

# DFID's Education Programmes in Nigeria



Independent  
Commission  
for Aid Impact

# Contents

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                 | <b>page 1</b>  |
| <b>1 Introduction</b>                    | <b>page 2</b>  |
| <b>2 Findings</b>                        | <b>page 7</b>  |
| <b>Objectives</b>                        | <b>page 7</b>  |
| <b>Delivery</b>                          | <b>page 11</b> |
| <b>Impact</b>                            | <b>page 16</b> |
| <b>Learning</b>                          | <b>page 20</b> |
| <b>3 Conclusions and Recommendations</b> | <b>page 23</b> |
| <b>Annex</b>                             | <b>page 26</b> |
| <b>Abbreviations</b>                     | <b>page 33</b> |

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) is the independent body responsible for scrutinising UK aid. We focus on maximising the effectiveness of the UK aid budget for intended beneficiaries and on delivering value for money for UK taxpayers. We carry out independent reviews of aid programmes and of issues affecting the delivery of UK aid. We publish transparent, impartial and objective reports to provide evidence and clear recommendations to support UK Government decision-making and to strengthen the accountability of the aid programme. Our reports are written to be accessible to a general readership and we use a simple 'traffic light' system to report our judgement on each programme or topic we review.



**Green:** The programme performs well overall against ICAI's criteria for effectiveness and value for money. Some improvements are needed.



**Green-Amber:** The programme performs relatively well overall against ICAI's criteria for effectiveness and value for money. Improvements should be made.



**Amber-Red:** The programme performs relatively poorly overall against ICAI's criteria for effectiveness and value for money. Significant improvements should be made.



**Red:** The programme performs poorly overall against ICAI's criteria for effectiveness and value for money. Immediate and major changes need to be made.

# Executive Summary

DFID's education programme in Nigeria operates in a very challenging environment, with too few effective teachers, poor infrastructure and unpredictable State funding, all contributing to poor learning outcomes for pupils in basic education. Our review indicates no major improvement in pupil learning. Expectations continue to be modest with no likelihood of Nigeria meeting its Millennium Development Goal for primary education.

Currently, DFID supports ten of Nigeria's 36 States through two programmes: the UNICEF-led Girls' Education Programme (GEP), funded from 2005 to 2019; and the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), delivered by a Cambridge Education-led consortium during 2008-14. DFID has spent £102 million to date, with a further £126 million committed to 2019.

**Overall** *Assessment: Amber-Red* 

Around a third of eligible children in the ten States, an estimated 3.7 million, remain out of school. Insufficient and erratic State funding of education leaves the system lacking the infrastructure and other essentials necessary to improve learning outcomes. The long-term sustainability of DFID's technical assistance requires greater political and financial commitment by the States.

GEP and ESSPIN are delivering similar programmes but the ESSPIN approach appears more likely to succeed over the long term. UNICEF was reappointed for the third phase of GEP without competition, which we do not believe was fully supported by recent performance or by the 2012 Project Completion Report. If we were assessing ESSPIN on its own, its score would be Green-Amber. The breakdown of ratings is set out in the Annex.

**Objectives** *Assessment: Amber-Red* 

Communities have clear expectations of basic education: they want their children to learn to read and write so that they can be self-reliant. DFID's approach is to improve the overall education system so that benefits flow to schools and pupils, although this does not address the most severe problems in the weakest schools. Until recently, there have been considerable weaknesses with the programme plans for both GEP and ESSPIN, with insufficient priority on improving pupils' learning.


**Delivery** *Assessment: Amber-Red* 

GEP and ESSPIN have helped to create ten-year State education sector plans which are neither realistic nor affordable. Existing resource deployment by States is inefficient and virtually all the budget is spent on the salaries of teachers, who are often poorly deployed. The absence of comparative data on the two programmes

means an opportunity has been lost to assess value for money and promote efficient practices. DFID is facing challenges in managing the programmes. It has adopted a 'light touch' approach with its partners. The programmes are not yet sufficiently embedded in their existing States in order to expand as currently planned.

**Impact** *Assessment: Amber-Red* 

The DFID programmes are operating in a very challenging environment. The beneficiary communities identified only limited benefits. There have been some successes – including support for female teachers and school-based management committees – but implementation issues are limiting the impact on pupil learning. Teachers need more support to be effective. The programmes have yet to achieve sustainable results, largely due to the failure of State governments to fund adequately and equitably the required improvements.

**Learning** *Assessment: Amber-Red* 

There is very little sharing of knowledge and good practice between DFID and its delivery partners, despite the similarities in their programmes. There is evidence of only limited innovation in programme design. There are approaches that have been used successfully elsewhere to improve learning which could be adopted in Nigeria.

## Key recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** DFID should create a single education programme out of GEP and ESSPIN in 2014 focussing rigorously on basic reading, writing and arithmetic in the early years of primary schooling and building on the lessons learned, with aligned initiatives for teacher training and infrastructure.

**Recommendation 2:** DFID should work with its partners and each participating State to secure a clear agreement about the policy changes and financial contributions required to improve enrolment and learning and to introduce effective financial management and resource planning into education. There should be regular reviews of performance with States, based on school-level data.

**Recommendation 3:** DFID should work with UNICEF to achieve significant improvement in the performance of GEP over the next 12 months against agreed targets, with a review of progress by DFID after six months.

**Recommendation 4:** DFID should address implementation issues that are limiting the impact of the two programmes in relation to the Female Trainee Teachers' Scholarship Scheme, School-Based Management Committees and Qur'anic schools.

# 1 Introduction

## Education in Nigeria and DFID's programmes

*Context: Nigeria faces fundamental problems with its basic education system*

1.1 In 2009, the House of Commons International Development Committee reported the situation for education in Nigeria in the following manner: 'DFID describes Nigeria's education system as facing 'a multi-dimensional crisis'. Access is limited and quality is poor; Department for International Development (DFID) research found that learning outcomes in Nigerian schools were worse than in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. There are insufficient qualified teachers, especially in rural areas. Quality of teaching is often low. Many children leave primary school and junior secondary school without adequate literacy, numeracy and life skills. Teachers are often poorly supervised and are described as having low motivation and inadequate incentives. In addition, half of existing schools need some renovation and almost twice the existing number of classrooms would be needed to achieve universal basic education.<sup>1</sup>

1.2 DFID is one of the few donors with a significant long-term commitment to improving basic education in Nigeria. The successful transformation of this sector is critical to improvements at senior secondary and tertiary levels. Major investments continue to be required in the education system. DFID, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank and UNICEF are the major development partners working in basic education in Nigeria. Whilst there is no shared strategy, they meet regularly, providing the opportunity for co-ordination.

1.3 Basic education is important for equipping pupils with a range of skills and stimulating economic growth. It also has particular benefits for girls in encouraging later marriage, better maternal health, fewer and healthier children and increased economic opportunities.<sup>2</sup> According to UNESCO,

however, there is a crisis of learning facing many of the world's poorest countries, characterised by:

- large numbers of children out of school with no opportunities to learn; and
- children who are in school but not learning basic skills, such as reading and mathematics. This leads to further drop-outs and low transition rates to secondary school and children who are progressing through school but not learning relevant skills that will prepare them for adulthood.<sup>3</sup>

1.4 These issues are all very relevant to Nigeria. Despite its oil wealth, many people face extreme poverty and two-thirds of Nigeria's 162 million inhabitants live on less than \$1.25 per day.<sup>4</sup> Poverty is most acute in the north.

1.5 The quality of education in Nigeria declined during the years of military rule (which ended in 1999) and has not improved since under civilian rule. Participation rates and learning outcomes in the north are worse than in the south.

1.6 A law was passed in 2004 making compulsory nine years of universal and free basic education. Despite this, Nigeria accounts for a third of all out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>5</sup> While 23.1 million children are enrolled in primary and junior secondary education,<sup>6</sup> another 10.1 million children are out of school.<sup>7</sup> Attendance rates are poor (61% for boys and 58% for girls in primary; 44% for both genders in junior secondary).<sup>8</sup> On its current trajectory, Nigeria is unlikely to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 2 for all children to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015.

1.7 Nigeria has low levels of literacy and numeracy, especially in the north. A learning assessment was

<sup>3</sup> For example, see the Brookings Institution's *Global Compact on Learning*, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2011/06/09-global-compact>.

<sup>4</sup> See World Bank database: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/nigeria>.

<sup>5</sup> *Reaching Out-of-School Children Is Crucial for Development*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics fact sheet 18, UNESCO, July 2012, <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/fs-18-OOSC-2.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> *Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2006-2010*, Federal Ministry of Education, 2011. Note primary is for ages 6 to 11 and junior secondary for ages 12 to 14, although children do attend at later ages.

<sup>7</sup> *Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Nigeria Country Study*, UNICEF, March 2012.

<sup>8</sup> *Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2006-2010*, Federal Ministry of Education, 2011.

<sup>1</sup> *DFID's Programme in Nigeria*, House of Commons International Development Committee Report, 2009, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmintdev/840/84002.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> *Learning for All: DFID's Education Strategy 2010-2015*, DFID, 2010, <http://consultation.dfid.gov.uk/education2010/files/2010/04/learning-for-all-strategy.pdf>.

# 1 Introduction

carried out by USAID in Bauchi and Sokoto States. It found that, after three years of primary school instruction, only 6% of pupils were able to read a simple narrative text.<sup>9</sup>

*The flow of resources to schools is unpredictable*

1.8 Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education has published a four-year strategic plan for the country's education sector.<sup>10</sup> In practice, Nigerian States are responsible for providing education, with the Federal Ministry of Education not playing a strong role in delivery.

1.9 Nigeria has 36 States (plus the Federal Capital Territory). Each State has its own State Governor and an elected House of Assembly. The States, with local government, manage their own education systems, although core funding and key strategies and policies come from the federal government. Within each State there are Local Government Areas, or districts, each with a Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). There is a proliferation of ministries, departments and agencies involved in the funding and management of education. The Education Commissioner in each State, appointed by the Governor, is the head of the Ministry of Education. In each State there is also a State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), which is responsible for the funding and delivery of basic education.

1.10 The States have considerable policy autonomy, controlling 50% of government revenues and holding responsibility for the delivery of public services. Yet according to the World Bank, capacity is weak in most States and improving governance will be a long-term process.<sup>11</sup>

1.11 Nigerian State Governors have a considerable amount of political and financial power, with responsibility for releasing funds under their control. They tend to deploy resources to satisfy

competing interests rather than according to a funding formula and to meet education targets. Payment of salaries is prioritised over other types of expenditure for school development, which results in limited release of non-salary budgets. Financial management is poor and there is a lack of transparency about allocation and spending. As a result, the flow of resources for schools is insufficient and unpredictable.

*DFID runs two education programmes in Nigeria*

1.12 DFID started work in education in Nigeria in 2003. It currently has two main education programmes in Nigeria which operate in two separate State groups:

- the **Girls' Education Programme (GEP), delivered by UNICEF**, which is working to improve girls' access to education and learning in four northern States.<sup>12</sup> It started in 2005 and is now in its third phase (GEP3). Phase 1 (GEP1) ran from 2005 until 2008; Phase 2 (GEP2) ran from 2008 until 2012; and Phase 3 is due to run until 2019. DFID chose to work with UNICEF because of its well-established country presence and network of contacts at federal and state levels; and
- the **Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), delivered by a Cambridge Education-led consortium**, which is working to strengthen governance and systems of basic education in six States.<sup>13</sup> It started in 2008 and is due to complete in 2014. Cambridge Education was chosen through competitive procurement.

1.13 Managing two large education programmes in ten States through the work of two independent contractors is demanding. Sharing experience between UNICEF – a UN agency wishing to be a partner with DFID – and Cambridge Education, a commercial sub-contractor, has not been easy. The working relationships with the ten States and the federal government have also created challenges for DFID's desire to secure a good return on its investment in basic education.

<sup>9</sup> Northern Nigeria Education Initiative, *Results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment in Hausa*, USAID, September 2011, <https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&ID=340>.

<sup>10</sup> 4-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector: 2011-15, Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education, 2012, <http://fmi.gov.ng/federal-ministry-of-education-4-year-strategic-plan-for-the-development-of-the-education-sector-download-pdf-format-5/>.

<sup>11</sup> Nigeria: Country Brief, World Bank website: [http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/NIGERI\\_AEXTN/0,,menuPK:368906~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:368896\\_0.html](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/NIGERI_AEXTN/0,,menuPK:368906~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:368896_0.html).

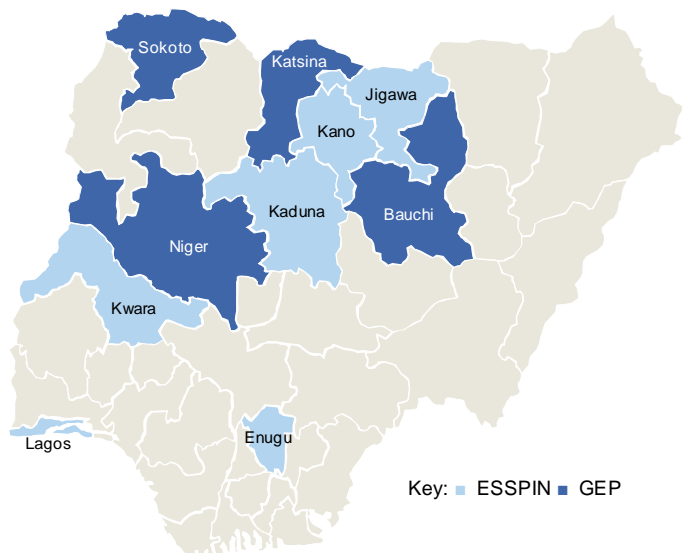
<sup>12</sup> Niger, Sokoto, Bauchi and Katsina.

