000. In 2000, the baseline data indicates the number of girls per 100 boys enrolled in secondary school was at 81%.<sup>27</sup> Latest data show that there are fewer girls enrolled in junior secondary school compared to boys with a 77% female to male ratio in junior secondary school enrolment.<sup>28</sup>
76. Of the 24.2%<sup>29</sup> of male and female positive deviant respondents who never went to school the highest numbers came from Kano at 37.5%, Kwara 31.3%, Jigawa 25%, and Enugu 6.3%. Amongst a quarter of respondents who never went to school, 81.3% of these are women. Although Nigeria's literacy level is increasing, women still have a long way to go to equal the literacy level of their male counterparts.
  - "...one will not (understand) regret the loss...we are encountering now because we didn't go to school...because we can't do many things for ourselves due to the lack of education...we rely on others..." (PDW, 47 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).
77. Present data in Nigeria, show that more children now, girls in particular, are being sent to school but there is a significant decrease in the transition rate of girls into the higher primary school grades. The completion of basic education is crucial for all. Although, just the completion of primary school may provide girls the basics of reading and writing skills it does not guarantee the opportunity to compete in the job market and to apply for higher

<sup>25</sup> Lloyd, C., (2009). *New Lessons: The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls*. Population Council.

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO. (2011). *Early Adolescent Girls: A Review of Participation in Secondary Education*. Montreal, UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

<sup>27</sup> Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2010). *Nigeria Millennium Development Goals: Report 2010*. Abuja, Nigeria.

<sup>28</sup> World Bank. (2010). *World Development Indicators*. World Bank. Washington, D.C.

<sup>29</sup> N=66.

paying jobs with a monthly salary. For children to reach their potential, it is important that parents are encouraged to see the value of sending their children to school beyond primary level.

- “...to educate a girl is important but the problem is that they do not go far in their studies which will enable them to seek employment with the Government or any job that can earn a salary...most do not go further than primary school that is if they even finish primary school...it’s because of cultural beliefs like early marriage, ignorance, illiteracy and poverty...(parents) unwillingness to further their education. (PD husband, 49 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

78. The lack of or low educational attainment of women not only directly affects their ability to raise healthier families it also presents a serious employability problem given their low level of skills, knowledge and expertise. This therefore becomes a pathway to present and future socio-economic vulnerability, marginalisation and poverty which not only directly affects women but more so, their children. For women who were unable to go to school or finish their schooling, their desire to send their daughters to school is more passionate.

- “I will plead with my husband until he lets my daughter go to school.” (PDW, 45 years old, rural community, Enugu).
- “...no, I cannot wait...now education in this state is free ...I can even sell my wrappers (clothes) to ensure that no child stays out of school...” (PDW, 45 years old, rural community, Enugu).
- “I did not go to school and that is my regret today but my only daughter will go to school...to whatever level she desires...if I am in good health.” (PDW, 60 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).

79. Women who experienced first-hand the difficulty of not being able to read and write or those who struggle more in life because they lack employability and financial independence want a different future for their daughters.

80. Although education is perceived to be a pathway to better future options, the social construct within the research communities visited shows a different reality. Whilst education may open up economic doors for women, as stated in the quote below, it does not always guarantee a brighter future since the final decisions on all aspects of community life rely with the man.

- “...if the girl is lucky, the benefit (of education) is equally the same...if a girl is educated and gets married, the husband may prevent her from working...but if she is lucky and

the husband allow her to work with the education she acquired, then the benefit for her will be just like that of a boy.” (PDH, 60 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).



Safe spaces to explore more with the children

81. Whilst change is slowly occurring in most of the research sites across the States, SBMC PD women say that there is still much work to be done in increasing the level of importance placed by communities on educating children, especially the girl child. Equally important is a positive behavioural and attitudinal change on the value placed on women and girls and their possible contributions to society.

### **Early marriage**

82. Early marriage otherwise also known as child marriage; is a health issue as well as a human rights violation.<sup>30</sup> For the purpose of this report, early marriage is the term that will be used. Early marriage has profound physical, psychological, intellectual and emotional impact on both boys and girls. It cuts off further educational opportunities that would ensure a chance for personal growth and better options for the future. Many young brides face a life of poverty, ill health, frequent pregnancies, abuse, and unprotected sex carrying the risk of HIV/AIDS.<sup>34</sup> Early marriage almost ensures the young girl's dependence and complete submission to their much older husbands.

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<sup>30</sup> (1948). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

<sup>31</sup> (1979). *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.

<sup>32</sup> (1989). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

<sup>33</sup> (1990). *The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*.

<sup>34</sup> UNICEF. (2001). *Early Marriage: Child Spouses*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Center. Florence, Italy. Innocenti Digest. No. 7.

83. The subject of being “married off” only came up when positive deviant respondents were asked why they dropped out of school. The following respondents per state specifically attributed their early marriage as the reason they dropped out of school: Kano 42.9%, Jigawa 16.7%, Kwara 15.4%, and Enugu 10%. Specific to Jigawa, 66.7% of respondents mentioned their “parents did not value education,” as the main reason as to why they stopped going to school. Further into the interviews and after much probing, it was later explained that during the time the women were growing up, parents in their area put more value on marriage than education. Girls were either not sent to school, or if they were, they were married off after sixth grade. If that were the case, the result for Jigawa would read at 83.4%.
84. To further confirm if the reason for stopping their education was indeed early marriage, the age of the first child of PD women were subtracted from their given age to provide an estimate age as to when they had their first child.<sup>35</sup> Since three-fourths of the PD participants are Muslim and pregnancy before marriage is not accepted in Islam, it is supposed that pregnancy occurred after being married for at least nine months, at the earliest. Given this premise, 56.4% of positive deviant women had their first child by the age of twenty. Of the 56.4%, 48.7% already had their first infant by the age of eighteen. It may be extrapolated that 48.7% of the PD women were married by the age of 17 years old.
85. In Jigawa, Kano and in Kwara research States, both men and women PD respondents believe that at the age of menarche, a girl may be in her parent’s house but the second menstrual period should be held in the husband’s house. It is reportedly shameful for the family, especially the mother, if the girl child is still unmarried by her second or third menstrual period and still lives under her parents roof. This practice, whilst most common in rural and semi-rural area may partly explain why girls drop out of school in the latter primary grades; girls’ ages at these grades coincide with the first age of menarche.
- “...there was no civilization then...we grew up in the hamlet...at the time, our parents did not value education. We were married off as soon as we started menstruations. As you started menstruation then, the second must not meet you in your father’s house.” (PDW, 40 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).
86. The importance of marrying a girl child at a young age also ensures the girl child’s sexual purity during marriage, a virtue highly valued in most cultures. It is seen as a form of protection against pre-marital sex and pregnancy outside marriage from the perspective of the girl’s family. It must be noted that though rarely mentioned during the research, another reason why girls married early was teen pregnancy.

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<sup>35</sup> N=39

87. In line with studies from other countries<sup>3637</sup> and a more common reason given in research sites as to why girls are married off at a young age, is that it is believed that the husband, who is much older and is said to be more financially stable will assist the financial needs of the family.

- “...my parents could not pay school fees for me...and that the boys should go (to school).....my parents said I should marry so that my husband will help feed them and give them school fees to train the boys...that is why I got married at the age of 16 years old. (PDW, 61 years old, semi-rural community, Enugu).

88. Though noted, the foremost challenge of young brides going back to school lies in the certainty of early and highly probable multiple pregnancies in a short span of time. Given this situation, the girl's role immediately changes from being a young bride into a teenage mother. With more family responsibilities, going back to school for many remains a dream.

89. Under Nigeria's Marriage Act,<sup>38</sup> the legal age for marriage is 21 years old. Anyone under 21 years old is considered a minor and would require parental consent before legally entering into a marriage. The Child Rights Act passed in 2003 raised the minimum age to 18 years old, but the federal law may be implemented differently at the State level. Nigeria has three different legal systems operating simultaneously, civil, customary, and Islamic; State and Federal Governments only have control over marriages taking place within the civil system.<sup>39</sup> A 2003 Women's Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) publication highlighted that customary law has "encouraged" cultural attitudes towards child, or forced, marriages in Nigeria. In some parts of the country, the minimum age for customary-law marriage has been fixed by legislation. The age of marriage under customary law is governed in the three Eastern States of Nigeria by the Age of Marriage Law 1956. Section 3(1) of the Law stipulates that, "A marriage . . . between or in respect of persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen shall be void." But this is not true for all States as noted in this research earlier, marriages in the Northern research states occur at a much earlier age. According to the Center for Reproductive Rights Country Report (2004), the Nigerian government "did not undertake any significant measures to stop customary practices harmful to children, such as the sale of young girls into marriage." Nigeria, particularly northern Nigeria, has some of the highest rates of early marriages in the world.<sup>40</sup> Unless the present trend of early marriage and early pregnancy is curbed, it will continue to be an immense factor in curtailing girls' and women's active economic, political and psychosocial participation and development.

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<sup>36</sup>Rwezaura, Bart (1994), *The Changing Context of Sub-Saharan Africa* in Philip Alston (ed.) *The Best Interests of the Child*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>37</sup>AIDS Orphans' (2000). *Information sheet on the HIV/AIDS emergency*. UNICEF ESARO, Nairobi.

<sup>38</sup>Chapter 218 (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria) 1990.

<sup>39</sup>Center for Reproductive Law and Policy (CRLP).

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid*.

90. Child marriage or early marriage is not seen as a problem in all research communities. The cultural practice of marrying girls before the age of 18 years old or as reported in Jigawa, Kwara and Kano, between the ages of 12-15 years old. The practice of early marriage is still alive and strong and reportedly practiced in all research States.

