

Access and Equity

Introduction

Inequalities in educational opportunities stem from the way education is organised, policies, unwritten rules, and the attitudes of both those who provide education and of the parents, families and communities who send their children to be educated. For example, facilities for children with disabilities are limited, and prevailing attitudes mean that far more boys than girls acquire post-primary education in the North, whereas more boys drop out in parts of the South East.

All states working with ESSPIN commit to improving access and equity in basic education, and to reducing gender inequality. All states, to a greater or lesser extent, involve civil society in making plans to address access and equity, integrate gender issues in Medium Term Sector Strategies and use data disaggregated by sex in annual education performance reports.

What is ESSPIN's approach?

ESSPIN takes a cross cutting and exploratory approach at all levels in the education system. The aim is to find ways to reduce inequality and give all children opportunities for education. State governments are key partners in identifying areas where changes can be made.

Strategy

The first step in developing a strategy to address access and equity is to understand the issues – what educational opportunities children have, and whether or not all children have equal opportunities. ESSPIN therefore supports the development of Education Management Information Systems at federal and state level and the gathering of relevant data on schools and the children who attend them. A key component of this work is to help ministries of education conduct a comprehensive national Annual School Census covering public, private and faith based schools. To get an even better understanding of school attendance, ESSPIN also assesses how many children attend schools outside the formal education system, as is particularly the case in northern Nigeria (see also ESSPIN Briefing Note 8: Islamiyya, Quranic and Tsangaya Education).

This information provides an overview of the extent to which government, the private sector, religious groups, non-government and civil society organisations collectively meet or do not meet the educational needs of different groups of children. ESSPIN then works with the various education providers to find ways to fill significant gaps.

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Education Sector
Support Programme
in Nigeria



UKaid

from the Department for
International Development

Support for access and equity

Planning and costing

As reliable and accurate data becomes available, ESSPIN is helping states to develop strategies, for example, to improve school attendance of girls and children who are currently excluded such as those with disabilities. ESSPIN guides government staff through the process of analysing data on the enrolment of girls, deciding which schemes to get girls into schools and keep them there have been successful, and working out detailed plans and costs for scaling up successful approaches and feeding them into Medium Term Sector Strategies.

Cash transfers

ESSPIN is working with Kano State Government to develop a scheme of cash payments to families to improve girls' attendance at school. ESSPIN helps states develop ways to involve communities in choosing recipient families for cash transfers and in checking that girls are in fact attending school.

Inclusive education

ESSPIN is working with state governments and civil society to give excluded children better educational opportunities. The starting point is to guide states through the process of gathering information on the number of children with disabilities in a sample of Local Government Education Authority districts and to catalogue the types of disabilities. Based on this research and analysis, ESSPIN then helps teams of government and non-government staff to train teachers and school administrators in more inclusive approaches to education.

Future challenges

Planning, accountability and capacity are significant challenges to access and equity in education in Nigeria. ESSPIN needs to show both government and the public that collecting and analysing data, using the information to make plans and using plans to decide where to allocate the education budget, pays off in better access and equity in education.

Better planning and budgeting will only result in better education if those organisations responsible for putting plans into action, governments, the private sector and civil society, are systemically strengthened and develop the necessary skills. The challenge here is to help build capacity throughout the education sector.

ESSPIN support for access and equity in education

Collecting robust data on the current situation:	Annual School Census Censuses of Islamiyya, Quranic and Tsangaya schools	Information on unregistered private schools Annual education performance reviews	Surveys of public attitudes to state, Islamiyya, Quranic and Tsangaya schools Analyses of data
Using information in planning and costing Medium Term Sector Strategies:	Helping states turn access and equity objectives in education sector plans into detailed Medium Term Sector Strategy work plans and budgets	Meeting with private schools and private school associations to discuss the roles of public and private education, and to identify issues private schools wish to raise with state governments	With the Partnership for Transforming Health Systems 2 (PATHS2) creating opportunities for civil society organisations experienced in gender policy issues, working with government and results-based planning to take part in state Medium Term Sector Strategy planning processes and supporting their involvement
Identifying ways to target excluded groups of children:	With the State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) advocating for mainstreaming gender issues in Medium Term Sector Strategies	Developing check lists for government staff to see how effectively state Medium Term Sector Strategies address gender inequalities	Guiding use of annual education sector performance reviews to reduce gender inequalities