<sup>13</sup> Lagos, Kwara, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa.

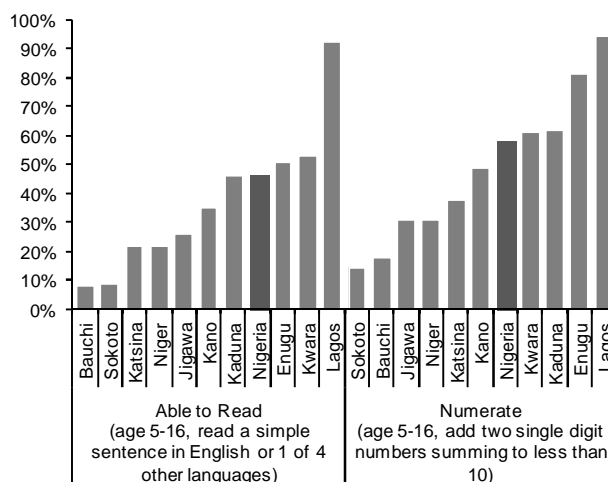
# 1 Introduction

1.14 DFID is operating its two current programmes in some of the States with the greatest need; these are mainly in the north (see Figure 1). With the exception of Lagos, the levels of literacy and numeracy in the ten States where DFID is supporting basic education are either similar to, or much worse than, the national average.<sup>14</sup> This can be seen in Figure 2.

**Figure 1: States where DFID is supporting the development of basic education**



**Figure 2: Literacy and numeracy rates in the States where DFID is supporting education programmes, compared to national averages**



Source: Nigeria EdData Survey, 2010<sup>15</sup>

1.15 The Capacity for Universal Basic Education (CUBE) programme, funded by DFID, was the predecessor to ESSPIN, running from 2003 to 2008. It sought to improve the education governance capability of the federal government and of three States and helped to develop ten-year education sector plans. CUBE was implemented alongside the World Bank's State Education Sector Project (SESP) 2007/2011, which supported school development and quality improvement in basic education. CUBE provided resources for the capacity-building and inspection components of SESP. Both CUBE and SESP provided the basis for the design of ESSPIN, reinforcing the focus on a small number of States and establishing working relationships on which to build. A new World Bank Country Assistance Strategy is being prepared that will identify the Bank's future priorities in Nigeria.

1.16 DFID programme expenditure on CUBE, GEP and ESSPIN from November 2005 until 30 June 2012 was £119.2 million. Planned expenditure to March 2019 is an additional £126 million. Expenditure to date by programme is shown in Figure 3 on page 5.

<sup>14</sup> Nigeria DHS EdData Survey 2010, Education Data for Decision Making, National Population Commission, Nigeria and RTI International, May 2011, <https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&id=329>.

<sup>15</sup> Data and definitions of literacy and numeracy: Nigeria DHS EdData Survey 2010, Education Data for Decision Making, National Population Commission, Nigeria and RTI International, May 2011, <https://www.eddataglobal.org/documents/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubDetail&id=329>.



# 1 Introduction

**Figure 3: Expenditure to date and planned on basic education programmes by DFID, 2005-19**

| Programme   | Timing  | Expenditure to Date (£ million) | Future Allocation (£ million) | Total Planned Expenditure (£ million) |
|-------------|---------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| CUBE        | 2003-08 | 17.5                            | 0.0                           | 17.5                                  |
| GEP phase 1 | 2005-08 | 26.0                            | 0.0                           | 26.0                                  |
| GEP phase 2 | 2008-12 | 14.4                            | 0.0                           | 14.4                                  |
| GEP phase 3 | 2012-19 | 0.9                             | 102.1                         | 103.0                                 |
| ESSPIN      | 2008-14 | 60.4                            | 23.9                          | 84.3                                  |
| Total       |         | 119.2                           | 126.0                         | 245.2                                 |

Source: information supplied by DFID

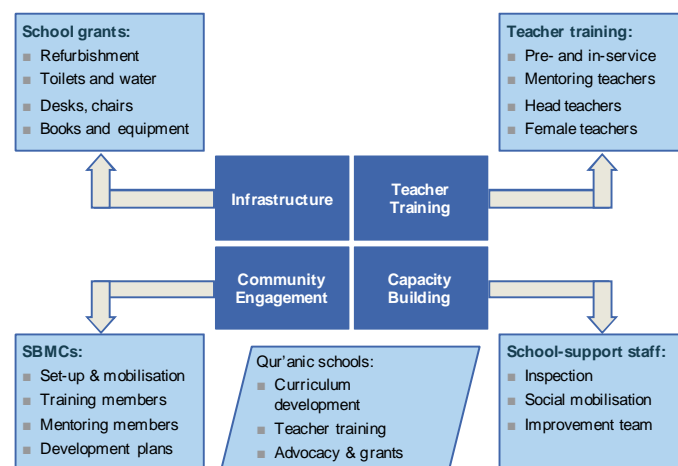
1.17 Both GEP and ESSPIN provide support in the form of technical assistance to individual State governments, as well as small grants to specific parts of the programmes (including to schools). The success of these programmes is dependent on the active engagement and support of States, local government and schools.

1.18 GEP and ESSPIN support a range of activities that are delivered at school level, as shown in Figure 4. Both programmes have been involved with:

- setting up School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and training their members;
- providing grants to schools to enable small projects to be carried out, based on school development plans;
- providing in-service teacher training; and
- broadening the curriculum in Qur'anic schools.

1.19 ESSPIN has also been involved in a wider range of teacher training interventions and support for school improvement. Both programmes have worked with State education institutions to develop their capacity, to prepare sector education plans and to collect data.

**Figure 4: GEP and ESSPIN activities at school level**



1.20 GEP is working across the whole of each of its four States (in approximately 10,870 primary schools) and ESSPIN is working in 3,080 schools in its six States (representing approximately 27% of primary schools in the 2011-12 academic year). To date, GEP estimates that it has spent an average of £3.3 million in each of its States, whereas ESSPIN has spent an average of £10.1 million (ranging from £4.4 million in Enugu, where there was a late start, to £12.8 million in Kano). This emphasises that the resources in GEP are spread much more thinly across States than those in ESSPIN as a result of the different programme designs and funding.

1.21 Major areas of expenditure for GEP2 have been: school grants (£4.9 million), capacity-building for SBMCs (£4.4 million), teacher development (£2.0 million) and the Female Trainee Teachers' Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS – £0.5 million). Major areas of expenditure for ESSPIN have been: school improvement (£28.1 million), community engagement and accountability (£15.5 million), State governance of basic education (£10.6 million) and federal governance of basic education (£6.2 million).

1.22 There was a bomb at the UN headquarters in Abuja in August 2011. Whilst this was not mentioned during our visit, we understand from DFID that this affected UNICEF's ability to complete the GEP2 programme, due to the effect on its management systems; all records were destroyed.

# 1 Introduction

## Purpose of the review

1.23 The purpose of our review was to examine how effectively DFID's education programmes in Nigeria deliver impact, concentrating on GEP2 and GEP3 and on ESSPIN. We carried out two streams of evaluation:

- **in-depth qualitative research on pupil experiences and community views:** we have always had an emphasis on obtaining the views of intended beneficiaries first-hand by visiting sites where aid projects are being delivered. This review took that approach further and in more depth to reach a greater number of pupils and community members. While we do not suggest that this evidence constitutes a statistically valid sample in the context of programmes of this scale, it does provide a broader and deeper set of findings from the community level, which we have used to compare with our other findings; and
- **a contextual and programme assessment:** we looked at the ways in which States plan and manage education and considered DFID's management of GEP and ESSPIN and the performance of its delivery partners.

1.24 We combined evidence from both streams of work to reach our conclusions.

## Methodology

1.25 We carried out field work in five States, the choice of which was limited by the security situation in Nigeria at the time. The work took place in:

- ESSPIN States: Enugu, Kaduna and Kwara; and
- GEP States: Niger and Sokoto.

1.26 The qualitative research was carried out in 20 primary and junior secondary schools and six Qur'anic schools, all in Kaduna and Sokoto States. We used Hausa-speaking interviewers indigenous to each State and deployed a range of data collection techniques, including participant observation, informal and in-depth interviewing and focus group discussions.

1.27 Overall, the study team engaged with over 900 people, including: pupils, parents, grandparents,

teachers, head teachers and community leaders. Interviews were open-ended, with respondents encouraged to raise important topics. Interviews continued with each category of respondent in each State until they no longer generated new information. The Annex provides a further description of the study methods.

1.28 The contextual and programme assessment consisted of short visits to a further 17 schools in Enugu, Kwara, Niger and Sokoto States to meet a variety of intended beneficiaries. It was also based on meetings in Nigeria with DFID, the two delivery partners, other donors (the World Bank and USAID), civil society organisations (including Action Aid, Save the Children and Voluntary Service Overseas) and federal and State education ministries, departments and agencies.

1.29 We examined the programme plans for both GEP and ESSPIN. In gathering our own evidence, we also considered two recent independent reviews: the GEP2 Project Completion Review (PCR)<sup>16</sup> and the ESSPIN Mid-Term Review (MTR).<sup>17</sup>

1.30 The Annex provides an assessment of GEP2 and ESSPIN separately against the ICAI evaluation criteria as well as a comparison of their performance against their 'logical frameworks' (or initial high-level plans).

1.31 We took account of recent ICAI education reviews in East Africa, India (Bihar) and Pakistan (Punjab). We also considered the findings of the House of Commons' International Development Committee report on DFID's programme in Nigeria<sup>18</sup> and the National Audit Office report on DFID's bilateral support for education.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *DFID Project Completion Review – Girls Education Project II*: first published in July 2011 and updated in July 2012.

<sup>17</sup> *Mid-Term Review of the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)*, Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project for the State Level Programmes (IMEP), July 2011, <http://www.esspin.org/index.php/search/reports?q=mid+term+review>.

<sup>18</sup> *DFID's Programme in Nigeria*, House of Commons, 2009, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmintdev/840/840i.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> *DFID: Bilateral Support to Primary Education*, National Audit Office, 2010, [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1011/dfid\\_support\\_to\\_education.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/1011/dfid_support_to_education.aspx).



## 2 Findings

### Objectives

Assessment: Amber-Red 

2.1 In this section, we first examine intended beneficiaries' views on their local primary and junior secondary schools and their objectives for their children's education. We then discuss DFID's objectives for its education programmes in Nigeria and assess whether they are clear, relevant, realistic and focussed on the desired impact. We also consider whether they are supported by clear and convincing operational plans.

*Community members report significant problems with their local education system*

2.2 ESSPIN and GEP are working in northern Nigeria, one of the most difficult basic education environments in the world. They face a combination of deteriorating infrastructure, sub-standard teacher performance and almost no predictability or transparency in State funding.

2.3 Virtually every student, teacher and headmaster we spoke with complained about the disrepair of school buildings and facilities. Many schools are without windows, desks, chairs, adequate roofing, toilet facilities and sources of water. Often, pupils must use nearby fields as toilets. In one school, water was brought from a few kilometres away requiring children to be away from the classroom.

2.4 When one of our researchers asked a group of girls how they felt about the state of their school, they laughed. One said that, as could be seen, the corner of their classroom had fallen in, the sky was exposed through parts of the roof and there were no windows or doors. This is significant in a country which experiences heavy rains.

2.5 Teachers' absence is a significant problem. In Sokoto, it was not difficult to find rural schools where, on average, half of the teachers had not worked the previous month. As one mother said, 'the teachers are very good at missing school; they are usually not around and the children are always roaming the place'.

2.6 The impact of routine teacher absenteeism is plain to see. One researcher joined a group of pupils playing football outside a school. It was the only activity at the school. A bell rang but none of the pupils moved toward the classrooms. When asked

about the bell, the boys said that it signalled a break; the football continued uninterrupted.

2.7 The headmasters complain that disciplining a teacher for lack of attendance is difficult. They claim that the salary cuts or transfers they impose as disciplinary measures can be reversed if the teacher has a patron in government. They say they get little support from the LGEA.

2.8 Teachers explain that part of the problem is that transport takes up a significant proportion of their salary, particularly for teachers from the city who are posted to rural areas. Some teachers from the city trade off teaching days with other teachers.

2.9 There is a chronic shortage of teachers willing to work in rural areas, so teachers are recruited from other regions. Many of these teachers do not speak Hausa (the local language) and the students do not speak English. One boy informed us that he could not remember what he was taught the day before. This was because the teacher had simply written something in English on the board, asked them to copy it into their books and then left. In another school, students were identifying books by their covers as they could not read the titles.

2.10 The lack of sufficient teachers is an ongoing struggle for the staff of many of the primary schools. One teacher told us that, 'once school starts, I have no time to rest because we have more classes than teachers. As soon as I leave one class, I go to another.' She said she would appreciate even a few minutes' rest.