*Little or no access to information and resources*

91. Another important finding is that women have little or no access to information and other resources. There are two ways to look at the issue of little or no access to information. The first is through the lens of illiteracy whilst the second one is through the physical presence of women in the learning process.
92. First, women from Jigawa mentioned the use of the radio as one of their sources of information. The rural research site in Jigawa is said to have a local radio station that PD women frequently listen to. The use of radio and megaphone is an important source of first hand information for many women, especially those with low or no literacy level or those in purdah. In Enugu state, the use of community theatre in the community was mentioned several times by various PD respondents. This indicates that key messages on the importance of education were clearly received by the people in the community. In Kwara, the use of short slogans and picture posters has proven to be helpful in educating communities in the importance of sending children to school. In a pilot school in Kwara, a teacher mentioned the importance of using short messages and pictures to encourage children to plan for their future. The picture posters used by the said teacher show different professions where both male and female sexes are represented in different professions; lawyers, engineers, medical doctors and others. Under the said pictures are short messages. As reported, the use of picture posters with equal representation of both sexes encourages both girls and boys to dream of a future where “anything” is possible.
93. Directly linked to the topic of men’s domination in decision making above is access to vital information that affects women’s lives. Particularly in communities where families practice the purdah system and confine their wives at home. Women are unable to access information first hand except through their husbands or through the radio.
94. Observations from the field revealed that in Kano, limited exposure of rural men in urban cities where Kano women comparatively have more freedom of movement and participation is making ripples of change in terms of their own perceptions. As pointed out, evidence of this is seen today in ESSPIN research States, women are out and participating in schools activities as compared to other parts of the state. Exposure is key in change of perceptions. Exploring the use of various mediums, such as print media and mass media is vital in awareness raising campaigns.

## Specific Challenges of SBMC Positive Deviant Women in Education

95. Positive deviant women encounter the same problems as everyone else in the community. In fact, due to their participation in SBMC activities, they encounter more challenges than most women. Positive deviant women who are members of SBMC women's committees are involved in various kinds of activities. Ranked according to the number responses received, PDW are involved in education awareness campaigns, fundraising and/or personal contributions, attending meetings, bringing children back to school, conducting house visits and other activities. Below are stories of specific additional challenges faced by PDW.

### *Low value placed on education and women's participation*

96. Raising the community's awareness on the importance of education and sending children, girls to school as well as encouraging women to become actively involved in school and in community activities are the main challenges SBMC women face daily.

### *Ridicules and insults*

97. An education awareness raising campaign is vital in communities. Whilst changes in people's perceptions on education are slowly changing, there is still much work to be done in increasing people's awareness on the importance of girls' education. All PD women mentioned the challenge of being ridiculed and insulted whilst conducting home visits, fundraising or awareness raising campaigns as part of their SBMC activities.

- “We suffered some ridicules in the hand of some parents who did not understand what we were doing...some of them were difficult to convince that what we are doing is for the good of everybody.” (PDW, 34 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).

“...the Fulani people are very shy and timid so they do not participate with us. Their husband won't even allow them...some women are even of the opinion that we are only wasting our time and that they don't understand what we stand to gain from the meetings we attend...all they say is that we are idle...I sell petrol and oil so to leave my shop is a problem...at times, they (community people) mock me and say I don't have a job that's why I am going about attending meetings” (PDW, 25 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).

- “...it can be frustrating at times...I had a challenge one day. I met a woman taking her children to school at about past 9 a.m. When I confronted her, she replied asking me if I was his (the child's) teacher...I wasn't annoyed because I was doing the right thing...I knew that I could be disrespected because of my effort...this did not and will not discourage me...” (PDW, 40 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

98. Women conducting house visits struggled not only with the ridicules, but also with persuading the husbands of secluded women to send their children go to school and have their wives come out and participate in their children's education in school.

#### *Lack of financial allocation for SBMC activities for women*

99. One foremost problem of community women, as stated earlier, is the lack of or limited financial access. This is also true with positive deviant women, and for many, they also struggle when it comes to their involvement in SBMC activities. The research reveals that for some PD women, helping out and spending their own money is occasionally needed:

- "...I was not co-opted into SBMCs...but I am always encouraging children to go to school... sometimes I teach them. I spend my own money helping those who cannot afford certain things like books." (PDW, 30 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

...but it is the frequency of its occurrence that makes it difficult.

- "the lack of transport to go about counselling other women...by struggling with my business and using my own money..." (PDW, 49 years old, rural community, Kano).
- "...another challenge that other people face, that is different from mine, is the fact that they do not have the economic ability to participate. This is because there are times we spend our own personal money whilst participating and they do not have (any)." (PDW, 40 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).

100. The lack of financial resource allocated to certain SBMC women's activities may also be one reason that prevents women from joining SBMC activities. During the Jigawa PRA, women in one community complained about fundraising and contributions. They gave a specific example of the collection of 50 Naira during meetings. Considered an insignificant amount in urban communities, the collection of 50 Naira from women from poorer households may be equivalent to part of a meal at home. Though it is said that the collection is voluntary, there is no such thing as a voluntary collection if everyone around you is putting in money and you are not. Out of shame, one would need to come up with the collection money. For others, the easiest way out is not to participate at all.

#### *Low number of women's participation*

101. Women's participation in children's education has progressed tremendously. Initially, in some rural and semi-rural communities, women were staying home and not a part of any school activity. The SBMC has provided women an opportunity to participate in school activities. Though there are more women now part of SBMC women's committees and its activities, PD women say there is a need to involve more women to increase awareness in education and also to help share the work responsibilities in women's school activities.



- “Some women are afraid of joining and supporting me that their husbands may be angry with them for coming out to do SBMCs (work) and support activities as the men feel women’s best place is at home ...and women are afraid of taboo from the elders if they try to come out as some of us do...also women are not educated so they don’t know their rights.” (PDW, 50 years old, rural community, Kano).

102. In spite of all the activities women conduct to assist in education, out of 77.5% of PD women who are members of SBMCs, only a handful are part of the Executive. The most common roles these women hold are treasurer, teacher representative, and public relations officer (PRO). Present State policy guidelines dictate that the SBMC secretary post is specified for the headmaster. More often than not, particularly in the rural areas, headmasters are male, thus even the secretary post is allocated for males. Majority of the active PD women identified by their communities in this research are mostly women’s committee members of the SBMC.

#### ***Lack of or low level of recognition of women’s work***

103. Evidently shown in various examples above, PD women part of SBMCs or even those that are not active members are all making numerous personal sacrifices to make a difference in all children’s lives. In spite of the many challenges PD women face, their zeal and unrelenting endeavour in increasing community awareness in (girl’s) education are not always widely and publicly recognised. At times, women were reportedly encouraged on a personal basis for their hard work and contribution but rarely are women publicly acknowledged by key people in the community. Public recognition will not only provide women much needed encouragement but also due recognition of all their voluntary hard work. Public recognition of women’s works will also help change community wide perception to positive, valuable women’s contributions in education and in the community resulting to possibly higher value placed on women.

#### **Strategies used by PD Women and their families in overcoming barriers**

104. Positive deviant women were identified and selected in a community led process because they are able to overcome common problems faced by everyone in the community with access to similar or sometimes less resources, and their family’s uncommon behaviour or practices. 94.4% of positive deviant women identified encouragement coming from various people as a source of strength and inspiration. These encouragements may be in a form of a simple thank you or may also be in a form of assistance. Below are examples of how the PD women are able to break beyond traditional restrictive norms and expectations.

105. Recognition of the husband’s support and approval is the key for married women to continue participating in school and community activities. Although going beyond accepted traditional roles for women, compliance with certain societal norms are still expected.

- “...some husbands want their women to be confined at home for fear that when they get exposed they will be corrupted and they will not respect their husbands... I make sure to pay my loyalty and respect to my husband, the family and also become extra careful in my SBMC activities so that I don’t break the cultural norms of our community that will make them unhappy with me....” (PDW, 30 years old, rural community, Kano).

#### *Informal contributions in decision making process*

106. Despite the fact that women may have limited direct input on the final decision making process in the community and family life, women are able to go through informal channels of having their views heard and taken into consideration. Again, this process is always through a male member of her household or a blood relative. It is important to note that whilst women may not have influence in community activities, they are said to have a lot of influence on their son.

- “Women are usually not considered when we ask for support unless we pass through men who are close to the community leader.” (PDW, 47 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).
- “Women can influence their husbands on a particular thing and the man will table it during the men’s meeting.” (PD brother-in-law, 65 years old, semi-rural community, Enugu).

#### *Overcoming lack of time*

107. Overcoming the lack of time is a more difficult undertaking; it not only requires personal sacrifice but may also entail extra help from others. Family support is essential in fulfilling expectations and still performs extra tasks. Gender roles are slowly changing within communities due to a common goal, a better future for all. Though in most cases women are still expected to attend first to their family’s needs before any other school or community activity, arising needs brought about by situations has led some husbands to help out in housework, normally ascribed to women. Commonly seen in PD families is the openness of various family members to “help out” and do whatever they can to give PD women more time to continue their work helping out in schools. Supportive PD families bridge the culture of change in the way people perceive traditional gender roles.

- “Everyone at home tries to give a helping hand so that she can go out, perfect in what she is doing...the activities takes her time away from the house...she prepares the house enough before she goes out...I have an old mother in the house, when my wife leaves for a meeting, I close my shop and come home to stay with her.” (PDH, 64 years old, semi-rural community, Enugu).
- “When she goes to meetings, I find time to prepare food for myself. There is no problem.” PDH, 65 years old, rural community, Enugu).

- “...everything is planned before (she leaves) so there are no hitches...when she is not around, the children cook for themselves and attend to house chores...” (PDH, 62 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).

### *Overcoming low or lack of education*

108. Overcoming the lack of or low educational attainment of women in the four research States come in different forms. PD women expressed regret and dissatisfaction with their inability to read and write; skills needed for daily business. For many, the lack of education or low level of education brought lower self-esteem in dealing with issues and with other people. The lack of or low of education, low self-esteem and limited exposure to are the reasons that communities perceived women as someone who has nothing to say or contribute. For women who never attended school or for those that did not complete their schooling, having a second chance on education is important. For those who are not as fortunate to have adult literacy classes in their communities, the only option for them to learn is through their children. In some research communities, adult literacy classes are available; unfortunately this is not true for all.



Reinforcing the importance of community based adult literacy programme

- “I initially started primary one then I was withdrawn by my father...in those days women didn’t go to school in our area...I attended an adult literacy class ...because I wanted to learn to read and write...” (PDW, 45 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).

- “...girls here are taken out of school for marriage when they get husbands but the boys continue so it is more important to the boys to be in school.....my parents didn’t think it is important to send me to school when I was young....I attend adult literacy class...because I am not happy that I did not go to school when I was a child...” (PDW, 30 years old, rural community, Kano).
- “...I was married off by my parents ...after primary six...it was my husband and my parents who realised the importance of education and felt sorry that I was not allowed to continue after primary education....so the only option is to allow me to enrol into the adult education classes...I have been attending for one year...” (PDW, 35 years old, rural community, Kano).

