

Quality Assurance

Introduction

School inspections provide crucial information for improving schools. Reports on what happens in schools call those providing education to account. This feeds demand for better education and strengthens backing for efforts to improve.

ESSPIN supports states in reforming fragmented and disjointed school inspection services. These reforms aim to avoid duplication and waste, and complement reforms in federal quality assurance.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

ESSPIN's approach is to introduce radical changes to help states move from inspection systems that check whether schools comply with laws, regulations and procedures to quality assurance systems that support schools in their efforts to deliver quality education and learning opportunities.

A three-pronged approach targets quality assurance at federal, state and institutional levels. The goal is to put in place quality assurance processes, at each level and in each institution, that complement each other.

Strategy

ESSPIN's strategy is to help states work within the framework of the new law transforming the Federal Inspection Service into the National Commission for Education Quality Assurance. ESSPIN helped draft the legislation setting up the Commission and is supporting the new Commission as it develops its strategic plan and trains inspectors. A quality assurance handbook, produced with ESSPIN's help, provides a solid foundation for reforming education inspection systems in states.

ESSPIN helps states put in place a single body responsible for quality assurance that complies with the new law. This may take the form of an educational quality assurance bureau or department. The aim is to ensure consistency in quality assurance inspections and reports, and capture data for education management information systems. The quality assurance bodies will also make sure stakeholders are fully informed of reports and recommendations.

esspin

Education Sector
Support Programme
in Nigeria



UKaid

from the Department for
International Development

Support to state quality assurance

ESSPIN helps states set up committees to draft legislation and operational guidelines for new or reorganised education quality assurance services. The committees align quality assurance inspection practices in their respective states with federal systems. Exchange visits between states encourage this.

As well as understanding the principles of quality assurance, those tasked with carrying out evaluations need operating guidelines and appropriate institutional frameworks in which to work. ESSPIN helps states to separate the responsibility for quality assurance and the responsibility for supporting schools. Quality assurance teams make recommendations for schools to improve and school support services help schools carry out the recommendations (see also ESSPIN Briefing Note 4: School Improvement and Teacher Professional Development).

ESSPIN helps strengthen the quality assurance skills of state inspectors through learning-by-doing tasks, mentoring and helping them develop work routines. This goes hand-in-hand with training for school inspectors, State Universal Basic Education Boards and State Ministries of Education in self evaluation and school development planning.

ESSPIN runs training courses for inspectors in writing reports. Short, clear reports in plain language help stakeholders – head teachers, teachers, School-Based Management Committees, parents, Local Government Education Authorities, State Universal Basic Education Boards and others with an interest in education – understand what is needed to improve schools and foster accountability.

Future challenges

The federal law establishing a National Agency for Educational Quality Assurance consolidates reforms and paves the way for strategic planning and training for quality assurance in education. The challenge is to maintain the momentum and act on strategies and plans.

The challenges vary from state to state depending on political support. They include overcoming passivity and dependency, changing mindsets that regard inspection as a low-status function, putting in place quality assurance systems, and helping organisations strengthen their skills in preparing and distributing reports.

ESSPIN builds on progress by leading discussions on how information from inspections can best be used to drive school improvement, by feeding data into education management information systems where it can be used by school advisory services for example.

ESSPIN guiding principles for quality assurance in education

Establish a single quality standard

Make standards, indicators and processes open and transparent

Combine school self evaluations with external evaluation

Include all learners

Ensure findings are valid, reliable and consistent

Ensure findings contribute to school improvement

Make quality assurance reports publicly available

Use evaluations to develop state policy, plans and training programmes to improve schools