*Parents understand the value of education but do not always send their children to school in the current reality*

2.11 Many parents understand the value of education and want their children to go to school, gain employment and help the family. The infrastructure, however, is in such disrepair and the quality of teaching so poor that, in many schools, there is little evidence of learning taking place.

2.12 Even if a child is able to acquire an adequate education, in the present Nigerian political economy many believe it is unlikely that he or she will find employment without personal connections that will help them get a job. In communities across northern Nigeria, educated young men are back at

## 2 Findings

home, unemployed and no longer willing to work in the fields. Figure 5 describes how the situation has deteriorated.

### Figure 5: One experience of change in Nigeria's education system

State schools once provided high-quality basic education that led to opportunities. One of our researchers remembers that, when she was a schoolgirl, every year the education commissioner would visit her class. 'He'd ask us about our studies and encourage us. If someone pointed out that a blackboard or something was needed, he would make sure it was taken care of.'

The researcher said that there used to be a connection between the government and the people. The quality of education declined during the decades of military rule and has not improved under civilian leadership.

Rural schools deteriorated to such an extent in their region that the aunt of this researcher decided not to send her daughters to secondary school. When the researcher asked why, she said: 'Education is now for people like you, people who can send their kids to good schools and who have contacts to help them find employment when they graduate.'

- 2.13 Given the low quality of public education, many of the parents interviewed refuse to make the sacrifices needed to send their children to school. 'Everyone knows that education is very important but there is no need to deceive yourself by sending your child to school if there is nothing to gain by going,' one mother told us.
- 2.14 Pupil absenteeism is a barrier to learning. One teacher noted, 'students don't come or, if they do, they don't stay'. Another said, 'during my first week at the school, a father showed up with farm tools and called his kids out of class. It was discouraging.'
- 2.15 The teachers also complain that girls miss school each weekly market day when they go to sell produce for their mothers. 'Parents don't send their children to school regularly and yet they expect their child to pass, which is impossible,' a teacher told us. A headmaster spoke of nomadic families

that send some of their children to school while the others watch the animals and do chores. The children then exchange roles the next day.

*Those parents who do send a child to a State school have realistically limited expectations*

- 2.16 If parents do make the sacrifice to send their children to school, they want their child to learn to read, write and do basic arithmetic for use in trade and farming. The proprietor of a small shop told us that, when he goes to the bank, he has to rely on others to help him fill out the deposit and withdrawal slips. He fears the tellers will defraud him without him knowing. He wants his children to be educated and self-reliant so that they can avoid this kind of situation. A mother said that, when voting, poll workers assist her because she can't read. She feels she is cajoled or tricked into voting for choices other than her own and wants her daughter to avoid this.
- 2.17 The students we interviewed had higher aspirations than just learning to read and write. In one focus group discussion, a girl said, 'I want to become a teacher or health worker and assist my family and community'. This was repeated by many primary and junior secondary students. Another girl said, 'I want to teach other people, especially my younger siblings'. A third girl said she wanted to be a doctor or a teacher, although she would prefer to be whatever her parents wanted. All the girls said that they looked forward to marriage after secondary school and that they would like to proceed with their education after marriage, if their husbands consented.

*Research evidence supports the concerns of parents, teachers and children*

- 2.18 Key characteristics of schools and teachers which improve learning, based on research findings, are identified in Figure 6 on page 9, although other external factors may also be at play.

## 2 Findings

**Figure 6: Factors influencing learning<sup>20</sup>**

| Infrastructure                            | Learning environment      |
|---|---------------------------|
| Accessible schools                        | Teacher subject knowledge |
| Quality of classroom walls/roofs/ceilings | Focussed curriculum       |
| Desks and chairs                          | In-service training       |
| Blackboards/learning aids                 | Teacher attendance        |
| Secure premises                           | Longer school day         |
|   | Community support         |

2.19 Extensive research shows that teacher shortages and absenteeism have an unambiguous and strongly negative effect on learning.<sup>21</sup> Some countries have initiated contract teacher programmes to increase teacher supply and improve teacher attendance. As in a number of other countries, such lower-paid contract teachers are recruited locally and teach in their own villages. They have fewer formal qualifications, on average, than government teachers but are expected to remain in the community for an extended period.

2.20 A recent study from India showed significant gains in maths and language test scores for pupils in schools with contract teachers (most of whom were female) compared to schools without them. Similar findings have been reported in Kenya, where female contract teachers were hired to reduce student-to-teacher ratios.<sup>22</sup> These studies endorse the hiring of local female teachers, particularly as role models for young girls, which DFID is promoting through the scholarship scheme for young women under GEP.

2.21 There is evidence to suggest that good school infrastructure (including desks, tables, chairs,

walls, roofs and ceilings) yields positive impacts on learning outcomes, as measured by test scores.<sup>23</sup>

*The original plans for GEP2 and ESSPIN had several shortcomings*

2.22 We now turn to DFID's objectives and plans. DFID has guidelines for preparing logical frameworks (hereafter referred to as 'plans') for its programmes that are based on a theory of change.<sup>24</sup> Each programme's main outcome must be underpinned by integrated outputs, delivered through a set of related activities.

2.23 In Nigeria, as in East Africa,<sup>25</sup> DFID's theory of change is to improve the overall education system so that benefits filter down to schools and pupils. Unfortunately, this is not an appropriate strategy to tackle the most severe problems in the weakest schools. The strategy has to be capable of identifying weak schools, deploying resources to remedy weaknesses and securing learning opportunities for all pupils.

2.24 Given the Nigerian context for basic education (including poor infrastructure, ineffective teachers and weak governance), it is critical that the DFID programmes follow a sound design and effective implementation. Pupil learning must be the top outcome priority underpinned by output improvements to classrooms, teacher capabilities, equitable funding, improved access and gender equality. With such a framework, pressure from supported communities for improvements can then produce a response from the education systems.

2.25 According to DFID's programme documentation, ESSPIN was set up to run concurrently with GEP2 in order to focus on system-wide reform in education. While both programmes are facing the same challenges, with some variation across the ten States, their plans differ significantly. In the

<sup>20</sup> Glewwe, P. et al., *School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature from 1990 to 2010*, 2012, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/120033/2/WP12-1.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Glewwe, P. et al., *School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature from 1990 to 2010*, 2012, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/120033/2/WP12-1.pdf>; Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, *Solving Absenteeism, Raising Test Scores*. Policy Briefcase No. 6, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008, <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/solving-absenteeism-raising-test-scores>.

<sup>22</sup> Muralidharan, K. and Sundaraman, V., *Contract Teachers: Experimental Evidence from India*, 2011, *Journal of Political Economy*, [http://econ.ucsd.edu/~kamurali/papers/Working%20Papers/Contract%20Teachers%20\(24%20May,%202010\).pdf](http://econ.ucsd.edu/~kamurali/papers/Working%20Papers/Contract%20Teachers%20(24%20May,%202010).pdf); Duflo, E., Hanna, R. and Ryan, S., *Monitoring Works: Getting Teachers to Come to School*, Discussion Paper No. 6682, 2008, Center for Economic Policy Research, <http://www.cepr.org/pubs/new-dplist.asp?dpno=5426>.

<sup>23</sup> Glewwe, P. et al., *School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature from 1990 to 2010*, 2012, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/120033/2/WP12-1.pdf>.

Also, a study from Ghana showed that basic improvements, such as repairing leaking roofs and providing blackboards, can raise primary-level reading and maths scores. See Glewwe, P. and Jacoby, H., *Student Achievement and Schooling Choice in Low Income Countries: Evidence from Ghana*, *Journal of Human Resources*, 1994.

<sup>24</sup> *Guidance on Using the Revised Logical Framework*, DFID, 2011, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/how-to-guid-rev-log-fwk.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> *DFID's Education Programmes in Three East African Countries*, ICAI, May 2012, <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/DFIDs-Education-Programmes-in-Three-East-African-Countries-Final-Report-3.pdf>.

## 2 Findings

plans for both GEP and ESSPIN, however, pupil learning was not given sufficient priority.

- 2.26 For GEP2, the stated outcome was to: 'improve girls' access, attendance, retention and relevant learning outcomes at primary and junior secondary level in the four GEP2 States'. These four components are all important to improve girls' education but the ultimate goal of providing education is to improve learning outcomes. We believe that having four components to GEP2's outcome diverted attention away from this key goal. The other three components (access, attendance and retention) are vital to achieving that goal but would be better defined as building blocks (outputs) of the programme.
- 2.27 The GEP2 plan focussed on UNICEF's activities, rather than creating in each State a planning and delivery process aimed at reducing inequities. The GEP2 approach did not provide a disciplined framework to secure process improvements at the State level, which would deliver education systems necessary for better pupil learning.
- 2.28 For ESSPIN, the stated outcome was system-wide: 'the planning, financing and delivery of sustainable and replicable basic education services in terms of access, equity and quality are improved at federal level and in up to six States'. This stated outcome made no direct reference to pupil learning. The related performance targets within the four parts of the outcome (i.e. access, learning, competent teachers and State funding) were too diverse to allow an assessment of the strategic progress of the programme. This was also confirmed by the 2011 MTR.
- 2.29 In light of its early experience, ESSPIN revised its plan in 2011 in order to have a more coherent logic. The outcome, however, still makes no direct reference to pupil learning. As originally identified in the MTR, the plan still fails to deal adequately with the demands of roll-out and replication to other schools.
- 2.30 ESSPIN still has one output for its work at the federal level, which does not fit coherently into the plan as the other three outputs relate to the States' education systems. The federal aspect of the work does not easily link to improving systems at State level. If retained in the scope of DFID funding, the federal component should be subject to a separate plan. This would improve the coherence of the approach to progress at State level.
- 2.31 GEP2 had 25 performance indicators and ESSPIN had 29 performance indicators. This is more than double the number recommended by DFID.<sup>26</sup> Many of the indicators and targets lack clarity and simplicity or fail to measure what is intended.
- 2.32 In addition, both programmes use the same plan for each of their States, whereas the conditions in each State vary sufficiently to indicate that variations of the plans should have been prepared for each State and then been negotiated between GEP and ESSPIN and their client State governments.
- 2.33 In order to monitor progress against objectives, the plan for GEP3 and the revised ESSPIN plan should pay more attention to annual monitoring of learning achievement in each school. The ASER programme in India is a potential model. Also the Uwezo scheme in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania conducts independent annual testing of primary school children and publishes the results to generate more action to improve performance.<sup>27</sup>
- 2.34 Inadequate preparation of the initial plans led to frequent changes being made, with some changes not being approved by DFID before implementation by its delivery partners. The GEP2 plan was not completed until just before the 2011 draft PCR – the end of the phase. Now in its fourth year, ESSPIN is working with the third version of its plan. Whilst programme plans should not be static, the frequency of changes is higher than we would expect.
- 2.35 The lack of political engagement in the design of ESSPIN was noted in the MTR. It was also noted for GEP2 in the PCR. This is particularly problematic because DFID's programmes provide technical assistance and grants with the expectation that States will follow with annual funding of their own, to enable sustained improvement. States have not done so. The

<sup>26</sup> *Guidance on Using the Revised Logical Framework*, DFID, 2011, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/how-to-guid-rev-log-fmwk.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> See Aser Centre (<http://www.asercentre.org/>) and Uwezo (<http://www.uwezo.net/>) for details.

## 2 Findings

absence of a formal agreement on funding is a flaw in the design of both programmes. For example, infrastructure improvement, teacher effectiveness and water and sanitation were included in the GEP and ESSPIN plans but too little attention was devoted to securing the necessary commitments from the States to fund and implement the required improvements.

- 2.36 Overall, given the shortfalls in learning achievement in Nigerian primary schools, DFID should redefine its objectives with a clear focus on pupil learning, underpinned by adequate classrooms, teacher attendance and performance, pupil access and gender equity and school-level accountability. DFID, together with its delivery partners, should also be more assertive in securing State commitments to achieve sustainability. These changes would make it more likely that parental expectations would be met. The clarification of outputs and outcome would also provide a sounder framework for implementation.

### Delivery

Assessment: Amber-Red 

- 2.37 This section focusses on the delivery of GEP and ESSPIN during the period 2008-11 and assesses the prospects for the two programmes in the future. It considers (a) the overall approaches to delivery adopted by GEP and ESSPIN, (b) the perspective on delivery from community beneficiaries and (c) DFID's management of programme delivery.

#### *Overall approach to delivery by GEP and ESSPIN*

*GEP and ESSPIN have adopted different approaches to delivery*

- 2.38 Overall, the two partners have adopted different approaches to their technical assistance. Neither programme fully appreciated the logistical challenge to the States of:

- providing sufficient classrooms to meet the MDG target;
- an equitable distribution of teachers;
- a deliverable curriculum followed by re-training for the whole teacher workforce;
- managing funding to support local SBMCs; and

- providing books and learning materials.

- 2.39 Schools without all of these features will struggle to meet parental expectations for pupil learning.

- 2.40 GEP2 (UNICEF) concentrated on advocacy and training of selected teachers and State staff across the whole of its four States. This light touch approach aimed to change the attitudes of politicians and officials towards education for girls and has coincided with the increased enrolment of girls. As acknowledged in the GEP PCR, it is not feasible to measure the contribution of GEP to the increase as insufficient data were compiled by the GEP project. There is little evidence to indicate that the substantial and sustainable changes, which were part of the project plan, have been made to teacher performance and school infrastructure.