### *Overcoming low or no access to financial resources*

109. Poverty alleviation programmes are vital in empowering women. With limited access to financial resources, women rely heavily on their husbands or other family members for financial assistance to participate in community and SBMC activities.

- “...there is a daily contribution they make, if she is not able to carry out her trading it means I will have to be the one to pay the money for the daily contribution on her behalf...” (PD brother-in-law, 60 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).

110. There are small initiatives happening in the grassroots level created by the people, in response to problems within their communities. The availability of activities greatly vary according to state and may range from informal and ad hoc skills training programs to more organised microcredit programs.

- “I think that for more women to participate in SBMC and communities, the communities themselves can organize some form (financial) empowerment...so they can gain financial independence...more women will be able to participate in SBMC/community activities.” (PDW, 35 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).
- “...many of our women obtain soft loans from the forum to improve their businesses...this has made many of them have a steady source of livelihood...” (PDW, 60 years old, rural community, Kwara).

### *Overcoming insults and ridicules*

111. One of the most painful experiences positive deviant women talked about is the constant insults, ridicules, and “side talk” people had while conducting SBMC activities. Overcoming these barriers came in different ways. One way of coping with this was knowing that their family, especially their husband had their full trust and support.

- “I don’t care what people say because I trust her, in what she goes out to do in SBMC and in the community...my children’s friends say what they hear their parents saying...that my wife goes out everyday, but the children don’t mind...they know she is working for people development in both SBMC and in her community (to) support in the hospital...I have interest to see her (wife) serving children...I have social awareness even though I didn’t go to western school...” (PDH, 55 years old, semi-rural community, Kano).

112. Sometimes, this is not enough. SBMC members within the PD women in Jigawa stated that the ridicules and insults about their school activities only lessened when SBMC women were able to distribute school uniforms for girls. In Enugu, the collection of the women’s group of over 100,000 Naira was used to dig a borehole, reportedly changed the community’s perspective of women’s contribution and participation in education and in the community. Achievements such as these have helped to gradually increase women’s status in communities. PD results in Jigawa show that women who actively participate in SBMC activities and have functional literacy skills are now seen as an important asset to their husband. This change in thinking has encouraged more women to start participating.

### **Conducting house visits**

113. House visits are conducted by women to raise the community’s awareness on the importance of education and sending children to school as well as encouraging women to become actively involved in school and in community activities. Women are in a better position to gain access into the homes of other women because of the traditional practice that men cannot talk to other women’s wife. PD women who are SBMC members mentioned the difficulty of conducting house visits. To overcome this barrier at times, PD women from the north reportedly received support from male family members who accompany them during house visits. In the semi-rural research community of Jigawa, PD women reportedly received support from the village head who at times would go on house visits with them. Occasionally, the village head also reportedly talked to the” difficult parents.”

### **Reasons Why Men Changed their Minds**

114. An interesting aspect of the research was learning why men, within the immediate circle of positive deviant women changed their minds and started supporting women’s involvement in SBMC activities in the community even if it went against the traditional practice within their communities. Below are selected quotes from these men.

- “I understand that the tradition of not allowing women is because of illiteracy and since I am enlightened and educated, I ignore that traditional belief...if more women are involved...it will help...especially in education considering their strategic roles as

mothers and their present level of involvement in teaching pupils in school and at home..." (PDH, 45 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

- "...to support her in helping women move to modernity...to allow her to give her contribution to developing our children...to help in bringing about awareness in society... to help in poverty alleviation of women." (PDH, 34 years old, rural community, Kano).
- "...I was patient in explaining to her husband (brother of the respondent) the benefits of her participation and gradually he was able to reason with me...today he allows her to participate without any problem..." (PD brother-in-law, 60 years old, semi-rural community, Kwara).
- I know it is right for me and I know it is not against my religion. There is no doubt her involvement in the SBMC will bring growth and progress in our community that will make our children to depend on no one tomorrow and in the future...I know the importance of education...it will benefit me and the community...if not now, in the future credit will be ascribed to us...because if you lay a good foundation, it will speak for you even after you might have gone. (PD husband, 34 years old, semi-rural community, Jigawa).
- "If you see a women doing good in the community, why would you not support her?" (PDH, 64 years old, semi-rural community, Enugu).

### Benefits of Women's Participation

- "The women in the SBMC are really working. They are doing wonders. They have visited most of the households in Abor, including the Igwe's palace and the Churches. They visit homes, discussing with parents whose wards have challenges in school how to go about addressing identified problems. They make visits to school to monitor the activities of both the pupils and the teachers. In December last year, they were instrumental to the counterpart funds raised for the purchase of the water tank they have in the school. The women here have been using the '*heart of a mother*'<sup>41</sup> to cater for the school. There was a case of a family who brought two girls as house helps and refused them go to school. When the women in the SBMC got wind of this happening, they immediately approached the family, and now the children are in school." (Female, CSO Programme Manager, Rural Community, Kwara).

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<sup>41</sup>A direct quote from the interview transcript. The phrase using "the heart of a mother" was explained as someone having motherly instincts; one that has tremendous concern for the welfare of children.

115. Women's participation in schools through SBMC women's committees has had a community-wide impact. SBMC activities conducted through the women's groups have resulted to tangible changes in communities and in their own personal lives. PD women's involvement in SBMC activities have provided women an exposure on community issues, opportunities to be directly involved, and take part in training that enhance their skills in accomplishing change. Across the four research States, there are higher enrolment rates of children presently attending school attributed by the respondents to SBMC women's committee's community activities. These are the results of women subcommittee group's efforts in conducting education awareness campaigns, house-to-house visits, and school visits to ensure that teachers are in class to teaching children. All PD women stated that membership in SBMCs has provided them a chance to be out and actively take part in significant community and school affairs. As some PD women put it, it gives them an opportunity to be relevant.
116. For some PD women, involvement in SBMC community activities has resulted in positive, personal, behavioural change, which benefits their entire households.
- "...like in the past, she wasn't too keen about her children's wellbeing. But now, she takes very good care of them and ensures that she bathes and sends them to school on time...this is why I say I am in favour of her participation...if she wasn't participating, this wouldn't have been so, don't you think?" (PDH, 35 years old, rural community, Kwara).
117. PD women in all States have also started addressing the issue of out of school children and those that are missing classes. In both rural and semi-rural communities, SBMC women go around on market days to identify children who are not enrolled in school and counsel their parents to send the children to school. Other PD women also reported attending naming ceremonies and weddings to scout for children who are not in school.
118. In the research communities in Kano, a lot of focus was placed on PD women attending SBMC meetings. Given the strict cultural restrictions of women in the area, being able to attend meetings is already a significant step. Some women in Kano are also known to visit houses to counsel mothers about the importance of their children's education.
- "I wish to see her as the protector of human rights...and she helps in uplifting this and the next generation of my community...enlightening more women, advising people to take their children to school and supporting activities that will bring about progress of the community." (PDH, 40 years old, rural community, Kano).

119. In Kano and Jigawa States, women used to stay home. PD women who are members of SBMC women's committees they are now movers in their communities and seen as a valued asset by their husbands. In the rural research community of Jigawa, SBMC members bought uniforms for all girls in school to encourage them to go to school. The second round of collection is said to be for boy's uniform. Reports from PD women state that the distribution of school uniforms has boosted the number of children presently going to school. PD men and women also mentioned that SBMC women members sometimes take over supervision of classes when the teachers do not report to school. In the rural community, the SBMC has been involved in sanitation campaigns in the community. In Enugu and in Jigawa, SBMC women's committees raised matching funds for boreholes.

- "I am in favour of my brother's wife's participation in the SBMC activities and in our community. We have seen the benefit and what her participation has and is still bringing to us. Our children now go to school compared to what was happening before when did not like going to school...also we did not have water in this community, but now we have a bore hole that supplies water to the whole community. We have seen the result of (what) education and women's participation can bring us in this community." (PD brother-in-law, 50 years old, rural community, Jigawa).

120. All PD women interviewed were able to identify a person they admired most, a role model. Having a role model has given these women an inspiration and hope that dreams can come through. These PD women have also served as a role model for the young girls in their own communities. Results indicate that all PD women have given counselling to young girls on the importance of education, of finishing school in spite of all the challenges. Some have counselled girls on proper decorum and moral values within their communities whilst some have also talked to girls about being careful as they reach their teenage years. These talks are said to have also included personal hygiene and bodily changes as the girls enter puberty. Though these talks occur, it does not occur on a systematic method where there is a fixed schedule or forum for frequent meetings and discussions. With the changes they are making in women's community and school participation, there is no doubt that these PD women are opening up more opportunities for new generation of girls. Actual change for better future options for girls lie with the parents of these younger generation.

### **Voices of Teenage Daughters of Positive Deviant Women**

121. "My mother is a teacher in my school. She is a member of the SBMC and she attends meetings with the girls in the school, trying to find out what their problems are and the way she can help them in case they have problems...when she discovers that some children are not in school, she meets their parents and advise them on the need to enrol their children in school. On market days, she is one of those appointed by the



SBMC to go to the market and see if there are schoolchildren either hawking or selling in the market. There are some other people who go with her... Once they see any child in the market, they send such a child to the school. She also meets with the girls in school and advises them on how to face their studies so that they will be great people in the future...(but) we face some problems...some people do not like what she does...she says it when she comes home. There are some people who used to greet her before but because she sends their children away from the market to the school, they don't greet her anymore ...I don't like a situation where some people will not be happy with her and they will talk (bad) about her...there are people who appreciate and thank her but it is not everybody...There was even a man who brought yams to our house thanking my mother for convincing his daughter to go to secondary school instead of trading...A girl in my school (Rakiya) finished primary school and said she was not interested in going to the secondary school but her parents wanted her to go. So, her father came to tell my mother and my mother called her and told her she will lose if she does not go to secondary school, despite the fact that the girl is brilliant. The girl listened to my mother...she is now going to JSS 3. In appreciation, her father, who is a farmer brought big tubers of yam for my mother."



Comparing the triple roles of men and women in the community

"She comes back home in good time. On days that she does not come back in good time, there is no food I cannot prepare, so there is no problem as regards that...Yes, we all (including the father) give her the support she needs because what she is doing is for the benefit of everybody. She is very hardworking and she supports my dad financially. She provides for our needs ..."

“(on role models)...there is a nurse in this community that I like...she is very hardworking and friendly...there are some other women. My mother is one of them.”(14-year-old daughter of a PD woman from Kwara).

“My mother is a pride to this family. I am happy to be associated with her role in the community and in the school. I feel very good inside knowing what my mum is involved in school. I am not embarrassed in the community. Instead it has drawn more friends to me...(even if she is busy) we still have valuable time together. Her exposure has also helped her in counselling and taking care of me better. In fact, her work has brought more honour and glory to the family. I will encourage her to keep doing the good work.” (19-year-old daughter of a PD woman from Enugu).

122. In spite of the many tribulations and sacrifices faced by positive deviant women and their families, it is the belief that education will bring a better future for their daughters and their community that keeps positive deviant women and their families going.

### Women’s Participation in Decision Making in SBMCs

123. The Girl’s education support in Jigawa State, part of an intervention supported by ESSPIN has garnered success. In particular, the distribution of girl’s school uniform in one of the research communities can be directly traced to a SBMC woman treasurer and schoolteacher. As reported, “the men misspent the first round of funding collected” for the children’s uniform, so when the second collection came, the treasurer, a female Executive member informed the board that she will take the money and ensure that girl’s school uniforms were sewn and distributed. The success of this project was due to the help of women from the SBMC women’s committee. This is now recorded as a tremendous contribution by the SBMC in their community. The distribution of uniforms to girls helped give the SBMC women’s committee legitimacy and gained the respect of a number of community people. As stated by PD women, “the insults, and ridicules lessened” after the success of this project. Though most of the time it is difficult to ascertain the participation of women in decision making processes in SBMCs, this is one of the rare, irrefutable examples. An important point to consider in the looking at decision-making processes in education is who made the proposal. In this case, it was PDW treasurer, Executive member, and an educated individual and highly respected in the community. For women to overcome the typical stereotype of power dynamics and decision making, both the school and in the community, education and/or financial independence are the two key factors that maybe used as a leverage as seen the profile of our PD women.

124. There is sufficient evidence based data to state that women are making positive changes in schools and in the community through the SBMC women’s committees.

Most of the PD women interviewed are members of the SBMC women's committee, women that work on the ground and in the forefront of school and community work. Since majority of the PD women interviewed are members of the SBMC women's committee and not necessarily part of the board, it is difficult to ascertain the full extent and nature of their participation in decision-making processes in SBMCs. But like in community settings, within the SBMC women's committee, women are free to plan and decide on their own. Planned activities are then sent to the board for approval. In most research communities visited, the board there is a range of 20-30% representation of women.

125. In Kwara and one research community in Enugu, PD women members of SBMC stated that women are consulted in all SBMC activities. The story is different in Jigawa, where women stated they are not consulted. In Enugu, where the SBMC was just formed, the range of women's participation in SBMC varies from being informed, consulted to involved from State to State.

## Children's Views on Education

### *Early marriage or child marriage*

126. As discussed extensively earlier in the report under barriers faced by women, child marriage or early marriage was a problem raised by Kano children in the focus group discussion. The practice of marriage after menarche is still strongly practiced in Kano. It is reported that the marrying age for young girls is between the ages of 13 to 15 years old, especially in rural communities. Although early marriage reportedly occurs in Kwara and Jigawa, this issue did not come up as strong during the FGD with teenage boys and girls. The cultural practice of early marriage or child marriage still occurs in many States of Nigeria. If early marriage continues, this cultural practice will continue to chain girls and women in the web of poverty, submission, and marginalisation.
127. DFID through ESSPIN in collaboration with the Kano State Government is piloting a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) for girls education programme. Reports from the field indicate that the CCT selected girls from less privileged households attending primary and junior secondary school have recently started receiving money transfer amounting from 2,500 to 5,000 Naira. It is envisioned that the CCT programme will not only increase the girl's enrolment in primary school but also improve their retention and completion rate in higher junior secondary grades. Although still in its pilot stage, it will be interesting to see the impact, if any, it will have in curbing early marriage and keeping girls in schools in Kano.

### *Use of the mother tongue in teaching minority groups*

128. During the pilot in Kwara, the research debriefing brought an interesting turn out of nomadic Fulani people. The Fulani group were upset that they were not represented in the research process. An SBMC representative informed the group that they have been

constantly invited to different school activities but that the group never showed up, this time it was a conscious decision not to invite them. During the discussion, the issue of frequent absenteeism of nomadic Fulani children came up. The leader of the Fulani group explained to the head master that their children are learning Yoruba in school and they do not use nor speak Yoruba at home. The Fulani people later said that if their children can learn Hausa in school then they would diligently send their children to school. The head master said that he had two teachers in school that could teach Fulani children Hausa and made a pledge that this is something they will do. Though the actual result of this discussion still requires follow up, what is clear is that learning needs to be meaningful to the children and that their parents will only find value in education if they find it useful. The value of teaching nomadic children in their native tongue is a lesson often overlooked. Research shows that when children learn in their mother tongue, children are more likely to enrol and succeed in school.<sup>42</sup> Parents of indigenous or nomadic children are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning if education is conducted in their mother tongue.<sup>43</sup> To develop the literacy and verbal proficiency required for academic achievement in secondary school, six to eight years of education in a language is essential. This would mean that nomadic children have to be taught in their native tongue for the entire primary level.<sup>44</sup>

### *Distance of schools from communities*

129. The distance of schools from communities is frequently mentioned as a problem in education, this research is no different. Children from Jigawa, Enugu, and Kwara also echoed the same sentiments. One research community in Jigawa mentioned that the nearest secondary school to their community was seven kilometres away. Due to the distance, only parents who can send their children to bordering school are able to attend. Given the high poverty level in the research community, this will be a very low percentage. With the lack of secondary school, many parents are allegedly discouraged to send their children to primary school since there is "no reason to." Those that finish sixth grade are found in the village carrying out the same work as those that never went to school. Based on the researcher's observations, there is a high rate of child marriage in the area and this fact may be attributed to the cultural practice of child marriage it is further reinforced by the lack of other options. In Enugu, the distance of the school from the community and poor road access makes it difficult for children to go school. During the actual field research, children in the research communities in Kwara also reported similar challenges for children in reaching school. In two pilot communities in

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<sup>42</sup> Kosonen, K. (2005). *Education in local languages: Policy and practice in Southeast Asia. First languages first: Community-based literacy programmes for minority language contexts in Asia*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok

<sup>43</sup> Benson, C. (2002). *Real and potential benefits of bilingual programmes in developing countries*. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 5 (6), 303-317.

<sup>44</sup> Cummins, J. (1986). *Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention*. Harvard Educational Review, 56, 18-35. CfBT/Save the Children (2009) Education and Language, The Missing Link

Kwara, children mentioned the fear of “being kidnapped” as they go to and from school. Nomadic communities in three research areas have also complained of the distance of schools from their settlements.

### *Corporal punishment*

130. The issue of corporal punishment was raised both in Kano and Kwara. Although in Kano, the children highlighted the beatings received by children from teachers, in Kwara the focus was more about public shaming. Corporal punishment is said to be entrenched in the Nigerian school system that some children consider it as a “normal form of school discipline.” PD interviews in Enugu and Jigawa showed incidences where teachers and parents had altercations due to the extreme punishments given by teachers. In both cases, SBMC women committee members had to step in. In Kano, the children enjoyed the way the focus group was conducted that they even said that if their classes had the same environment (an open and less threatening environment where their opinions were welcomed) and teachers spoke to them nicely they will go to school more frequently.

131. Physical punishment reduces trust between the teacher and the child. Trust is vital in learning because children need to feel safe; a learning environment in which they can try and experiment new things without the fear of making mistakes. It is by trying new things that children learn new skills and knowledge.<sup>45</sup> There is no evidence that punishments improve a child’s academic achievement. A recent report states that girls left school due to corporal punishments.<sup>46</sup>

### *Child labour*

132. In most of the research States, poverty has resulted to children taking up work to help supplement their needs and their family’s needs. Results show that in Kwara, an area known historically in Nigeria as a trading centre, many children were seen working. Children engage in petty trading the pushing of (yam) carts weighing over twice their weight, and the grinding of shea butter nut seeds. In Kano, boys are under considerable pressure to engage in petty trade and hawking to help the family. The majority of the children interviewed who are involved in petty trade, hawking and other forms of informal work said that the money they earn help them pay for PTA levies and buy school supplies.

133. In 2003, the Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics reported more than 15 million Nigerian children under the age of 14 were working. Children worked mostly to help pay their school fees and help their parents in household daily expenses. The survey, conducted with support from the International Labour Office, showed that over eight million of the country's working children were also attending school. The report Child

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<sup>45</sup> Plan International. (2008). *Learn Without Fear*.

<sup>46</sup> ActionAid International. (2011). *Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria*. ActionAid Nigeria.

Labour in Nigeria,<sup>47</sup> reveals a staggering 15 million children under the age of 14 years are working across Nigeria, many were working long hours and in unhealthy and dangerous work environments. Working children who make it to school are unable to concentrate on their schoolwork due to exhaustion and are less likely to be prepared compared to their school counterparts. Working children are more likely to eventually drop out of school.<sup>48</sup> The likelihood of children involved in child labour dropping out of school is high, Though the issue of child labour was raised in only two research States, it does not connote it is not occurring in other States. With the increase in the country's poverty level, this national problem will continue to persist if not aggressively dealt with.

#### *Parent Teacher Association (PTA) levy*

134. The problem of payment for Parent Teacher Association (PTA) levy was raised in all four-research States. Free education is always associated with direct and indirect costs such school uniforms, textbooks, transportation fee, lunch money, school levies and others. PTA levy is a contributing factor that inhibits a marginalised child from frequently attending school. Research results show that children are frequently sent home if they are unable to the PTA levy. Collection of PTA levy for those that are unable to pay brings fear, shame, and stress on children.

#### *Quality education and safe schools*

135. Most Nigerian reports in education highlight the need for better school infrastructure, with the basic tables, chairs, chalkboards, availability of teaching and learning materials in classrooms for teachers to use, and better quality of teaching. Lesser is teacher absenteeism, more women teachers with a more child centred methodology.
136. Children in areas where water is a valued commodity mentioned the importance of having access to potable drinking water. Access to clean school latrines was also raised. The issue of clean latrines was not only mentioned in terms of access but also of safety, children need to go to the bush where the grass is usually high and the fear of getting bitten by snakes is a fear everyone expressed. Emphasis was made on clean latrines since there were some schools, which had latrines but were unusable and unsanitary. In the end, children opted to go back in the bush.
137. In all four-research States, children mentioned the importance of having a fence around their schools. In the pilot in Kwara, school children mentioned the fear of "hooligans" coming into their classrooms because the teacher leaves earlier than the dismissal bell. The children reported being "beating up" and hooligans ripping their school supplies such as notebooks and/or books. Similar stories were gathered in Jigawa and Enugu. In Enugu, children in one school reported that in the evenings, classrooms

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<sup>47</sup>United Nations Children Fund. (2006). *ChildLabour in Nigeria*. UNICEF, Nigeria.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid*.

were vandalised, chairs and tables are destroyed, and their water buckets contaminated with human excrements. The lack of school fencing is essential not only for the safety of children but also for the safety of the school infrastructure. Though communities have raised funds to facilitate school renovate and construction, local governments need to ensure budget is allocated to the most disadvantaged schools.