- 2.41 ESSPIN (Cambridge Education) adopted a more hands-on approach, for example becoming engaged in system design with ministries, departments and agencies; it has also trained teachers and State-level education staff, providing mentoring and holding regular reviews that lead to continuous improvement. ESSPIN has piloted its approach in over 1,100 schools to build commitment to broader improvements across each State during the roll-out phase (2012-14). Even by 2014, when a successor to ESSPIN may start, it will be difficult to determine if this approach has been successful, as few of the improvements will have been in place in the new schools for more than one year.

*Education sector plans are required which are affordable and achievable*

- 2.42 All ten States supported by DFID have generated ten-year education sector plans and the Federal Ministry of Education has produced a four-year plan for the period 2012-15. The plans in the five States visited and the Federal Plan are aspirational with major funding gaps. The current State sector plans will not meet MDG targets and schools will continue to be without adequate numbers of classrooms and competent teachers for many years. These are serious logistical challenges which have to be met if children are to be enrolled in schools where they can learn. DFID



## 2 Findings

programmes should pay more attention to overcoming these logistical challenges.

- 2.43 The Federal Ministry of Education Strategic Plan is a list of projects and lacks performance indicators and targets. This will make progress difficult to monitor and the impact of DFID's funding impossible to assess in a rigorous manner.<sup>28</sup>
- 2.44 Neither GEP nor ESSPIN have been able to achieve lasting reforms in State budgeting or the equitable deployment of resources to and within education. State education sector plans were the main approach for achieving these changes and, to date, whilst they have improved transparency and accountability, they have had a limited impact on public financial decision-making.
- 2.45 Given the views of beneficiaries expressed in the community research, the sector plans supported by GEP and ESSPIN must speed up the transition to effective learning. In addition to the features set out in Figure 6 on page 9, our community research and current school plans identified security and play/sports facilities as a high priority. The majority of schools in the States we visited were not able to provide the infrastructure and learning environment to support the expected pupil learning.

### *Teacher pipeline and management are critical*

- 2.46 Supporting government in managing the teacher pipeline and teacher deployment to provide schools with effective teachers is still not a sufficiently high priority for GEP and ESSPIN. Some work has, however, been piloted in both programmes.<sup>29</sup> Research has shown the negative impact of teacher absenteeism.<sup>30</sup> We were surprised to find that this issue did not figure prominently in either GEP or ESSPIN, even though it is a major concern for parents and pupils. Neither programme had detailed information on the

number of classes without a teacher available. This information should be collected and acted upon.<sup>31</sup>

- 2.47 An ESSPIN survey in 2009 found that less than 5% of all teachers assessed in five States were competent as primary school teachers.<sup>32</sup> ESSPIN has taken steps to tackle the problem through creating prescribed lesson plans, setting learning benchmarks and providing intensive support for teacher training, including mentoring and monitoring. ESSPIN has established State school improvement teams and school support officers, from existing State and LGEA staff, to provide support for the pilot schools. Initial evidence suggests that this approach is improving pupil learning.
- 2.48 Over 19,000<sup>33</sup> teachers have benefited from ESSPIN in-service training and mentoring. A small-scale Monitoring Learning Achievement study in Kwara state, in 2012, showed positive signs of improvement.<sup>34</sup> GEP2 provided a combination of in-service training and mentoring but achieved only 25% of the target teacher numbers (in part due to non-release of government funding) and the impact on learning was not assessed.<sup>35</sup>
- 2.49 The use of school report cards, introduced by ESSPIN, comparing school staffing and resources to the LGEA and State averages, is a step towards creating more pressure for the equitable distribution of resources. A similar approach has improved school outcomes in Uganda.<sup>36</sup>
- 2.50 The UNICEF/GEP-supported Female Trainee Teachers' Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS) should address the need for qualified, committed female teachers in rural areas. The scheme aims to increase the number of female role models in the schools while creating employment opportunities for educated young women. The FTTSS provides

<sup>28</sup> See recommendation 1 in Figure A4 in the Annex. This figure contains more detailed and operational recommendations on particular programmes examined as part of the evaluation. We do not expect DFID to provide a formal management response to these recommendations.

<sup>29</sup> The original log frame for ESSPIN did have an indicator to measure the maldistribution of teachers but it was dropped from the revised plan in 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Glewwe, P. et al., *School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature from 1990 to 2010, 2012*, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/120033/2/WP12-1.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> See recommendation 2 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

<sup>32</sup> *Teaching and Learning Baseline Survey, Summary Report, 2010*, ESSPIN, <http://www.esspin.org/index.php/search/reports?q=teaching+and+learning+baseline+survey>.

<sup>33</sup> From *ESSPIN March 2012 Quarterly Report*.

<sup>34</sup> *ESSPIN Report of a Small Scale Evaluation of ESSPIN's Support to Kwara State's Literacy and Numeracy Programme 2012*, ESSPIN, <http://www.esspin.org/index.php/resources/abs/kwara/328/Kwara-328-Report-of-a-small-scale-evaluation-of-ESSPIN-s-support-to-Kwara-State-s-literacy-and-numeracy-programme>.

<sup>35</sup> DFID Project Completion Report for GEP2.

<sup>36</sup> Reinikka, R. and Svensson, J., *Fighting Corruption to Improve Schooling: Evidence from a Newspaper Campaign in Uganda*, Journal of the European Economic Association, 2005.



## 2 Findings

scholarships for poor rural girls to pursue a teacher training programme at their respective State Colleges of Education. Beginning in 2009, GEP and States provide a student stipend during the training, in return for a commitment to work for two years in a rural area after completing three or four years of training.

- 2.51 GEP has so far supported 912 (20%) female students on the FTTSS out of 4,459 students, with the balance sponsored by States, local government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The total cost to GEP2 so far has been £0.5 million.<sup>37</sup> There was evidence that States are not releasing their funding for FTTSS scholarships (e.g. in Sokoto, funds had not been released for more than a year). One participant said: 'Look at me. I am about to graduate and still the money is yet to come. Some have left school because they could not continue without the scholarship.' Another trainee said, 'I complained to the GEP co-ordinator. She gave us a sheet of paper to list out our names and we did. Nothing happened. I am not sure if I will be teaching at the end of the programme, because I will not be able to go for teaching practice if I haven't received my outstanding scholarship money.'
- 2.52 This initiative is significant. Until at least three cohorts complete their training and work in a remote rural school for two years, however, it will be uncertain that this approach will be effective. More attention is needed to secure the smooth transfer of funds to students, to monitor retention and check on student progress during the training.
- 2.53 DFID is now developing a new large-scale Teacher Development Programme (TDP), in addition to GEP and ESSPIN, to start in 2013. It involves pre-service and in-service training, as well as reforms to the colleges of education. Rural teacher shortages, however, may remain a challenge, along with absenteeism. GEP and ESSPIN should be encouraged to promote a more equitable distribution of competent teachers by adopting

proven interventions (e.g. performance incentives and regular monitoring of teacher distribution and effectiveness). Both programmes will have to work closely with the new TDP and DFID will need to play a strong co-ordinating role.<sup>38</sup>

### Community-level delivery

- 2.54 During our review, security concerns restricted some of the coverage of the community survey, particularly in Kaduna State. As a result, the community-level survey focussed on School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and support for Qur'anic schools, which were common to both Sokoto and Kaduna States. The survey also examined the FTTSS in Sokoto but could not assess teacher training in Kaduna.

*SBMCs can increase enrolment of out-of-school children and create the conditions for increased retention*

- 2.55 SBMCs have been established across Nigeria acting as a bridge between schools and the communities they serve. The committees usually include the head teacher, teachers, parents, community leaders and a student representative. Both programmes have sought to support the SBMCs.
- 2.56 Evidence on the effectiveness of community-led oversight committees is limited. Our own community research suggests that they can have impact, for example helping to increase student enrolment. GEP and ESSPIN have started to monitor the impact of SBMCs on enrolment and attendance (including teacher attendance) but this is work in progress and will need to be developed. Research suggests that ongoing support is required to achieve results.<sup>39</sup> By building sustainable support networks via LGEAs and civil society organisations (CSOs), ESSPIN has met this need. GEP has supported the establishment of associations in each State to represent SBMCs but the effectiveness of these has not yet been demonstrated, leaving the sustainability of the initiative in question.

<sup>37</sup> Women have been enrolled on the three-year course plus an initial bridging course (four years). The 912 GEP-funded students are spread over the full period, with a small number, unknown, graduating in 2012 and progressing to their first teaching post in late 2012. Some GEP students completed four years by the middle of 2012 and others in two and three years depending on their entry year. As a result, the 912 students created stipend demands of around 2,500 student years to date.

<sup>38</sup> See recommendation 3 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

<sup>39</sup> For example, Casey, K. et al., *Reshaping Institutions: Evidence on External Aid and Local Collective Action*, NBER Working Paper 17012, May 2011, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17012>.

## 2 Findings

- 2.57 SBMCs worked to increase public awareness of the importance of enrolling girls, disabled, Fulani (nomadic) and very poor children. Our community research showed that both programmes saw fathers of school-aged children as important recipients of outreach campaigns.
- 2.58 In Sokoto, several SBMCs provided fathers with school uniforms for their daughters and asked that they send their daughters to school. For example, one village chief organised a meeting of fathers to collect the names of all school-age children for enrolment. The women knew about the meeting but complained that they were not consulted. 'Men insist that their children go to school,' said one mother, 'and if the child isn't in school, they usually blame the mother for not enforcing the rule as laid down by the father.' Many women say that their husbands do not leave them enough money for food and other necessities; they therefore need their daughters to go to the market to buy and sell for them.
- 2.59 The two programmes used different strategies to strengthen women's voices on SBMCs. ESSPIN organised a men's wing and a women's wing in each SBMC, to provide a forum for women's participation. It held frequent follow-up visits with SBMCs, which was valuable in sustaining benefits for as long as the support lasted.<sup>40</sup> GEP arranged for a network of women's groups to participate in SBMCs. The women's representatives we spoke to identified occasions when they were represented by older women, with a limited interest in education. Both programmes need to share good practice examples and promote their wider application by SBMCs. This sharing will need to be preceded by sound monitoring and analysis of the success of various support methods for the participation of women in SBMCs.
- 2.60 Both delivery partners have been successful in engaging CSOs at the State level. In several States, they are now part of the planning process as well as providing support for schools and SBMCs. This is very positive and should be extended to other States.
- 2.61 ESSPIN has co-operated with CSOs in the design and delivery of training programmes and follow-up mentoring, strengthening SBMCs, giving local ownership and increasing the profile of CSOs. GEP has also worked with civil society groups who have supported increased access for girls through SBMCs.
- DFID's approach to Qur'anic schools is innovative but is struggling to meet basic needs*
- 2.62 Virtually every Muslim child in northern Nigeria attends a Qur'anic school. They say they go to 'learn the Qur'an and its teachings, to be conscious of the hereafter and to learn how to live in harmony with others'. The schools are run by *mallams*, Qur'anic teachers, who have studied with Islamic scholars across the northern States.
- 2.63 Some Qur'anic students are *almajari*, very poor boys who may come from other communities, states or even neighbouring countries to study. The girls at these schools are usually from the local community. Almajari account for up to 25% of the school-age rural population in the north. With poverty increasing in the north, few of the religious teachers can provide for the basic needs of the children, so the boys spend much of each day begging or working.
- 2.64 DFID is promoting the integration of secular and religious education in Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria. In response to the different types of Qur'anic schools in this region, DFID has encouraged its programmes to develop a range of approaches to working with them.
- 2.65 In Sokoto, GEP provided Qur'anic schools with exercise books, textbooks, pencils and school bags. There is limited evidence that such materials improve learning outcomes in the absence of sustained teacher performance and student attendance.<sup>41</sup> UNICEF also negotiated with SUBEBs and the State Agencies for Mass Education to provide teachers qualified to Nigeria Certificate of Education level to teach basic literacy

<sup>40</sup> Research evidence suggests that benefits of engaging women do not last beyond the period of facilitation. Casey, K. et al., *Reshaping Institutions: Evidence on External Aid and Local Collective Action*, NBER Working Paper 17012, May 2011, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17012>.

<sup>41</sup> Glewwe, P. et al., *School Resources and Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Review of the Literature from 1990 to 2010, 2012*, <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/120033/2/WP12-1.pdf>.

## 2 Findings

and numeracy in Qur'anic schools with the integrated curriculum.

- 2.66 ESSPIN developed a focussed curriculum for teaching Hausa, English, social studies and maths to the boys. It also assisted mallams to identify trusted and educated community members willing to teach, as well as training and supervising support teachers. The students learn with ESSPIN's community teachers five days a week, for three hours each day when they are not being taught by the mallam.

### DFID's management of the programmes

*DFID has faced challenges in managing GEP and ESSPIN*

- 2.67 Until July 2010, both GEP and ESSPIN were led by a single DFID education adviser, supported by three programme staff. This limited DFID's ability to direct the programmes in an active way. DFID has since strengthened its advisory capacity and now, in 2012, there are three education adviser posts in Nigeria. Their task remains considerable, managing delivery in ten States as well as designing and launching new programmes.

- 2.68 DFID's **contracting arrangements** can prove challenging when changes to programme design and implementation must be negotiated. For example, UNICEF regards itself as a development partner rather than a sub-contractor and, as a UN agency, adopts a standard approach to working with different donors, which makes performance management and programme modifications more difficult. In contrast, Cambridge Education does regard itself as a sub-contractor and it has been responsive to feedback from DFID (e.g. following early problems, it responded to recommendations in the ESSPIN MTR).

- 2.69 Regarding **procurement**, Cambridge Education was appointed to deliver ESSPIN in 2008 following an open competition; it had previous experience with CUBE. In contrast, UNICEF was reappointed to deliver the third phase of GEP without a competition. This was justified by DFID in the business case for GEP3 based on UNICEF's performance on GEP2, its well-established country presence, its willingness to work in the North and

its network of influential contacts. We do not believe that this decision is fully supported by UNICEF's recent performance or as shown in the GEP PCR 2012.<sup>42</sup>

- 2.70 ESSPIN is **externally audited** by a professional firm and the most recent audit was supported by consulting engineers. In the 2010 financial year, the main area of weakness identified concerned adherence to local procurement guidelines. These are being addressed and DFID has a process for following up on the agreed recommendations. By contrast, GEP relies on the United Nations (UN) audit process and DFID only sees a statement of account for the programme, identifying total contributions pledged, funds received and a summary of expenditure. The information is minimal and we understand that it cannot be changed within the constraints of the protocol between the UK Government and UN agencies.<sup>43</sup>

- 2.71 **Risk mitigation** has not been given a sufficient priority in either the management of the programmes or the quarterly reporting. Risk registers did not form part of the reporting cycle for either programme, as was noted in the MTR for ESSPIN. In the last year, ESSPIN has introduced risk management into its daily management processes and UNICEF is in the early stages of rolling out risk management under GEP3. The extensive use of technical assistance reduces opportunities for misappropriation of funds and DFID does not use budget support because of fiduciary risk. In the three financial years from 2009 to 2012, the DFID Counter Fraud Unit did not receive any referrals about GEP or ESSPIN.

- 2.72 **Value for money** is difficult for DFID to assess due to lack of reliable data. This would have required a data management system with information on pupil enrolment and retention, teacher attendance, school infrastructure and supplies and school-level financing to be established at the start. Whilst DFID has focussed efforts on establishing national data systems for education at State level, in the absence of adequate data from States, neither the

<sup>42</sup> More detailed information is presented in the Annex from GEP PCR 2012. The PCR does not offer such a positive assessment as is in the DFID Business Case document.

<sup>43</sup> See recommendation 4 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

## 2 Findings

GEP PCR nor ESSPIN MTR could assess value for money. DFID must share responsibility for this omission. Comparative studies of GEP and ESSPIN would have provided valuable results, as they have adopted different approaches in similar circumstances.<sup>44</sup> Over the last year, DFID has put in place value for money strategies and monitoring for both education programmes.

2.73 The **timing of the expansion of both programmes** needs to be carefully planned. GEP is being asked to expand into more States and ESSPIN is planning to expand within its existing States beyond the pilot schools. We are concerned that expansion is being encouraged before the programmes have been sufficiently embedded in their existing States and revised to give priority to pupil learning. GEP3 should concentrate on securing operational improvements within each of its four current States before considering expansion on a gradual basis.

2.74 ESSPIN is committed to a State roll-out in the second half of its timeline without being sure that the conditions are in place to secure success. The difficulties of achieving sustained change cannot be over-emphasised – DFID has been working in three of the six ESSPIN States since 2005 (through CUBE). Creating a single programme across the ten States from 2014 would help to ensure a common approach to design, delivery and management.

### Impact

Assessment: Amber-Red 

2.75 This section assesses the impact of the programmes on intended beneficiaries, in particular drawing on the community perspective. It considers whether the programmes are reaching intended beneficiaries, whether the programme activities are meeting the beneficiaries' self-defined needs and the programmes' potential for long-term sustainability.

### Programme level impact

*It is difficult to be sure if enrolment in basic education has increased as a result of GEP and ESSPIN*

2.76 A major focus of the two programmes was on improving enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes in basic education. Unfortunately, State census data are not yet sufficiently reliable to provide an accurate picture of the extent to which top targets have been met – although both GEP and ESSPIN are working to improve the quality of these data. The census is published in ESSPIN States but remains an internal document in the four GEP States. Publication provides transparency and encourages performance improvement.<sup>45</sup>

2.77 Taking the census data at face value,<sup>46</sup> there is a mixed picture with respect to enrolment in the ten States where DFID is providing support. Overall, primary enrolment in the ten States increased by 15% over the five-year period 2005-06 to 2009-10, against the declining national trend. Enrolment fell, however, in three of the ten States (two ESSPIN States, Kwara and Enugu and one GEP State, Bauchi). Junior secondary enrolment increased in the ten States, broadly in line with the national trend. In these ten States, which are among those in the greatest need, an estimated 3.7 million children continue to be out of school. The out-of-school rate for primary education, at 39%, was higher than the national rate of 30%.

2.78 In terms of equity of access for girls, the position improved in the ten States where DFID is working between 2005-06 and 2009-10. The proportion of female pupils rose from 41% to 43% in primary schools and from 39% to 42% in junior secondary schools.<sup>47</sup> Enrolment gains in northern States have kept track with national trends, in spite of strong cultural and economic barriers to enrolling girls.

*It is not possible to assess the impact of GEP and ESSPIN on pupil learning*

2.79 GEP2 adopted an advocacy approach to changing attitudes and gaining access to schools for larger numbers of girls. At present, it is not possible to

<sup>45</sup> See recommendation 6 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

<sup>46</sup> *Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2006-2010*, Federal Ministry of Education, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> *Nigeria Digest of Education Statistics, 2006-2010*, Federal Ministry of Education, 2011.

<sup>44</sup> See recommendation 5 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

## 2 Findings

assess the impact of GEP on learning because data from a Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) exercise collected with the Federal Ministry of Education has not yet been analysed. GEP3 will conduct one MLA during the programme, in line with government policy.

- 2.80 By contrast, ESSPIN is spending more resources on monitoring learning progress. A mini MLA was conducted in Kwara in 2012 to assess the impact of the strengthening of teacher capabilities through learning benchmarks, prescribed lesson plans, training and mentoring. The results were encouraging, with pupils in years 3 and 4 of primary school improving their performance against Primary 1 and 2 benchmarks. These assessments, however, do not constitute rigorous impact evaluation but they do provide useful mid-term results. ESSPIN set a learning baseline in all six States in 2010 and is assessing impact in 2012 and 2014.

*Comparison of the log frames show that the progress of GEP and ESSPIN is below expectations*

- 2.81 A comparison of progress made by UNICEF and Cambridge Education against their respective log frames is provided in the Annex. This shows, in summary, that neither partner has delivered against its plans. The evidence suggests that ESSPIN has been more successful, although assessment of its performance is made more difficult by the lack of information on several indicators. This conclusion supports those reached by the PCR on GEP2 (in 2011 and 2012) and the MTR on ESSPIN (in 2012).<sup>48</sup>
- 2.82 By 2019, GEP3 is only targeting a 40% literacy rate (i.e. 40% of girls should be able to read a single sentence) for girls at the end of primary school. This falls short of parents' and pupils' expectations. ESSPIN's objective is that 36% of Primary 4 girls (age nine years) will be able to read 'with comprehension'<sup>49</sup> by 2014. This aim is more closely aligned with expectations but still falls short. These targets emphasise the slow pace of improvement that DFID and its partners believe is possible. It is also a concern that the two

programmes have different definitions of literacy, which creates problems for monitoring and comparative work.

### **Community assessment of impact**

- 2.83 Our community research explored three DFID programme activities in detail: strengthening of the SBMCs; supporting the FTTSS; and including secular subjects in Qur'anic schools. They were chosen because they were visible programme activities at community level. These have had mixed results in creating the outcomes that beneficiaries are requesting, particularly in respect of pupil learning and enrolment.

*SBMCs can act locally but need State government support for their needs to achieve sustainable school improvement*

- 2.84 SBMCs are potentially an important mechanism for increasing the local accountability of schools to their communities. Awareness of the SBMCs or their activities was low in the rural communities in Sokoto served by GEP. Around one in ten fathers and one in 20 mothers that we spoke to knew of their existence. Knowledge of the SBMC was affected by distance from the school, socio-economic status and political connectedness. Awareness of the SBMCs and their activities was far greater in Kaduna, with ESSPIN. There, committed local CSOs and LGEA desk officers provided extensive support to the committees. Similar support was observed in Kwara and Enugu. One local desk officer had been working to recruit out-of-school children before ESSPIN. He said he began with no budget and no co-ordinated plan. Now, with DFID support, he has both. In Kaduna, the SBMCs were reported to be effectively recruiting pupils and maintaining attendance, working with teachers who used to go from house to house to bring pupils to school. Out-of-school numbers suggest that continuing effort is required.<sup>50</sup>
- 2.85 Children's voices on the SBMCs do not yet appear to be making much of a difference, reflecting cultural barriers to children speaking up in adult company. We interviewed one pupil representative

<sup>48</sup> See recommendation 7 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

<sup>49</sup> During the assessment of learning, ESSPIN endeavours to determine if pupils are able to understand the texts they are reading rather than simply being able to read the words. GEP is seeking to test only reading ability.

<sup>50</sup> In Kaduna, an estimated 23% of primary age children are out of school (270,000). *Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children: Nigeria Country Study*, UNICEF, March 2012.



## 2 Findings

to the local SBMC who said she usually spoke her mind at the meetings: 'There was a time I complained about the teachers who wouldn't come to class unless a student was sent to call them. Sometimes, even after sending a student, they still wouldn't come. This hasn't changed since I brought it up.' Other pupils taking part in SBMCs found it hard to speak or were asked to run errands. This aspect needs more external support to secure the voice of children on the SBMC.

- 2.86 ESSPIN and GEP provided small grants to schools for improvement projects identified in a school development plan – GEP provided SBMCs with a set amount (Naira 150,000 or approximately £600) and ESSPIN calculated school grants on the basis of school enrolment numbers. To date, GEP2 has provided £4.9 million and ESSPIN has provided £1.3 million in grants. SBMCs have used their grant money from the two DFID programmes for a range of purposes – from repairing classrooms and buying play and sports equipment, to procuring exercise books and textbooks. These priorities came out of their school development plans.
- 2.87 The grant programme, however, can only provide a partial solution because of the small scale of the funds. SBMCs raise funds for a variety of school projects, with infrastructure often a key priority, including the construction of classrooms, toilets, an office for the headmaster and water storage containers.
- 2.88 The SBMC at a rural Sokoto school raised the funds to construct a block of three classrooms. It ran out of funds before completing the buildings. It looked to local government but received no support. The unfinished ceiling and windows make it impossible for the pupils to study in the classrooms during the rains and they complain of discomfort during the colder months.
- 2.89 The SBMCs cannot raise all the resources to rebuild the schools on their own. Some State governments, however, have been slow to engage with and support DFID's grant programmes, which can meet only limited needs. Clear bidding processes are not common, so schools feel frustrated at the lack of responses for their needs. There is insufficient transparency in the spending

of State educational capital improvement funds. Both GEP and ESSPIN should have sought more secure commitments from States before beginning their grant programmes.

- 2.90 There are signs that the situation may be improving and a few States have begun to finance universal basic education initiatives for school improvement through their State budgets. Direct funding for schools is included in some State education budgets for 2013. For example, four of the six ESSPIN States are planning direct school funding averaging £600,000 per State; it remains to be seen whether this money is released. UBEC Self Help funds are also being provided to meet priority needs and, across the ten States where DFID is working, a total of £7.3 million was made available in 2011.
- 2.91 Crucially, ESSPIN is providing ongoing support to its committees through collaboration between local CSOs and LGEA desk officers. This can be considered a good practice based on evidence from the literature that sustained facilitation of SBMCs and linkage with local government may enhance results.<sup>51</sup>
- 2.92 SBMCs have held some teachers accountable for chronic absence and sexual harassment. SBMCs were able to have teachers transferred for habitual absence. In one rural community, the SBMC had a teacher transferred to an administrative post when it learned of his sexual harassment of a student in another school.
- 2.93 Some teachers in Sokoto feel that the SBMCs discriminate against those without influence with the head teacher or government officials. They say that teachers with patrons in government are absent from work and yet nothing is done. Teachers from other regions, they say, are fined or transferred for the same misbehaviour.
- 2.94 SBMCs have achieved other useful forms of change. One committee in Kaduna has informally adjusted the school calendar to fit the agricultural

<sup>51</sup> For example, see Pradhan, M. et al., *Improving Educational Quality through Enhancing Community Participation: Results from a Randomized Field Experiment in Indonesia*, Policy Research Working Paper WPS5795, World Bank, [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer?WDSPath=IB/2011/09/13/000158349\\_20110913123202/Rendered/PDF/WPS5795.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer?WDSPath=IB/2011/09/13/000158349_20110913123202/Rendered/PDF/WPS5795.pdf).



## 2 Findings

cycle. One member told us, 'A parent should be able to count on their children during planting and harvest. The vacations need not be lengthy but should be planned carefully.' Schools also need to take into account market days when girls go to sell produce and the boys work on the land.

- 2.95 SBMCs provide a real opportunity for the local community to engage with and influence the provision of schooling. In the early stages, SBMCs need support for their operations and require a responsive LGEA and State government. We saw many examples of good practice as well as SBMCs still struggling with their role. Both programmes should continue to provide support for SBMCs to secure their contribution to improving education at the local level.