138. In Enugu, during the final activity of the focus group, children were asked to think and draw about their dream for the future. One child drew the school and right beside it was a huge tree. When asked by the researcher to explain her drawing, the child said that she drew the big tree to protect the school so that it will not be blown away or destroyed until the community can completely fix it. This school was dilapidated and unsafe yet the community has been struggling to repair it in the last year. It is the only school they have in that community.

## Conclusions

139. This community-led participatory research on positive deviant women sought to gain further insights into the different factors which continues to affect women's participation in SBMC's education decision-making processes and in communities.
140. Certain community members generally welcome women's active participation in the education of their children. Research results show that women's participation in school activities is somehow "expected", it is seen as an extension of women's motherly roles from the house to the community since it directly involves children. Findings show there is higher women's participation in school and education activities than in the community affairs. The value placed on education is slowly increasing in a number of ESSPIN supported research communities though there is still much work to be done. Poverty is forcing families to choose, and use of their limited resources wisely. Though PD families see equal importance of sending both girls and boys to school, the general preference in research communities is still to send boys to school over the girls. Girls are reportedly married after the age of menarche while boys continue with their schooling and marry at a later age.
141. The majority of positive deviant women identified by communities are SBMC women's committee members, only a handful of PD women are part of the Executive. Executive members hold either the treasurer or PRO position. Similar to the community practice in decision-making, women freely decide within their small groups, like in SBMC women's committee. PD women, board members in Enugu and Kwara have stated that they have been part of the consultation process unlike in Jigawa. Though it is difficult to ascertain the extent of women's participation in decision-making within the Executive, one story came across as a perfect example. Looking at the profile of this woman, it is an educated woman, a schoolteacher and part of the board that was able to make a suggestion to the board that was immediately acted upon. This example is on the



provision of free school uniforms to girls in a research community in Jigawa as discussed earlier in the report. Traditional socio-cultural practices, blurring lines between culture and religion and strictly ascribed roles have all resulted to the low value placed on women, on women's participation. Practices such as early marriage, low literacy rate of women, lack of, or little access to financial resources, the lack of time and men's seclusion of their wives is some of the most common factors inhibiting women's activate participation.

142. Women have been in the forefront of education community awareness raising campaigns. Women's active participation in SBMC women's committee activities of house visits, fundraising, bringing children back to school and informal mentoring are opening up more opportunities for the younger generation, especially the girls. The increase in school enrolment in all the research communities was mainly attributed to the hard work and resoluteness of SBMC women's committee members. Girls in a research community in Jigawa were given free school uniforms to motivate them to go to school. Stories of SBMC women's committee members being directly involved stopping early marriages and advocating for girls to continue in school have been documented. Access to potable drinking water in close to half of the research sites was attributed to the fundraising activities of SBMC women's committee member. Women's highly, visible presence in communities and linkages with community gatekeepers and duty bearers advocating for better access to, quality education as well as higher women's involvement in various school activities are in itself changing the perceptions of many on women's contributions and the importance of their participation.

143. Recognition of women's contributions has resulted in changing gender roles within the families of positive deviant women. A number of husbands and children of PDWs are sharing in house chores to free the women for SBMC work. In spite of the generally supportive environments within their own families, interview transcripts often showed conflicting responses by positive deviant men. It may be surmised that conflicting statements of male family members of positive deviant women show the struggle they themselves face in going against traditional cultural practices. Change takes time, positive behavioural change often takes courage and requires a supportive environment.

144. The SBMC women's committees established in ESSPIN supported States has provided more women an opportunity to be involved in school activities. Women's involvement needs to be complemented with quality training to equip women the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct their activities effectively and efficiently.

## Options and next steps

145. Recommendations below are divided into four main categories; general recommendations, specific recommendations on education, specific recommendations



on school based management committees and lastly, recommendations for longer term sustainability of women's participation.

## General Recommendations

### *Policy Level*

146. Increasing women's participation through SBMCs women's committees has made some progress but more work is needed to ensure that women are truly empowered. As women taking part in school activities continue their work, it is vital that communities, both men and women, are also prepared in women's changing roles within their communities, within the country. To ensure a sustainable and smooth transition of women's empowerment from school related activities to community daily living, both men and women, must be actively involved in the entire positive behavioural change process. Forging the link between women's active involvement in SBMC and eventually in community affairs outside the traditional mould of women's roles may prevent unnecessary conflicts in terms of unmet expectations within communities and families. Positive behavioural change on women's empowerment may only happen if there is a multi-dimensional and a cross-sectoral approach simultaneously focusing on education, health, and economics amongst all stakeholders.

147. The Policy Environment: This partnership has to start with the Government, at policy level through to grassroots community level, with proper resources, budgeting, planning and implementation through holding duty bearers and gatekeepers accountable. The present Nigerian Government has paved the way for higher recognition of qualified women through political appointments. Women representation in high official offices provides a balanced perspective from both men and women's views in various issues, especially those concerning women and children in decision-making bodies. Though not a certainty, it is none the less anticipated that changes in women's participation in the policy level might trickle down to women's participation in the grassroots level. Were a positive discrimination approach adopted at all levels of appointments, especially in teacher recruitment, positive impact will directly be felt in the school level which may address the dearth of female teachers in many rural communities. Recommendations below are for the various sectors of society.

### *Research Information dissemination campaign*

148. The Positive Deviance Research in selected States has created a higher community-wide awareness on the contributions and importance of women's participation in education. In line with the research framework of providing feedback and sharing of information gathered to research participants, it is essential that a similar approach be conducted with the information dissemination of report. As seen during the feedback sessions in most research communities, community-led action plans were developed to address existing barriers children faced in education, issues around women's participation were also discussed and in some cases addressed by traditional,

administrative and religious leaders with the support of community members. Sustainable change may only be achieved if there is local ownership in the decision-making process of providing solutions and the allocation human and financial resources. In the State level, improving women's participation and increased access to quality education may only be addressed if key decision makers are involved in the research process.

149. It is recommended that the final report and/or key findings and results of this research be presented to State Community and Government Partners and SBMCs by ESSPIN. It is further recommended that the feedback session in the State level be facilitated in a similar participatory manner conducted in the community level; one that elicits further discussion and hopefully result to State-led action plans.

### *Working with men as partners*

150. There is no doubt, that power of change lies with the men, gatekeepers of communities and families. Positive change in behavioural attitudes, practices and altering gender roles in response to changing times through higher women's empowerment and participation in communities, schools and homes may only be achieved if it is done working in partnership with men. Traditional and religious leaders who support women's changing roles within school and community settings and believe in higher access to (girls) education and women's participation may openly advocate this in men's meetings or religious gatherings. Men working with other men and women is an approach that warrants serious consideration.
151. It is recommended that State partners working on SBMC development in States, including both Government and civil society forge strong linkages to like-minded men and women at different levels of society who believe in advancing women's empowerment and participation in school and in communities. The work beginning in Kaduna State on Gender Champions, linked to the State Committee on Inclusive Education, where both men and women who champion the participation of women visit and engage with communities would be an example of this.

### *Early marriage*

152. Early marriage is a very sensitive issue in Nigeria, especially in some sections of the country. Caution must be taken in addressing this barrier to girl's education in relation to backlash. Changes in this line of thinking must happen in a well thought of and well-coordinated cross-sectoral approach from the health and education perspective.
153. It is recommended that CSOs working with Government partners in ESSPIN-supported States focus their advocacy efforts on improving girl's education and the barriers to it as revealed by their experience working with SBMCs and communities, one of which this research highlights to be early marriage. CSOs and Government partners to also find appropriate ways to support SBMCs and communities to address issues of

early marriage as part of their mentoring support sessions to SBMCs and communities. A less harmful traditional approach of delaying marriage to a later age together with intense information campaigns on future benefits of education for girls and the health detriments for the young brides may also be part of the advocacy campaign. It is further recommended that in States where the CRA (2003) has been domesticated, and a legal framework already exists for the age of marriage, SBMCs, CSOs and other Government branches work together to socialise this information in the community level and use this legal framework in keeping girls in school at least until secondary school.

### **Child labour**

154. There are over 15 million children below 14 years old working across Nigeria, many of whom are working long hours in unsafe and unhealthy work environments.<sup>49</sup> Children involved in child labour are more likely to drop out of school, those that make it to school are just too exhausted to concentrate on their school work. Children in Kwara and Kano research sites mentioned child labour as a problem in their community and “too much work” as stated by the children during their FGDs. Though it is understandable that due to dire poverty, certain families require their children’s assistance in making ends meet, community members themselves must address the difference between “life skills training and child labour” within their own contexts whilst given pertinent information on the concept of child labour. The issue of child labour has been tackled in only one out of four research communities.

155. It is recommended that SBMCs link with the State and Federal Ministry of Youth Affairs and Development, CBOs and Protection Networks in their States to help address different forms of child labour. It is further recommended that part of the step down training of SBMCs and SBMC women committee members on child protection focus on advocacy campaigns on child labour and ways of coordinating with parents and other community actors working on addressing child labour issues.

### **Specific Recommendations on Education**

156. The following recommendations are related to the challenges children encounter in accessing education. Also included is the challenge of community decision makers in the having evidence-based data on education within their own communities.