*The FTTSS offers promise but has yet to impact on rural schools*

- 2.96 The FTTSS, supported by GEP, is providing opportunities for young, often poor, rural women to become teachers in order to fill teacher gaps in remote rural schools. The recruited students are grateful for the opportunity. 'I'd be at home if it were not for this opportunity,' was a statement we heard time and again from the participants. One participant interviewed had just returned from her teaching practice in a community not far from her own. 'The mothers motivated me,' she said, 'they were so glad that one of their own was teaching their kids and I was touched and am determined to make a difference in their lives. I don't mind teaching in bad schools because those are the kind of schools I attended.' Trainees did, however, complain of large classes and problems with campus housing.

- 2.97 A high percentage of the first cohort of teacher trainees was from rural communities. Subsequent FTTSS cohorts have had fewer participants from rural areas and very poor families, although on average 70% are from rural areas. One GEP official explained this decline by saying that many of the applicants from rural areas were unqualified and had difficulty passing the entrance exams. FTTSS participants from rural areas suggested that GEP and the States should work with schools and communities to develop a pipeline for future applicants. This should include a bridge course to

help girls from rural communities to pass their exams and prepare for the teachers' college.

- 2.98 In Sokoto, the Ministry of Education has taken over the recruitment with UNICEF acting as a technical adviser. Few of the FTTSS participants from the city will serve happily in the rural areas. Some of the participants do not understand that the purpose of their scholarship is to fill a gap for female teachers in rural areas. A first year trainee said: 'I will not go to a village to teach. My family is in the city and I cannot abandon my husband and my daughter to go and teach in a rural area. It is not that I will say I am not going to teach there but rather I will lobby to get reposted to the city.'

- 2.99 The FTTSS has the potential to help transform gender relations in rural northern Nigeria. Many of the schoolgirls we interviewed wanted to learn to become teachers and help their parents and communities. The FTTSS could help to fulfil this aspiration and at the same time provide much needed indigenous female teachers for the rural areas. GEP, however, appears to have allowed a decline in the percentage of rural participants and should have ensured that the State Ministry of Education had adequate outreach arrangements in place. This is a concern as the teacher gaps in rural schools will not be filled as planned.

- 2.100 GEP will need to support the recent graduates as they take on teaching positions in rural areas. The first graduates are taking up their posts in September 2012. The graduates will teach in classrooms that are likely to be in disrepair and, in the context of gender relations, in situations that are likely to be daunting. They will need mentoring visits but there is no GEP programme budget for continued mentoring and support of FTTSS graduates, although they may benefit from general school-based teacher development and mentoring in GEP States.

- 2.101 The impact of the scheme on pupil learning cannot be assessed until late 2014, when the first group of teachers will have been in post for two years. An independent review of FTTSS should be undertaken to ensure that a full range of lessons can be learned for application across the States.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See recommendation 8 in Figure A4 in the Annex.

## 2 Findings

*Engagement with Qur'anic schools represents an opportunity but the approach faces practical problems*

2.102 Because of the importance of Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria, continued engagement through GEP and ESSPIN is valuable, if practical problems can be addressed. Specific examples of initial resistance to the new approach were given to us during our community research in Sokoto and Kaduna. Some parents withdrew their children because they believed the teaching of Hausa, maths and science would shift their children's attention away from the Qur'an. Students are reluctant to attend secular classes because, they say, the classes take time away from begging or working. Some almajari don't see the relevance of the secular subjects to their lives.

2.103 Mallams said that they supported the ESSPIN programme but thought that helping the almajari meet their basic needs for food and shelter should be the first priority. If this is done, it is likely that attendance at the secular classes would increase. ESSPIN is piloting providing the mallams with seed, fertiliser and outreach support for their farms. The boys work on the farm and a percentage of the harvest will be used for the benefit of the boys. This pilot, if rigorously tested and found to be successful, could be extended.

2.104 Both programmes will need to continue engaging with Qur'anic schools. GEP and ESSPIN should continue to work together to share experiences on their approaches to supporting Qur'anic schools with an integrated curriculum. In particular, the practical problems identified need to be addressed if their work is to have an impact on pupil learning.

### Long-term sustainability

*DFID needs to secure long-term commitment to change in each State if learning is to be improved*

2.105 DFID investment needs counterpart support from the States if it is to be effective and lead to long-term increases in enrolment and learning. Without a strong response and longer-term commitment from State governments, DFID's investment in technical advice will not give a reasonable return.

2.106 Dialogue with the States should be informed by detailed data on the condition and performance of education at school level (in a similar way to the

monitoring of the education sector reform programme in Punjab, Pakistan).<sup>53</sup> Only if the general condition of education improves, creating the opportunity to learn, can GEP and ESSPIN deliver impact commensurate with the resources planned for the period 2012-19 (currently £126 million for the two programmes).

2.107 Faster progress could be made in improving learning outcomes if there were a stronger focus on interventions that improve student performance in reading, writing and arithmetic in early primary years. DFID would need to revise its programme design to concentrate on this.<sup>54</sup>

### Learning

Assessment: Amber-Red 

2.108 This section considers the extent to which DFID and the two programmes have learned from their individual and collective experience, including ways of monitoring and improving delivery. This includes the influence of beneficiaries, design of the programmes, management of the two programmes and working relations with the States. We also considered the extent to which DFID has been innovative in its approach.

*The lack of accurate and transparent data about education and learning weakens accountability*

2.109 Securing high-quality data at the school level (including student test scores, teacher attendance rates and public expenditure) has proved to be a severe challenge for both programmes. Without accurate data, monitoring and evaluation are difficult and bodies such as SBMCs find it much harder to hold the State governments to account.

2.110 In the existing census data examined by the review team, there were significant quality issues.<sup>55</sup> Many States in Nigeria have yet to develop an information culture where accurate data are collected, published and used. Both ESSPIN and

<sup>53</sup> The reform programme measures school-level performance indicators including teacher presence, student attendance and school cleanliness. District-level data are reported and variations are highlighted. See [http://www.pesrp.edu.pk/district\\_ranking.php](http://www.pesrp.edu.pk/district_ranking.php).

<sup>54</sup> *Promoting Critical Knowledge, Skills and Qualifications for Sustainable Development in Africa*, Association for the Development of Education in Africa, 2012, [http://www.adeanet.org/triennale/Triennalestudies/subtheme1/1\\_5\\_04\\_TRUDELL\\_en.pdf](http://www.adeanet.org/triennale/Triennalestudies/subtheme1/1_5_04_TRUDELL_en.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> For example, according to the census, the number of classrooms in Enugu State declined by 1,890 (23%) from 2009 to 2010. In Niger State, one LGEA recorded a drop in pupil numbers of 20,300 (41%) from 2009 to 2010.

## 2 Findings

GEP continue to devote effort to securing good data from the census, although there remain problems with reconciling federal- and state-level education data systems.

- 2.111 The lack of pupil learning assessments in all ten States is a serious gap in the delivery of both programmes. Without regular, unannounced visits to assess learning outcomes and teacher attendance, neither programme is able to monitor progress on the key indicators of success. GEP2 monitoring has not been supported by any baseline assessment of learning progress in a representative sample of primary schools; a national assessment of learning by the Federal Ministry of Education was supported in 2011 but publication of the results has been delayed until later in 2012. GEP3 will only conduct learning assessments every four years. Given the criticality of learning assessment, more intensive and frequent coverage is required.

*More rigour is needed in management reporting to DFID*

- 2.112 Both GEP and ESSPIN submit quarterly reports to DFID to record progress and to identify critical issues. Both partners reported in a narrative style, rather than more formally against the agreed action plan for the quarter. Since the beginning of 2012, both partners report against work plans and budgets. ESSPIN also monitors progress every quarter against 19 headline indicators of activity but these do not all refer directly to its high-level programme plan (log frame).
- 2.113 In the absence of an agreement setting out the responsibilities of each party, there is no formal review of progress by DFID, its delivery partners and each of the States. DFID manages its relationships with States through teams in Abuja and its two regional offices and a high level of importance is attached to political engagement related to the DFID programmes in each State. On its education programmes, specifically, we believe that DFID leaves much of the management of the relationship with each State to its partners, which is undesirable, given the importance of political support to a successful education system.
- 2.114 Few States are measuring progress towards the improvement of school quality. ESSPIN has

successfully supported annual reviews by State bodies and this is now enabling more robust discussions to take place in 2012. The absence of annual reviews has been a major weakness for GEP2's delivery, as it has not allowed informed discussions of programme performance to take place. It is therefore surprising to see no reference to State annual reviews in the GEP3 plan. This should be addressed.

*DFID does not share experience and know-how between the delivery partners*

- 2.115 There is little evidence of the programme teams sharing experience, which is both surprising and a major concern given that both are working in similar areas and facing similar challenges. Sharing of good practice and know-how should be addressed by DFID as a matter of priority.
- 2.116 ESSPIN shares experience in six States bringing together the State Education Commissioners four times a year. This approach could be usefully extended to the GEP States and then the ten States where DFID is working could create a critical mass of engaged and influential individuals.
- 2.117 ESSPIN appears committed to transparency and knowledge-sharing and provides comprehensive information about its programme through its website. In contrast, GEP, despite a knowledge management focus in its plan, does not actively publicise reports about its programme. This limits wider learning from its experience.
- 2.118 There is sharing of knowledge and experience across DFID within its community of education specialists. This is through annual professional development events, an intranet platform, monthly teleconferences of Africa education advisers, literature reviews and peer reviews of business cases for major new projects. We would, however, expect to see stronger evidence of how such guidance on the DFID strategy for educational improvement has led to the design of more effective programmes. We would particularly expect to see this in fragile and conflict-affected States where 30% of future aid will be directed.
- 2.119 DFID could learn further from intended beneficiaries; our community study suggests that communities should be engaged actively in

## 2 Findings

programme design and implementation. This would more accurately identify needs, particularly pupil learning, reinforce the scale of the challenges being faced on the ground and inform the priorities for intervention.

*There is scope for further innovation in the GEP and ESSPIN programme designs*

2.120 The designs implemented by GEP and ESSPIN are largely tried and tested, though some (like community-driven oversight initiatives) have proved difficult to implement with success. There are, however, a few examples of new approaches, which include supporting the FTTSS, broadening the curriculum in Qur'anic schools, using scripted lesson plans for literacy and numeracy and running challenge funds for civil society to support school improvement. These should be carefully evaluated.

2.121 For example, the Challenge Fund in Enugu has been set up by ESSPIN as a two-year pilot to help poor children access quality primary education in 30 mission schools; currently 1,200 children are taking part. It is working with the State Education Scholarship and Education Loans Board, Christian missions and a group of CSOs to provide pupils with school supplies and schools with teaching aids and in-service teacher training. Partnering missions waive school fees and CSOs identify the extreme poor and follow up their progress.

2.122 Based on our community research, the Qur'anic approach to education offers insights for learning. Most youth in northern Nigeria attend Qur'anic schools regularly. The daily schedule and yearly calendar are synchronised with the priorities of poor families, including their need for their children's labour (during planting and harvest and for selling produce). On completion of their primary studies, most students can read and write Arabic.<sup>56</sup>

2.123 Other models have been evaluated and shown to be effective in improving learning. For example, Pratham (an NGO) delivers 'Read India'. This aims to improve the reading and basic arithmetic skills of children aged 6-14 years in rural India, at scale. This has been shown to be effective in improving learning by monitoring pupil attendance, teaching

in ability-based groups with appropriate curricula and materials and providing remedial education through volunteers and summer reading camps.<sup>57</sup>

2.124 Given the scale of the challenges being faced, different approaches are needed. We believe that DFID should consider revising the design of GEP and ESSPIN to include approaches that have been successful elsewhere. This should include co-ordinating with other development partners where appropriate (e.g. USAID is launching a Reading for All programme in seven of the States where DFID is working):

- using informal approaches, outside class time, to improve learning (such as reading 'camps'<sup>58</sup>);
- incorporating literacy and numeracy training into girls' 'safe spaces', to be organised by DFID partners in Northern Nigeria; and
- introducing formal monitoring of pupil and teacher attendance and pupil learning, with co-ordination at State level, possibly through SBMCs and using SMS messaging (which DFID is piloting in India).

<sup>56</sup> Until recently, Hausa was written in Ajami, an adaptation of Arabic script for use with indigenous African languages.

<sup>57</sup> *What Helps Children to Learn? Evaluation of Pratham's Read India Program in Bihar and Uttarkhand*, Poverty Action Lab, June 2011, <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/what-helps-children-learn-evaluation-prathams-read-india-program>.

<sup>58</sup> Banerjee, A. et al., *Remedying Education: Evidence from Two Randomised Experiments in India*, NBER Working Paper 11905, 2005, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11904>.