### **Increase social protection programmes to keep girls in school**

157. For girl’s education to truly make a difference in a woman’s life, finishing higher education, beyond junior secondary school, would provide her an opportunity to compete in the job market. For many women living in poverty, changing lives through education means a brighter future in terms of financial independence and having highly qualified skills. To achieve this, families must be encouraged to send girls beyond primary school.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

158. It is recommended that States to allocate funds and invest in social protection programmes that would provide families an incentive to keep girls in school until the upper secondary grades and beyond, if possible. An example of such programme is the CCT programme already implemented in Kano. In the 1990's the Government of Bangladesh implemented a successful a secondary school scholarship programme. Fees and books were provided to girls enrolled in school whilst parents received some compensation for the loss of their daughter's agriculture and household work. Parents were required to sign a bond that their daughters will not marry before the age of 18 years. This project resulted to the increase of marriage postponement.<sup>50</sup> In India, the Government of Haryana, set aside a small sum of money (\$78 USD) in savings account for a girl at birth. At the age of 18, if she is still unmarried, the girl is eligible to collect the accumulated amount of \$780 USD. The aim of the programme is to encourage parents to postpone marriage until daughters are 18 years old.<sup>51</sup> A strong political will backed with social protection programmes may help increase the community value placed on girls and women.

#### **Corporal punishment**

159. Corporal punishment is entrenched in the Nigerian school system as reported by teenage children and parents within research States. Trust is vital in learning because children need to feel safe to try new things and experiment without the fear of making mistakes. It is by trying new things that children learn new skills and knowledge. There is no evidence that punishments improve a child's academic achievement. It is recommended that SUBEB and LGEAs conduct an information dissemination campaign on the teacher's code of conduct and how this relates to corporal punishment. It is further recommended that there is provision made through the relevant teacher training channels for training, mentoring and follow up on alternative ways of class management and positive forms of school discipline for teachers and SBMC members.

#### **Collection of PTA levy**

160. Although basic education is free in Nigeria, there are still many direct and indirect costs associated to education. The PTA levy is considered by many of the teenage children who participated in State research FGDs to be a great barrier in their education. Children are often sent out of class if they are unable to pay the PTA levy, which brings constant trauma and stress on the children.

161. It is recommended that CSOs, Government Partners and SBMCs raise the issue of PTA levies at SBMC/LGEA forums as an enormous barrier to children in continuously accessing quality education. Partners to jointly conduct advocacy campaigns around PTA levies at the State Level to LGEA and SUBEB State departments. Concurrently, it is

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<sup>50</sup> Arends-Kuenning, M. and Amin, S. (2000). *The Effects of Schooling Incentive Programs on Household Resource Allocation in Bangladesh*, Policy Research Division Working Paper No. 133, Population Council, New York.

<sup>51</sup> Mensch, B, Bruce, J and Greene, M. (1999). *The Uncharted Passage: Girls' Adolescence in the Developing World*, The Population Council.

further recommended that whenever possible, SBMCs provide support to marginalised children and those at at-risk of dropping out in paying their PTA levy in the community level.

### *Review and provision of innovative education methods to nomadic children*

162. Although only found in 25% of all research communities, it may also represent a similar problem in other rural areas of the country where nomadic people venture annually. In Kwara and in Jigawa several barriers were highlighted by nomadic communities in accessing education but the most prominent one this is distance of schools from their communities. The distance of the schools from the nomadic communities have caused nomadic children's frequent absenteeism, which resulted to negative stereotyping from host communities and children's exclusion due to their hygiene practices and lack of uniforms and other education provision. The far distance of schools not only provide a challenge to nomadic children in accessing education, the more time away from their homes also equates to the amount of time lost for the children's assistance in their family's source of living, herding cattle.

163. It is recommended that the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) in the Federal and State levels allocate funding for the yearly in-service teacher training of teachers supporting nomadic communities on innovative methods of delivering the school curriculum for the Nomadic Education Program (NEP) developed by NCNE. It is further recommended that SBMCs continue to bridge the communication line between schools and nomadic communities through house visits to foster an atmosphere of inclusivity, which may encourage more to send their children to school.

### *Teaching minority children in their mother tongue*

164. Education is important if it is meaningful to the learner and their family. Frequent absenteeism of Fulani nomadic children attending a local school in Kwara was later traced to the teaching vernacular used in school, Yoruba. Parents of the children did not speak Yuroba, Hausa was the language spoken at home. Learning in ones local language is crucial for young children. As the Government and SBMCs encourage children to attend school, it is vital that specific needs of minority students are addressed in an inclusive education. It has been shown that when children learn in their mother tongue, children are more likely to enrol and succeed in school.<sup>52</sup>

165. It is recommended SBMCs, CSOs and Government partners advocate the appointment of teachers who speak the mother tongue of nomadic children attending their school and that nomadic children are taught in their mother tongue for the first six years to gain the literacy and verbal skills and proficiency needed to succeed in secondary school.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

### *Positive role models for boys and girls*

166. Positive role models are crucial to all. It provides hope, encouragement and gives everyone a chance to dream. Highlighting positive role models, people within their own community, or other accomplished public figures such as national athletes and others may encourage families and children to dream bigger. Having an important and influential role model or a spokesperson on girl's education and other important issues will have a bigger impact on people, especially in the rural areas.
167. It is recommended that SBMCs identify, recognise and support positive role models and spokespersons for education and women's participation in their own schools and communities. It is further recommended that States, support this effort by identifying positive role models on a national level and encourage these people to play an active role in education awareness raising campaigns and in women's empowerment campaigns.

### *Creating a community-wide forum*

168. As a community led research, providing feedback to the wider community on the research findings is a vital research component. The feedback sessions provided all research communities a forum, where everyone, men, women, and children were included and heard. All research sites in Enugu, Kano, Kwara, and Jigawa reported, this was the first time ever; a forum was held where everyone was invited. These feedback sessions, attended by community gatekeepers and regular community members opened up opportunities to discuss pressing issues on children's education, highlight women's contributions in education. Also discussed were research results on barriers women face in actively participating in education and community activities it also showcased various coping mechanisms positive deviant women and their families practice to overcome socio-cultural barriers in women's participation. In some cases, immediate decisions to address specific issues were arrived at by duty bearers, other times, traditional and administrative leaders agreed to further discuss the issue at a later time. As a result of this forum, community led action plans were jointly developed in majority of the research sites and an open discussion on important issues occurred. The value of a community wide forum where men, women, and children can equally participate in a public dialogue is immeasurable, and possible.
169. It is highly recommended that Civil Society Organisations, working in partnership with the Government, particularly the Social Mobilisation Department of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) continue to foster an inclusive community wide forum where men, women, and children can all equally take part in and be heard in a public dialogue. Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) in ESSPIN-supported states have recently started supporting SBMC forums, which bring together a range of education stakeholders to discuss achievements and challenges at community and school level. It is further recommended that these forums supported by all CGPs in the States be strengthened and ensure the inclusion of women and children.

### ***Community driven evidence-based data on education***

170. The lack of credible, first hand information on challenges faced by children in accessing quality education within States is one of the biggest challenges for promoting positive change in education. The lack of evidence-based data results to misunderstood and unaddressed issues related to children's education. Presently being piloted in Kaiana LGEA, is a community based education management information system where community teams linked to the SBMCs collect information from children and their care takers on out of school children and children who dropped out of school. The information is first and foremost used by communities themselves to understand existing issues related to out of school children and children dropping out of school. Knowing and understanding evidence-based information helps key stakeholders and communities in decision-making and prioritisation of barriers communities may choose to address.
171. It is recommended that SBMCs, CSOs, Government partners and key stakeholders receive capacity building training on basic evidence-based data collection systems, data analysis and prioritisation of issues that community decision makers wish to take action on and address themselves. It is further recommended that technical support for this training be facilitated by ESSPIN.

### **Specific Recommendations on School Based Management Committees**

172. The following recommendations are related to SBMC structure, roles, responsibilities and functions. Also included under this section are specific recommendations on improved women's participation.

#### ***School Based Management Committee Leadership***

173. When the SBMC was domesticated and state-specific policies developed, the number of members, their roles, and responsibilities were outlined. As women are encouraged to actively participate and continuously be empowered in the SBMCs, a rotating leadership role must be considered by the third year to provide women an opportunity to move beyond the treasurer and PRO roles.
174. It is recommended to State that for the review of the SBMC policy guideline book, rotating leadership roles be introduced in SBMCs by the third year and that all positions be open to qualified women.

#### ***Revisit the selection process of SBMC members***

175. The present membership of SBMC guidelines identifies specific people to occupy certain positions. The present guidelines also cautions in the selection of influential women within the area who may dominate activities and not providing enough chance to other women who are not as influential. Though this stipulation was made in good faith, it is important to "maintain a balanced representation" of various women in the group. A quarter influential women in the research communities visited were not part

of nor were they aware of the SBMC work in schools. The small representation influential women who above maybe attributed to community members prioritising the selection of women involved in SBMCs. The involvement of influential women within the school catchments who may no longer have children going to the said school may stimulate immediate change and may have access to much needed resources and time in participating in SBMC activities.

176. It is recommended that a balanced representation of influential and less influential women be represented in SBMCs. By the third year, at least one influential female must be part of the SBMC from the community.

#### *Evaluation and mentoring visits to SBMCs and SBMC women committee members*

177. After close to two years of a functioning SBMC and inline with good programming practice, initial training received by SBMCs need to be revisited and evaluated for its progress and address issues or challenges met that were not covered in the initial training. As the model is rolled out in States, it will be critical to ensure that SBMC training and mentoring support find ways to include SBMC women committee members. Suggested key training areas that need to be revisited are on fundraising, resource mobilisation, child protection, and inclusion.

178. It is recommended that an evaluation/review of some of core training received by SBMCs be conducted and further strengthened. That in future mentoring visits by CGPs to SBMCs, a focused and consolidated SBMC training and mentoring content include SBMC women committee members who are in the forefront of the advocacy campaigns in their communities. This may mean making time adjustments and increasing the number of mentoring visits specific to SBMCs and SBMC women committee members. It is further recommended that SBMCs become more flexibility on scheduling meetings or training and take into account the work women have so that women are able to take part frequently.

#### *House Visit Kit*

179. A house visit kit containing picture cards, talking points and key messages would serve as an important tool for SBMC women committee members conducting house-to-house visits. This would not only serve useful in social gatherings where the importance of girl's education and women's participation is being introduced to other women, more so, it would be crucial in conducting house to house visits with families with low literacy levels or those that are illiterate. Having a thematic approach on talking points about education and women's participation would give SBMC women's committee members a guideline and topics to discuss.

180. It is recommended that Communications Departments within the Department of Social Mobilisation spearhead the development of the house visit kits on the importance of girl's education and women's participation with technical support from ESSPIN. It is



further recommended that women committee members receive proper training in the use of these materials.

### *Providing Quality Training*

181. A step down training approach has been used in training SBMC members. With newly developed committees, such as the SBMC women's committees and the Children's Committees, it is important to maintain the quality of training initially provided to the SBMC and crucially the mentoring support to SBMCs following training. Also, with the increasing number of SBMC members in the women's committee, reviewing the present activities and training needs of the group is essential to truly empower women. For SBMCs to continue to be effective, it is essential that quality training is maintained during the step down training process of SBMC women's and children's committees.

182. It is recommended that CSOs conduct a training needs assessment for the newly developed committees to address their emerging needs. It is further recommended that States continue to quality assure SBMC training by CSOs and Government partners in roll-out to new schools and LGEAs, including the training of community facilitators<sup>53</sup> to work with the Children's Committees and enhance their participation in SBMCs. Themes on child protection, participation, advocacy skills, negotiation skills, and confidence building exercises may be included in the said training.

### *Fundraising and continuous contributions*

183. Findings of this research show that woman's contributions in schools and communities are frequently associated with fund raising projects. As recognised earlier in the report, women's contributions have made an impact not only in increasing school enrolment through providing school related supplies to students but also in improving school infrastructure. Access to water in several of the research communities, which not only benefits school children but also the general public, has been attributed to the efforts of women's fundraising campaigns. Yet several PD respondents mentioned that frequent fund raising campaigns," contributions" collected during meetings and costs directly related to house visits or other SBMC activities may be sometimes be financially taxing, especially those with restricted source of income. Reports indicate that frequent financial collections, contributions, and other personal expenses of SBMC women's committee members may also be deterring other women in the community from actively joining the SBMC.

184. It is recommended that States continue to work towards devolving and ensure the release of small amounts of budgets for direct school funding to enable Head Teachers and SBMCs to implement sound school development plans with the wider participation

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<sup>53</sup> Community facilitators have already been identified in all schools and ESSPIN supported States and received one training so far on how to work with children and support children's participation.

of the community in school improvements. From this budget, allocation may also be made for SBMC women's committee activities. Currently ESSPIN is supporting the piloting of a small amount of Direct Funding to Schools (DFS) in ESSPIN-supported states to be used for school improvement as prioritised in school development plans. Proper use and allocation of such a fund, which is now being budgeted for under the State government's Medium Term Sector Strategies, would reduce the financial burden on women and others in the community in mobilising resources for school improvement. It is further recommended that SBMCs and CSOs focus resource mobilisation efforts on more affluent philanthropists and the business sector in their communities or elsewhere rather than frequently collecting contributions from SBMC members.

#### ***Public appreciation and recognition of women's contributions***

185. Since women in SBMCs committees are volunteers, a yearly public appreciation and recognition celebrating women's contributions in education is highly suggested. This activity will not only continue to encourage active women to participation in education activities, it may also be used as a platform for awareness raising with other women in the community about activities happening in the school of their children and possibly ways of how everyone can be involved.

186. It is recommended that States, through the LGEAs, hold a yearly public appreciation and recognition day in honour of SBMCs including women's participation and contributions in schools through SBMCs. The proposed recognition day may coincide with the global celebration of the International Women's Day held yearly on the 8th of March.

### **Longer-Term Recommendations for Sustainable Women's Participation**

187. The following recommendations are vital in the longer-term sustainability of women's participation. Considered as equally essential recommendations, these recommendations are situated at the end of the report merely because it is broader than the scope of the ESSPIN project. Recommendations below are on adult literacy programmes, skills and livelihoods training and micro-credit programmes.

#### ***Improved access to quality adult literacy programmes***

188. Results of this research and other studies in Nigeria indicate that close to 50% of girls/women have their first children before the age of twenty years old. The literacy level for women, especially in the Northern States, and in various rural and semi-rural research communities is extremely low. There is an urgent need to have quality adult literacy classes in communities where there are high illiteracy rates. There would be great value in linking SBMCs to the State Agency for Mass Education in each state, as well as in linking SBMCs, CSOs and Government partners to Second Chance Schools set up by Government in some areas to assist them in helping girls who have dropped out of

school due to pregnancy or other reasons, to finish their education. In a bid to national progress, functional literacy is a life skill every human being should possess.

189. It is recommended that Civil Society Organisations working with government partners on SBMC development in ESSPIN supported states, or other organisations, which have interest and expertise in adult literacy could be tapped as resources to help support such programme. The Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) for example has started to conduct adult literacy classes in the Northern States with funding from different organisations. Moreover, it is further recommended that SBMCs link with the State Agency for Mass Education and the Ministry of Women Affairs to advocate for “quality” adult literacy programmes and advocate for increased presence in key areas where the highest illiteracy levels and marginalised groups are located in the country.

#### *Use of various print and mass media for awareness-raising campaigns*

190. Various forms of print media and mass media such as radio programmes have been useful tools in reaching the most unreachable households in some of the rural research communities visited. The uses of picture posters and community theatre have also been mentioned as avenues people received information on various topics in communities.
191. It is recommended that awareness campaigns on education and women’s participation make use of various print and mass media to send out short and concise messages.

#### *Improved access to skills and livelihoods training and microfinance*

192. Empowering women begins with breaking the cycle of poverty. Empowering marginalised women is giving them lifelong skills and financial independence. Providing a training package, which includes training and start up money, would prove beneficial to many marginalised women. Access to resources alone does not translate into empowerment, proper use of resources must be a key component in any skills and livelihoods training programme. Returns of increased women and girls participation in microcredit and income generating activities will not only bring economic benefits to their families but also to their community. The importance and need for women’s financial independence has been recognised Kano. The State government’s recently initiated a poverty alleviation programme for women; ten women are selected every other month for a skills training and given seed money of 10,000 Naira. Though conducted in a small scale, this programme warrants more attention.
193. It is recommended that State partners including civil society; CBOs and local NGOs, and development partners consider investing and setting aside budget for training a cadre of marginalised women on a complete training package of skills training and livelihoods programmes combined with information on microcredit, the market, and

savings schemes. It is further recommended that SBMCs and women's groups link with microcredit organisations and the Ministry of Women Affairs, Social Development Departments.

## Annex 1: The Research Team

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## Annex 2: Voices from the Field: Testimonials of State Researchers

### Voices from Kano:

"I come from Kano, in any of the 484 communities in Kano state it is not possible for community leaders and traditional leaders, the top ones in everyone of those committees to sit down and everybody in the community, including women and children to come and address them telling them their problems and what they feel without the fear to be corrected...this is the first time I see this happening in Kano state...but women and children to stand up and talk in front of the community leaders, is religiously and honestly the first time...after saying what they feel are the problems and that something needs to be done. And the traditional and religious leaders together, and say yes, there is sense in what this woman is saying or there is sense in what these children are saying. In some things say we will meet later and take action and in some cases they agree and in some cases they agree ...they immediately decide on what is to be done on what that child or what that woman said...this I am happy to be part off...it will go down the history of my life... until I die. That something has happened in my life that I have never experience before in the 50 years of my life." (Nura)

"What impressed me much is during our feedback session where we were able to settle a dispute between two groups. The elder group and the youth group. That was really, really impressive and I will never forget this experience. And I feel that yes, I have really achieved something and coupled with that, the eagerness, the readiness of these women...they showed, in wanting to be part of all the activities, the zeal they showed. Really impressed me. I will never, never forget this in my life. This is very, very touching. I have so many things but let me stop here..." (Halima)

"What impresses me about this research is the children we met. They were vocal, they talked freely they enjoined our comments...I feel happy about it...they open to say whatever is disturbing them and we feel free to tell them how to move...in life..." (Salamatu)

### Voices from Kwara

"Personally, before this research work. I used to feel that I reach out to people and that I can help. More so, I deal with girls in the higher institutions and many a times when I come across indigent girls I try to see how I can come to their aid. And I think I was doing well. But on getting to the field and listening to these women who did not go to school and their level of reaching out to the needy. Relatively, looking at what they are doing and what I am doing, I feel I am still not doing enough. And I feel I should be able to do more than what those women are doing. I really feel challenged by what those women are doing...trying to touch lives even though they are not educated. Even though they are not educated, they are trying to see that other people's children are educated. More so that at the end of the

day they may not benefit from it directly from these recipients of theirs...so it's a challenge for me...I will put in more effort in reaching out to the poor and the needy." (Funke O).

"One thing I learned from this study is prior to this period...having participated in this research, I have never known that women struggled this hard in order to survive in life. I was surprised to see a situation whereby married women with husbands had to work this hard in order to make ends meet. So it's really an eye opener for me. And I think it has changed one or two perceptions I had. I actually respect them for that...it actually impacted on me...I even stated talking about it in some people...in my area. Women here should also wake up, women in the South are really working very hard...women taking care of the children's education and the men not saying anything about it...and they have accepted this too...we don't do anything, we are not supporting them. To me, that has really been something." (Mohammed).

"...the research is another step forward in all the effort that we started about four years ago...when we started it was like an impossible task...nobody believe anything can work, that was the way it is...but with the little that has been done, my own motto in life is that nothing is impossible...if we are determined to achieve, we'll achieve and that is what we are seeing. The Kaiama community when we started the women were not coming out and the men believe that where they are, women are not supposed to surface. But now the orientation is changing, they are beginning to see that women too have a role to play. And even the children that we are talking about their life, their future, so there is no way we can exclude the children from decision making process if they fully want to help the child...they always tell us, this is new it will take time, it's gradual. I want to believe that in the little steps we take we will get where we are going. I always tell them that where we are going is this communal living that we were used to then where a very brilliant child is detected and the parents where everybody contribute and the child goes and makes it. When he is done, he will come back to the community and give back. This is what SBMC is all about...they are beginning to see the possibility...for the community level they are ready, our greatest challenge is the Government...how much is their support?" (Funke).