# 3 Conclusions and Recommendations

## Conclusions

- 3.1 Parents and communities have clear expectations for basic education that reflect the reality of their local circumstances and economic opportunities. These expectations for basic literacy and numeracy should be the starting point for design, planning and implementation of DFID's support for improvement in basic education. This reality may be applicable to other fragile and post-conflict States where DFID is supporting education.
- 3.2 We recognise the fundamental importance of education to improving the lives of the poorest. We are concerned by the very high numbers of out-of-school children and the very poor learning outcomes in nine of the ten Nigerian States supported by DFID. Addressing these challenges will require DFID and its partners to be more assertive in their relations with State governments. Poor public financial management means that resources are being deployed unpredictably and not on the basis of need or equity.
- 3.3 A functioning education system requires key building blocks to be in place to create the opportunity to learn. These include adequate facilities, teachers who are present and committed, appropriate curricula and teaching materials and routine student attendance. According to community reports, these components are often missing from schools in northern Nigeria where DFID is providing support.
- 3.4 Accurate data and monitoring of learning achievement are also critical, for planning and budgeting, as well as for evaluation and accountability. Data collection continues to be a major challenge and DFID should continue to support greater capacity for routine pupil testing, teacher attendance audits and reporting on public expenditure. DFID programmes need to be more dynamic in pressing for transparency.
- 3.5 GEP and ESSPIN are now delivering very similar programmes with many common activities. Each partner has different strengths and weaknesses but our review indicates that ESSPIN is delivering on the ground more strongly than GEP:
- GEP's on-the-ground implementation raised a number of concerns. In particular, it is not providing sufficient ongoing support and follow-up of the FTTSS, SBMCs or the Qur'anic school activities. The description of UNICEF from our interviews and observations is of an agency that is not sufficiently in touch with the local schools and communities it is serving. Under GEP3, UNICEF has started to provide more staff and consultants at State and LGEA levels, which it is hoped will improve its on-the-ground performance by providing more support, follow-up and data collection at a local level; and
  - ESSPIN redesigned its programme to meet the MTR recommendations. There is evidence of the delivery partner (Cambridge Education) delivering results on the ground through a commitment to implementation follow-through (e.g. ongoing support for SBMCs' classroom-based support for teachers).
- 3.6 Part of DFID's challenge in managing GEP is that UNICEF regards itself as a 'development partner' and is less willing or able to change its ways of operating to meet DFID's requirements. The relationship is determined by protocols that govern UK relations with UN agencies. In contrast, Cambridge Education has shown itself to be more willing to be managed as a sub-contractor and has responded well to critical feedback about its early performance.
- 3.7 Supporting an education system on the scale of Nigeria, even in selected States, is a daunting task and requires very effective programme management and logistics. Cambridge Education appears to be better at this than UNICEF, through a combination of strong local presence and better planning and execution. In this environment, the ESSPIN model seems more likely to succeed.
- 3.8 DFID's current country planning horizon is only to the end of the 2014-15 financial year. It has, however, committed to support basic education in Nigeria at least until 2018-19, through GEP. We believe it will take many more years before significant improvements in learning outcomes are achieved and the system is self-sustaining. Changes to the programmes are required as part of the next phase of support to ensure that both enrolment and learning achievement are improved.

# 3 Conclusions and Recommendations

## Recommendations

3.9 Given the weaknesses in Nigeria's basic education system, the most important priority for DFID should be the achievement of basic literacy and numeracy for as many children as possible. If this can be achieved, improved enrolment should follow.

3.10 This approach should have three main elements:

- investing in interventions that are proven to improve basic literacy and numeracy in the early years of schooling;
- enhancing transparency and accountability to communities, through stronger State-level financial management and resource planning, as well as better school-level accountability; and
- encouraging enrolment, through advocacy and the 'demonstration effect' to parents that effective learning is taking place.

3.11 We believe that this shift in priorities can take place within the framework of GEP3 and ESSPIN but that changes in programme design are required.

**Recommendation 1: DFID should create a single education programme out of GEP and ESSPIN in 2014 focussing rigorously on basic reading, writing and arithmetic in the early years of primary schooling and building on the lessons learned, with aligned initiatives for teacher training and infrastructure.**

3.12 We believe that there should be a major drive to secure literacy and numeracy in early primary years for all pupils. As set out in this report, a number of inputs and outputs are required to enable the outcome of pupil learning. These include enrolment, teacher and pupil attendance, effective teachers and infrastructure.

3.13 GEP and ESSPIN should continue to encourage the enrolment of out-of-school children. This could continue to be done through advocacy by SBMCs. Other alternatives include conditional cash transfers to girls and their families and remedial or vocational training.

3.14 The responsibilities of head teachers and SBMCs should be extended to include monitoring and reporting on teacher and pupil attendance to local education authorities and DFID partners (and in summary to DFID). They should be given the

resources to hire local contract teachers, as there is some evidence that SBMCs are effective in selecting appropriate instructors for their children.

3.15 New approaches should be considered that have been shown to improve learning achievement. These include support for informal approaches outside class time, such as girls' spaces or clubs and remedial classes. In addition, the use of local contract teachers and volunteer tutors has been shown to improve learning. DFID is in the process of setting up safe spaces in Nigeria for over 100,000 adolescent girls in an estimated 900 schools (under GEP3). These would be an ideal vehicle for extra literacy and numeracy training.

3.16 Learning outcome benchmarks need to be agreed which define what 'basic' reading, writing and arithmetic mean in practice; this has been completed by ESSPIN and should be included by GEP. A baseline assessment of learning outcomes is required for all GEP3 States (similar to the ESSPIN baselines). This should be supported with plans for each State with a focus on targets to be achieved in the first three years – to be agreed with the local education commissioner and governor. These plans need to be closely aligned with State education sector strategies and operational plans. Quality-assured measurement will then be required to monitor progress and make corrections.

3.17 A single programme, with effective oversight from DFID, could draw on proven methods, focus on fewer priorities, establish common agreements with the States, improve collaboration between States and reduce the management complexity of the two different programmes. The new programme would have a common set of objectives and comprise a suite of State-level projects. This will be a significant long-term investment but it should lead to greater efficiencies and improved performance. The most appropriate timing would be after the end of ESSPIN in 2014. The most suitable and cost-effective provider would need to be selected through a competitive procurement.

**Recommendation 2: DFID should work with its partners and each participating State to secure a clear agreement about the policy changes and financial contributions required to improve enrolment and learning and to introduce**



### 3 Conclusions and Recommendations

**effective financial management and resource planning into education. There should be regular reviews of performance with States, based on school-level data.**

- 3.18 The elements of a functioning education system need to be agreed with each State. This applies to system development (e.g. appropriate curriculum, lesson plans, pre-service and in-service teacher training) and to infrastructure. A clear agreement is needed with each State government about its financial contributions and policy changes.
- 3.19 DFID should ensure that more attention is paid to generating reliable school-level data for resource deployment and learning achievement, to support transparent and equitable management decisions. This should include annual learning assessments and school report cards. This will provide the basis for a regular, data-driven review of budgets and school-level performance. ESSPIN is starting this.
- 3.20 DFID's support at State level should concentrate on introducing effective financial management in education. This is needed in order to develop an environment where budgets are realistic, planned resources are released and progress is reviewed regularly. Performance outcomes should be transparent so that communities can hold the government to account. This will be difficult to achieve in Nigeria but we understand that it is already being done in Lagos State, based on strong political leadership.
- 3.21 We suggest that DFID consider designing a component for each State programme to strengthen and support a group of influential CSOs. This would put pressure on government.
- 3.22 If there is evidence of continuing lack of support from a State's government, DFID should consider scaling down the particular State project and using its resources elsewhere. We recognise the limits to UK influence but believe this approach will help to improve the long-term impact and value for money of DFID's whole education programme in Nigeria. Exerting influence should be easier in those States where DFID is concentrating its wider aid programme (five coincide with ESSPIN).

**Recommendation 3: DFID should work with UNICEF to achieve significant improvement in**

**the performance of GEP over the next 12 months against agreed targets, with a review of progress by DFID after six months.**

- 3.23 Our review has identified weaknesses in UNICEF's delivery of GEP. DFID should give UNICEF 12 months to deliver against its latest log frame, with agreed targets for each State; these targets should focus on attendance, learning achievement, school completion and gender parity. If sufficient progress is not achieved within this timescale, DFID should review the range of services provided by UNICEF.

**Recommendation 4: DFID should address implementation issues that are limiting the impact of the two programmes in relation to the Female Trainee Teachers' Scholarship Scheme, School-Based Management Committees and Qur'anic schools.**

- 3.24 **FTTSS.** A pipeline of trainee teacher candidates from rural areas needs to be created. Improvements should include attracting more young women from rural areas through early outreach, encouraging married women to apply and offering bridge courses. Further attention is required to improve the teaching and living conditions for FTTSS students. Strong support will be required for female graduates once they are posted to rural schools. DFID should continue to press States to release the stipends for students.
- 3.25 **SBMCs.** Ongoing mentoring and support are required for all committees if they are to be effective. ESSPIN has shown how this can be achieved through local CSOs. States must be encouraged to engage positively with their SBMCs.
- 3.26 We suggest that DFID reconsider its school grants. While these provide valuable support for the schools to which they are given, they can only lead to sustainable school improvements across States if State governments financially support the initiative. This is currently not happening. A successful State grants programme is required to support and energise SBMCs.
- 3.27 **Qur'anic schools.** The living conditions and diet of the almajari pupils should be improved. The farming pilot can make a contribution here and, if proved effective, should be scaled up.

# Annex

1. This Annex sets out:
  - an outline of the beneficiary study methods;
  - a comparison of GEP2 and ESSPIN against the ICAI criteria;
  - a comparison of programme performance against log frames, drawing on conclusions from independent reviews and ICAI; and
  - additional programme-level recommendations arising from our evaluation.

## Beneficiary study methods
















2. The study of beneficiary perspectives used qualitative research to access, through local researchers, the voices and insights of a wide range of people. Our research team observed and conducted interviews at 20 primary and junior secondary schools and six Qur'anic schools, speaking to over 900 pupils, parents and other interested stakeholders. To reduce bias, the research design emphasised cross-checking data from varied sources and methods.
3. The researchers spent at least a day in each school to introduce themselves, have informal discussions and build rapport with the students and teachers. They played football, gave class presentations and chatted with small groups of students or teachers. Data gathering included participant observation, informal interviewing, in-depth interviewing and focus group discussions. The interviews were open-ended, with respondents encouraged to bring up areas they saw as relevant or important. The interviewers were all fluent Hausa speakers and came from a range of professions. They included teachers, girls' club mentors, medical professionals and students and faculty members of the Federal Teachers' College in Zaria. We employed a wide set of data collection methods that helped compare what people said (interview transcripts) with what they did (observation notes).

4. Using purposive sampling,<sup>59</sup> we selected respondents from a variety of beneficiary and stakeholder categories. These were girls, boys, disabled and nomadic children, parents, grandparents, teachers, head teachers, SBMC members and local traditional and religious leaders. Informed consent was a requirement for participation, on the basis that participation was voluntary and confidential. The interviewers needed both the child's and a parent's consent if the child was under 16 years old. Interviews continued with respondents from each category of people until the interviews no longer generated new information or raised new questions.

## Comparison of GEP and ESSPIN against ICAI criteria

5. One of the important features of DFID's support for education programmes in Nigeria is that there are two major programmes with different delivery partners. Each partner has different strengths, weaknesses, approaches, styles and performance. We believe, based on the evidence gathered, that Cambridge Education/ESSPIN is delivering on-the-ground more strongly than UNICEF/GEP. For clarity, we have provided a summary of the different performance assessments of each programme against the ICAI evaluation criteria in Figure A1.

**Figure A1: Comparison of GEP2 and ESSPIN against the ICAI criteria**

| ICAI Criteria | GEP   | ESSPIN  | Overall   |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| Overall       |  |  |  |
| Objectives    |  |  |  |
| Delivery      |  |  |  |
| Impact        |  |  |  |
| Learning      |  |  |  |

<sup>59</sup> Purposive sampling was used with each sub-group of participants, where individuals were selected on the basis of their knowledge of a particular topic rather than at random. Interviewing continued until saturation (that is, until no new information was gathered from the sub-group).

# Annex

6. When combined, the balance of scores for the two programmes is Amber-Red. The 2012 PCR of GEP confirmed the weak performance of the programme.<sup>60</sup> The next phase of GEP, currently to be funded until 2019, does not sufficiently tackle the weaknesses of the recent phase and give confidence that its delivery will be effective. ESSPIN has upgraded its approach and is more likely to be effective. Both programmes must pay more attention to value for money. DFID must secure consistent data gathering by both programmes to allow comparative studies to be undertaken with lessons being shared.

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<sup>60</sup> See Figures A2 and A3 in this Annex comparing the performance of GEP2 and ESSPIN.

# Annex

## Comparison of programme performance against log frames: conclusions from independent reviews and ICAI

7. The tables below compare the performance of GEP2 and ESSPIN against the outputs specified in their log frames, drawing on independent reviews and our own evidence. Because of the detail contained in the GEP2 Project Completion Review and in the ESSPIN Mid-Term Review, we have summarised the main points made in these reports in the middle column of each table.