### Voices from Enugu

"What really made a great impression on me personally was a sense of determination which I learned from just one PD woman...I keep referring to this one particular woman...when I went back home, I keep playing the tape I recorded...it gave me a light of insights and determination that you can achieve whatever if you are determined...this woman was a nobody. Even when her parents told her to marry at a tender age she cried, and her parent told her no, your husband will help us...but the man did not do anything...but this didn't happen...now if we talk of affluent, the woman is...this (her story) made me determined...when I look back I say yes, there are things I can do no matter what the circumstances are, no matter what the situations are, I can achieve that thing." (Itoro).  
"...I am very happy to be part and parcel of this research team that went everywhere. Mine was in Enugu and it was very impressive what we found out...what really impacted for me

was the way women...were handling issues. A story hit me so hard...that made me love my wife more...wives, husbands and children went to confront a company...seeing that the lives of their husbands and children were at stake, they asked the husbands and boys to leave the scene and to go...that they will besiege the place until they are answered. I see this in the life of my mother and in the life of my wife and I also see this in the life of many women...who can actually lay down their lives to make sure that things go right. It's a wonderful thing and it's a glorious thing and I really give kudos to the women of Onggonu, especially in Enugu state who had to take the fight to the forefront and were ready to surrender their lives so that things will work out fine for the people of Onggonu. Honestly, this is a woman in participation...you can image if women are given their right place in the scheme of things in Nigeria. I think they will be willing to lay down their lives to make sure that things run well...also in Enugu, there were two women in the men's group ...one was a financial secretary and the other was a treasurer...they (the men) said that they trusted the women so much that they...can't give the money to the men...you can see the type of respect they have for women but unfortunately when it comes to other things...like taking decision at very high positions women are deprived, women are not allowed...the only thing we can do is encourage them to come out...I think that women are still regarding themselves as weaker vessels...if women can come out and be in the forefront...I think Nigeria will be a better place. (Uwem).

"To be honest, I was shocked at the level of readiness of women to contribute to community development...the resources that had led...to maybe cultural inhibition or another...all the women we interviewed are eager and you can see the anger in them because they have been suppressed long ago. There is a widow, her husband died when her child was just entering JS1...the brother to the husband, got the boy to sign the gratuity of their dad and to this day they have not received a (thing)...the woman was out of state for many years and came back but today six of her children are graduates and she's one of the team leaders in the ESSPIN society...so I could see the bottled anger...the resources that are not tapped are there...they are ready...to contribute to community and school development...the earlier we tap these resource and these commitments amongst them the better." (Ignatius).

### Voices from Jigawa

My name is Sambo, I'm a PD man. I'm a changed man. I'm a transformed man now. Thank you to this research, thank you Emily for working with you...I felt guilty to stand in front of these people to facilitate the process of gender roles without practicing it...(After the training and pilot, Sambo reportedly started doing dishes in the house and helping his wife with house chores)...so it has helped me fit in the process. If you go to Brinuwe you go to Dole and mention my name, they won't thing twice...because I decided let me internalize this first...before I get the boldness to stand before them without being guilty, that is a plus to my life. And when I was coming back I was almost shedding tears, that I wish this thing is done in my community. That the time we had with them there and the changes of what I



saw...I say I wish...I do not know why they didn't do this research in Kaduna state and if they could do it in Kaduna, I wish they could go to my local Government, you could go to my community or my village...because I've seen light, I've seen improvement and greatness coming to Jigawa and I told them and they shouldn't play with it. And it is the product of this research. I wish you people can do this in Kaduna and in Lagos too. Thank you very much." (Sambo).

"...I am very happy to be part of this group. One thing this research has done for me...I can't foretell the future but I know that if not for this research it would have been a very long time before I could see Jigawa state...it was very exciting because for the first time I could see agricultural land...this trip has really given me...to see and appreciate them. We have this perception that the northern States is backward educationally, that we will say things like, everything is provided for them to go but they refuse to go. But during the course of this research, I know that they face the same problems that we face, Government not attending to things they're supposed to...we now know that they have peculiar problems just like we do have. That education to them is not coming cheap, cheap and they are not appreciating it...the two communities we went to (in Jigawa state) I particularly was surprised with the level of awareness...primary school children in Brinuwa spoke English with me...I was very impressed...so no I know that given the chance that most of us have in the South, the northern child can also excel...as a Muslim woman, the impression of polygamy that we have in the south, the way we practice it there is quite different from what I saw in the north...my PD women, two of them were married to the same man. I finished interviewing one, I went to the other compound to interview one by the time I went back to the second woman...I met the two of them eating on the same plate then the eldest one carrying the child of the younger one...that harmony...I'm impressed...it's not common." (Halima).

"One thing I will never forget about this research is the level of process of accountability in relation to women. I was so excited that these two school communities...women are very good in the process of accountability, so by involving them in much of the SBMC work, I'm sure process of accountability will be strengthened. They have given us examples where they have participated in the process of accountability in the use of resources in the schools. Particularly in these (name of schools) prove that.... I can say that they are even better than some men in their school, communities. Surely, involving women in the process of accountability and management resources ..." (Abubakar).

### Voices from Abuja

"...the dimension that this research took was a new dimension for me...what I learned for this process is the ability to continue to use dialogue more...will help us a lot to change perceptions and stereotypes at the community level...after doing the activity in Iporim from the Kwara, the Imam said he can (now) help his wife fetch firewood and fetch water...it told us that a lot of these ascribed roles can really change because this is what is affecting the workload of women if men can change their attitude ....will free some time and let them

attend a lot of other activities...I hope this is a big lesson that we can all apply back in the work we do..." (Abass).

"...to listen, to pick and to adopt things that are valuable to them in their own context...the key learning for me is that in any difficult situation, if you put your head above you can swim through the wave, either against the tide or you just follow...we have demonstrated that community participation has come to stay in Nigeria...the lesson for me is that we should keep the pace..." (Fatima).

## Annex 3: Samples of Community Led Action Plans

### Sample 1: Abor Community, Enugu State Work Plan

S/N	ISSUES RAISED	ACTIVITY	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	ACTION DATE
1	Poor class environment	Sensitization of community members to help in development. Fund drive.	(1) SBMC (2) UBA age grade (3) CWO (4) Ibeanyi Association (5) Execution of Umuavoro town Union (6) Head boy	15/09/2012
2	Lack of facilities	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
3	Poor Sch. Environment	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
4	Security	Approaching the vigilante to secure the school.	(1) SBMC Chairman and (2) Chairman of vigilante	Immediately
5	No library	Mobilization funds for library construction.	(1) SBMC (2) GWC in council (3) Obodechi Matthew (4) Head boy/Children committee	Oct. 2012
6	Withdrawal of pupil by parents	Fund mobilization, to give the school a face lift	(1) SBMC Chairman & members (2) Women committee	Dec. time
7	No toilet facilities	Same as above	Same as above	15/09/2012
8	Distance of school poor access road	Approach our sons and daughters. Write letter for fund.	(1) SBMC (2) Head boy (3) Women group	15/09/2012
9	No chairs, books lack of classrooms	Same as above	Same as above	15/09/2012

## Sample 2: Kaiama Community, Kwara State Work Plan

WHAT TO DO	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME	OUTCOME
Insufficient textbooks	SBMC	Immediately	Sufficient textbooks provided
Work on the abandoned toilet	SBMC	Immediately school resume	Toilet completed
Child labour	SBMC	On going	Child labour stopped
Insufficient chairs	SBMC	Immediately school resume	Chairs provided
Non payment of PTA levy	SBMC	Immediately	PTA levies paid
Men not allowing their wives to participate	SBMC	On going	Already yielding result
Men not supporting their wives	Traditional ruler	Immediately	Support from men as regards the education of their children

## Annex 4: Demographics of Positive Deviant Respondents

**Table 1: Participants per State**

Participants per State		
State	Frequency	Valid Percent
Enugu	17	25.4
Kano	18	26.9
Kwara	15	22.4
Jigawa	17	25.4
Total	67	100.0

**Table 2: Sex of Research Respondents**

Sex of Research Respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Valid Percent
Male	27	40.3
Female	40	59.7
Total	67	100.0

**Table 3: Ethnicities of PD Respondents**

PD Ethnicities		
Ethnicity	Frequency	Valid Percent
Hausa	25	37.3
Fulani	2	3.0
Manga	4	6.0
Boko Baru	12	17.9
Bamange	1	1.5
Kanuri	2	3.0
Baribari	1	1.5
Yoruba	3	4.5
Igbo	17	25.4
Total	67	100.0

**Table 4: Religion of PD Respondents**

Religion of PD Respondents		
Religion	Frequency	Valid Percent
Christian	18	26.9
Muslim	49	73.1
Total	67	100.0

**Table 5: Participants per Location**

Participants per Location		
Type of Community	Frequency	Valid Percent
Rural	33	49.3
Semi-rural	34	50.7
Total	67	100.0

**Table 6: Age Range of PD Respondents**

Age Range of PD Respondents		
Age Range	Frequency	Valid Percent
19-30	10	14.9
31-40	16	23.9
41-50	21	31.3
51-59	7	10.4
60 and above	12	17.9
Don't know	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

**Table 7: Age Range of PD Respondents According Sex**

Age Range of PD Respondents According Sex									
			Age Range						Total
			19-30	31-40	41-50	51-59	60 and above	Don't know	
Sex	Male	Count	3	6	5	4	9	0	27
		% Within sex	11.1%	22.2%	18.5%	14.8%	33.3%	.0%	100.0%
		% Within age range	30.0%	37.5%	23.8%	57.1%	75.0%	.0%	40.3%
		% of Total	4.5%	9.0%	7.5%	6.0%	13.4%	.0%	40.3%
	Female	Count	7	10	16	3	3	1	40
		% Within sex	17.5%	25.0%	40.0%	7.5%	7.5%	2.5%	100.0%
		% Within age range	70.0%	62.5%	76.2%	42.9%	25.0%	100.0%	59.7%
		% of Total	10.4%	14.9%	23.9%	4.5%	4.5%	1.5%	59.7%
Total		Count	10	16	21	7	12	1	67
		% Within sex	14.9%	23.9%	31.3%	10.4%	17.9%	1.5%	100.0%
		% Within age range	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	23.9%	31.3%	10.4%	17.9%	1.5%	100.0%

Note: For the male respondents, the highest number of respondents came from the 60 and above age range at 13.4%, while the highest number of female PD respondents is from the age range of 41-50 years old at 23.9%.

In cases where older male family members were not available for interview, sons or younger brothers of the husband were interviewed. Given the number of PD women identified by community members between the age range of 19-30 years old, it is evident that age is not necessarily an important factor in the selection of PD women for communities.

**Table 8: Occupation of PD Respondents**

<b>Occupation of PD Respondents</b>		
Occupation	Frequency	Valid Percent
Civil servant	15	22.4
Farmer	9	13.4
Petty trader	23	34.3
Daily labourer	6	9.0
Religious leader	1	1.5
Health worker	2	3.0
Retiree	8	11.9
Others	3	4.5
Total	67	100.0

Note: Of the 22.4% civil servants interviewed, 73% are teachers, the rest of the respondents under this category are SUBEB and LGA personnel. Under the category “Others” falls medium size businessmen and housewives.