**Figure A2: GEP2 – performance against the original log frame<sup>61</sup>**

| Output  | DFID Project Completion Review (PCR) Assessment   | ICAI Conclusion   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Establishment of credible sector plans</b><br/>(credible, costed, gender-sensitive, ten-year State education strategic plans and three-year State education sector operational plans – nine indicators with targets)<br/>£1.5 million expenditure to date</p>   | <p><b>Outputs ‘moderately exceeded expectation’.</b><br/>All project States have State education sector plans (SESPs) and State education sector operational plans (SESOPs). Concern remains about the quality of the plans, their statistical bases and projections (including EMIS software licensing problems and data quality issues). There is no evidence that plans have been implemented. Overall, some leverage on States' commitment to girls' education has been obtained.<br/>Issues identified with FTTSS: experiencing State payment delays and college capacity issues; not all recruits are rural poor.</p> | <p>SESPs were unrealistic with large funding gaps. SESOPs should have been updated annually and this was not achieved. No annual reviews have been conducted so there is no evidence of implementation. School censuses are not published. The FTTSS findings are confirmed by our review.<br/>Given this, the PCR assessment was generous.</p> |
| <p><b>Enhanced capacity for decentralised management</b><br/>(capacity built in State institutions, schools/ SBMCs and communities to deliver the SESOPs, particularly those aspects that impact positively on girls' participation in formal education – four indicators with targets)<br/>£0.5 million expenditure to date</p>  | <p><b>Outputs ‘moderately did not meet expectation’.</b><br/>Concerns remain about some of the qualitative aspects. More needs to be done to develop the capacities and understanding at local government levels. The project has done well to develop the interface at State Ministry of Education level and at school and community levels.<br/>Targets for LGEA desk officer training and for SBMC member training were not achieved. Targets for developing school plans were exceeded (but the plan template needed to be simplified).</p>   | <p>SBMCs have been set up but need continuing support and mentoring to be effective. The voices of women and children are not always heard. Many construction projects remain unfinished.<br/>We agree with the PCR which referred to the failure to evaluate the effect of the inputs.</p>   |
| <p><b>Effective systems for decentralised school management</b><br/>(provision of education of sound quality and relevance to the primary and junior secondary school cohort; recurrent budget support for SBMCs to address constraints on girls' education and improve the quality of learning – four indicators with targets)<br/>£11.7 million expenditure to date</p> | <p><b>Outputs ‘moderately did not meet expectation’.</b><br/>The leverage of State funds for school grants has not been achieved so SBMC funding is not sustained. GEP aimed to achieve effective quality in teaching and learning but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that this has been achieved.<br/>Target for providing textbooks was not achieved. School grants appear to be used for a higher proportion of refurbishment projects than targeted.<br/>Target for school-based teacher development was not achieved and this was the weakest aspect of GEP2 implementation.</p>                        | <p>SBMCs receive little or no financial support from States, limiting their effectiveness.<br/>We agree with the PCR that the failure to evaluate the effect of inputs was a serious weakness in the GEP2 delivery, particularly in respect of the teacher training programme, which did not succeed in delivering mentoring support.</p>       |

<sup>61</sup> DFID Project Completion Review – Girls Education Project II, first published in July 2011 and updated in July 2012.

# Annex

| Output   | DFID Project Completion Review (PCR) Assessment  | ICAI Conclusion   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Dissemination of best practice for girls' education</b><br/>(project monitoring and evaluation, communications and knowledge management, incorporating spot appraisals, impact assessment and dissemination of best practice – five indicators with targets)</p> <p>£0.7 million expenditure to date</p> | <p><b>Outputs 'moderately did not meet expectation'.</b></p> <p>Quarterly and annual reporting takes place. The log frame is not kept up to date, with different versions (and targets and indicators not agreed with DFID), which made monitoring difficult. Four spot appraisals were carried out by Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All and there were quality issues. A weak impact study was produced. A MLA survey collected national data but these were not analysed.</p> <p>UNICEF played to its strengths by publicising the project, advocating for girls' education.</p> <p>It would have been advisable to have had a much stronger focus on learning outcomes from inception and throughout the project.</p> | <p>The national MLA, supported by GEP2, was not completed on time. Quarterly monitoring reports are not published and do not contribute to dissemination. GEP does not publish project-specific documentation (e.g. reviews, evaluations).</p> <p>There is little or no sharing of good practice with ESSPIN.</p> <p>This output should measure the impact on others of the dissemination of information.</p> |

# Annex

**Figure A3: ESSPIN – performance against the February 2011 log frame<sup>62</sup>**

| Output  | DFID Mid-Term Review Assessment  | ICAI Conclusion  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Federal governance for basic education reform</b></p> <p>(Federal Government governance framework for enabling basic education reform strengthened – two indicators with targets)</p> <p>£6.2 million expenditure to date</p>   | <p>Uncertainties remain about how best to work at the Federal level. Major organisational change in the Federal Ministry of Education and its agencies proved difficult. The level of investment required to deliver this output should be reassessed relative to direct investment in service delivery by States.</p>   | <p>The Federal strategic plan (for 2011 to 2015) is a list of projects with ambitious timelines and there is no indication of the amount of funding required to deliver them. There are no performance indicators, making progress difficult to measure.</p> <p>It is unclear how work at the federal level will improve pupil learning in the short to medium term, or meet community needs for the building blocks of effective schools.</p> |
| <p><b>Governance and management of basic education services strengthened</b></p> <p>(State-level and local government-level governance and management of basic education strengthened – five indicators with sub-indicators and targets)</p> <p>£10.6 million expenditure to date</p> | <p>In ESSPIN's six States, there has been productive work on the development of medium-term sector strategies, the development of functional reviews and the production of the Annual School Census (which has been very effective and States are starting to fund).</p> <p>The benefits of this work have yet to be seen in terms of strategic priorities being reflected in budgets and budget releases. The likely sustainability of the reforms is variable across the six States.</p>   | <p>Pilot activities have been effective but uncertainties remain about the replication and roll-out phase in each of the six States. The extent of readiness of State education institutions (Ministries of Education, SUBEBs and LGEAs) to take on the stronger roles is unclear. The lack of effective public financial management and resource planning in education at State level remains a major issue.</p>                              |
| <p><b>School improvement</b></p> <p>(capacity of primary and junior secondary schools to provide an improved learning environment developed and sustained – four indicators with sub-indicators and targets)</p> <p>£28.1 million expenditure to date</p>                             | <p>ESSPIN's intensive investment in training, support and monitoring of its pilot schools is demonstrating that good practice in school development planning can become an integral part of school improvement (1,010 school development plans have been completed, with regular support from school Support Officers and School Improvement Teams). There is little evidence yet that school development plans will become an essential part of basic education planning, or that direct grants to schools will appear in State plans and budgets on a regular basis.</p> <p>A well-sequenced approach to head teacher development and support has been piloted but roll-out remains a challenge.</p> <p>The pilot of providing clean water and separate latrines for girls has been modest in relation to the scale of the challenge. Data need to be collected on impact.</p> | <p>Work in pilot schools has made significant progress, particularly with school planning and improvement. States are not, however, committed to fully resourcing replication and roll-out.</p> <p>There are problems with the ESSPIN plan. Some indicators have been dropped from the revised plan for 2012-14, creating monitoring problems. The impact of water and sanitation on enrolment and attendance should have been measured.</p>   |

<sup>62</sup> *Mid-Term Review of the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN)*, Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project for the State Level Programmes (IMEP), July 2011, <http://www.esspin.org/index.php/search/reports?q=mid+term+review>.



# Annex

| Output   | DFID Mid-Term Review Assessment  | ICAI Conclusion  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Community engagement and accountability</b></p> <p>(mechanisms for accountability strengthened through increased capacity of communities and civil society to support schools and articulate demand for inclusive, quality basic education services – five indicators with targets)</p> <p>£15.5 million expenditure to date</p> | <p>The establishment of active SBMCs has been an achievement of ESSPIN: SBMCs have been activated in 1,164 schools, of which 85% are functional; training has been provided to 19,800 SBMC members (including 7,000 female). There is evidence of positive results (e.g. improved teacher presence and pupil attendance and enrolment, harnessing local resources). Attention is needed with regard to representation and participation and to the use of downwards accountability mechanisms (such as LGEA and school 'report cards').</p> <p>Some 3,000 children have benefited from access to Qur'anic schools in the Northern States, supported by the training of community teachers, with an encouraging impact on pupils' learning.</p> <p>The extent to which ESSPIN is collecting, analysing and using sex-disaggregated data is inadequate and raises concerns about the degree to which interventions recognise and address gender differences.</p> <p>Progress in other areas has been difficult to measure due to lack of data.</p> | <p>SBMCs have been set up but need continuing support and mentoring to be effective. The voices of women and children are not always heard. Extending across each State will need much greater support from States and CSOs.</p> <p>Complex targets have proved to be hard to measure, leaving progress difficult to assess. Targets were not set for some indicators and then indicators were deleted from the latest revised plan.</p> |

**Figure A4: Additional programme-level recommendations**

8. This table contains more detailed and operational recommendations on particular programmes examined as part of the evaluation. We do not expect DFID to provide a formal management response to these recommendations.

| Issue   | Recommendation   |
|---|--|
| <b>Overall</b>  |  |
| 1. Without performance indicators and targets, it is difficult to be confident that the Federal Ministry of Education Four-Year Strategic Plan can influence the various agencies and bodies who are required to improve their performance. It will be equally difficult for DFID to assess the impact of its advice at the Federal level (see paragraph 2.43). | DFID and ESSPIN should urgently attempt to secure performance indicators and targets for the Federal Ministry of Education Four-Year Strategic Plan, taking into account the current baseline and the resources available. Regular monitoring should then enable progress to be assessed and adjustments to be made to both targets and actions.       |
| 2. Teacher attendance is a critical factor in support of pupil learning (see paragraph 2.46).   | Both GEP and ESSPIN must secure teacher attendance data from their States, in order that targeted action can be taken to secure adequate teacher attendance and thus regular support for pupils.   |
| 3. The current teacher workforce is not effective enough at supporting the required levels of pupil learning. DFID's new programme for teacher development will intervene in both GEP and ESSPIN programmes (see paragraph 2.53).   | DFID must establish a strong co-ordinating and implementing mechanism for the Teacher Development Programme, drawing in not only GEP and ESSPIN but also the participating States. Such a mechanism must seek to improve the rate at which teacher performance is upgraded in order that all schools can recruit and be staffed by effective teachers. |
| 4. The current audit arrangements for GEP do not provide detailed information on the financial and programme performance of UNICEF (see paragraph 2.70).  | DFID should consider commissioning from UNICEF a small number of detailed independent reviews, to include financial management, for specific aspects of the GEP programme (such as FTTSS) in order that a comprehensive picture can be compiled to underpin conclusions and recommendations for future actions.  |

# Annex

| Issue   | Recommendation   |
|---|--|
| <p>5. With two programmes operating in similar environments but with different approaches, there was a clear opportunity to assess the relative value for money of each programme in relation to specific initiatives, e.g. teacher training, SBMC operations and support for Qur'anic schools (see paragraph 2.72).</p>                      | <p>In order to be in a position to assess value for money in relation to specific comparable initiatives, DFID and the two programmes must design and collect relevant data from the start of activities within the programmes. The collected data can then be used to assess value for money and to make further recommendations for performance improvement.</p> |
| <p>6. School census data have only been published in the ESSPIN States. The lack of public data in the GEP States reduces transparency and restricts discussion of key issues, progress and solutions (see paragraph 2.76).</p>   | <p>Both programmes should increase their efforts to secure the widest dissemination and discussion of school census data. This publication can then inform local discussions, planning and implementation. The offer of technical advice should be made contingent on the publication of the information.</p>  |
| <p>7. On enrolment and pupil attendance, it was difficult to assess the effect of GEP and ESSPIN, as insufficient attention was paid to establishing the baseline at the start of activities. As a result, it was difficult to attribute the extent of the contribution of each programme to changes in performance (see paragraph 2.81).</p> | <p>The two programmes need to establish a baseline prior to the start of activities in each programme to improve pupil enrolment and attendance. The effect of programme activities can then be assessed and attribution to the programmes be more effectively carried out.</p>  |
| <p>8. The first cohort of graduates from the FTTSS will be posted to schools in 2012. It will be at least two years later before it will be feasible to assess the success of the scheme in providing a more stable teacher force for rural schools as well as acting as role models (see paragraph 2.101).</p>                               | <p>DFID should secure the resources and the initial baseline data for relevant rural schools, in order that a full evaluation of the FTTSS can take place in 2014. Based on this evaluation, lessons can be learned and good practice shared across States in Nigeria.</p>   |

# Abbreviations

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| CSO    | Civil Society Organisation  |
| CUBE   | Capacity for Universal Basic Education  |
| DFID   | Department for International Development  |
| ESSPIN | Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria – managed by a Cambridge Education-led consortium |
| FTTSS  | Female Trainee Teachers' Scholarship Scheme – managed by UNICEF/GEP                             |
| GEP    | Girls' Education Programme – managed by UNICEF  |
| ICAI   | Independent Commission for Aid Impact   |
| LGEA   | Local Government Education Area   |
| MDG    | Millennium Development Goal   |
| MLA    | Monitoring of Learning Achievement  |
| MTR    | Mid-Term Review   |
| NGN    | Nigerian Naira (local currency) <sup>63</sup>   |
| NGO    | Non-governmental organisation   |
| PCR    | Project Completion Review   |
| SBMC   | School-Based Management Committee   |
| SESOP  | State Education Sector Operational Plans  |
| SESP   | State Education Sector Project  |
| SMS    | Short Message Service (text messaging)  |
| SUBEB  | State Universal Basic Education Board   |
| TDP    | Teacher Development Programme   |
| UBEC   | Universal Basic Education Commission  |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development  |

<sup>63</sup> Exchange rates used in this report: £1 = NGN 252; \$1 = NGN 161 (on 18 July 2012).

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