

Addressing Teacher Absenteeism in Edo State

Summary of Findings

*Presented to the World Bank
January 2013*



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Prepared by Reboot

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Acronyms

APER	Annual Performance Evaluation Report
ASUSS	Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools
CIE	Chief Inspectors of Education
DICT	Directorate of Information and Communication Technology
DPRS	Department of Planning, Research, and Statistics (within Ministry of Education)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAPSS	Harmonized Public Service Salary Structure
LGA	Local Government Area
MDA	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCE	National Certificate of Education
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
NUT	Nigerian Union of Teachers
PPEB	Post Primary Education Board
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
TES	Teacher Executive Scheme
TESCOM	Teaching Service Commission
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UPE	Universal Primary Education
ZIE	Zonal Inspectors of Education

Executive Summary

Teacher absenteeism is a critical challenge for the education sector in Edo State and has recently come under the public spotlight. Repeated absences lead to fragmented learning experiences for students and pose a significant hindrance to improving education outcomes in the state.

Yet there is a lack of sufficient and reliable data to help determine appropriate measures to address the issue. Discussions on teacher absenteeism have been dominated by government officials and the public while the perspectives of teachers themselves remain largely absent. To better understand the factors that lead to teacher absenteeism, and how it may be addressed, the World Bank's Social Accountability team commissioned this research study.

This publication is the result of a study that sought to engage a diverse set of stakeholders to understand teacher absenteeism from multiple vantage points. This study included a two-week design research investigation in urban, peri-urban, and rural locations spanning three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Edo. Field research was conducted in seven primary and secondary schools and in the communities around them, and included the

perspectives of teachers, communities, and state and non-state education sector stakeholders.

Initially, this study also set out to evaluate whether citizen reporting on teacher attendance would be an appropriate mechanism for addressing teacher absenteeism, and for promoting social accountability in the education sector. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, observed community capacity to objectively assess teacher performance, and structural challenges that impacted teacher performance, it was determined that citizen reporting, as initially conceived, would not be the best avenue for improving teacher performance.

In response to the initial prompt to better understand and address teacher absenteeism in Edo, this report presents some preliminary analysis on structural issues which also may merit further examination by education sector stakeholders.

The Teacher Experience in Edo

Understanding the issue of teacher absenteeism necessitates, first and foremost, understanding the teacher experience. At the heart of teacher absenteeism is low teacher morale, which itself is driven by many factors that relate to different aspects of teachers' careers.

In Edo, teaching is widely perceived as a career for second-rate civil servants. Those that choose it do so not out of desire, but out of necessity or convenience. Teacher training, both preparatory and in-service training, is ad-hoc, uncoordinated, and perceived as inequitably distributed. There is a gap between theory and practice in the responsibility for training, leaving teachers scrambling for information, resources, and organized support.

Teachers perceive policies and processes for determining school assignments to be opaque and stressful. Assignments do not always consider teacher preferences or school needs, and the management of postings constrains teachers' involvement in their assigned communities and their overall morale.

In the classrooms, teachers face challenges such as difficult teacher-student ratios, poor school infrastructure, variable student interest in education, and a lack of basic resources. Inconsistent enforcement of attendance and tardiness policies allow teacher absenteeism.

Teachers are pleased about recent reforms in compensation value and reliability, but historical factors and perceived inequity mean compensation structures have been ineffective in motivating performance. Thus, some teachers pursue supplemental income. Teachers have few opportunities or merit-based career advancement. Given the civil service's fixed promotion schedule, there are few incentives for above-average performance.

Processes for monitoring teachers and evaluating their performance are also suboptimal, as inspections and evaluations processes are ultimately of little material consequence. Edo's education system is structured to collect data about teachers but not to act on such data.

Although they face many challenges in their work, teachers lack effective management and support mechanisms, and have few channels for communicating with the system they work within. School administrators and inspectors have little formal incentive to invest in teachers, and few means to surface and address their grievances. Teachers' unions are seen as largely toothless, and unable to adequately advocate for teachers' interests.

Historical & Institutional Context

As teachers' careers are defined by numerous stages and are influenced by multiple actors, it is useful to trace the teacher journey against the historical, social, and political factors that influence teacher performance.

Since the 1960s, Nigerian education policy has pursued the admirable international goal of education for all in primary schools. These policies have been ineffectively operationalized, however, leading to overcrowded classrooms and the recruitment of untrained teachers. Due to these shortcomings, the profession has come to be viewed as an 'all-comers job', negatively influencing public perceptions of teachers. Many teachers, therefore, feel unsupported, underappreciated, and pressured by unrealistic expectations.

These challenges have been compounded by a highly fragmented education system. Numerous education sector actors wield significant influence over the day-to-day experiences of teachers in Edo State. The launch of the Universal Basic Education program in 2004 created new education boards to implement

the extension of free and compulsory education to junior secondary schools, but did not adequately clarify the distinction between these boards and their predecessors, which now operate in parallel. This has led to confusion around roles and responsibilities for the education system's many actors.

In addition, a broader set of structural challenges afflict Edo's education sector. These include a disconnect between people who formulate policies and those who are affected by them, a culture of patronage, limited accountability mechanisms, and ineffective communications.

While Governor Adams Oshiomhole and his administration is to be applauded for its education reform efforts, the manner in which it has approached teacher performance has alienated teachers and neglected key structural challenges that give rise to teacher absenteeism. To sustainably improve teacher performance, education sector stakeholders may need to address a broader range of systemic challenges that contribute to teachers' poor performance.

Issues for Further Exploration

To improve staff performance, it is first critical to improve staff morale and management systems. Human resource theory has proven that individuals perform at their best when their unique worth and professional contributions are valued. Recent events in Edo suggest that teachers and school inspectors feel neither at present. Without addressing these fundamental issues, it may be highly challenging to substantively improve teacher attendance and performance.

As a result, this report puts forward five issue areas which the State may wish to consider as it seeks long-term solutions to addressing teacher absenteeism. These issues relate to teachers' frustration with the current assignment system, lack of accountability in school inspection processes, negative portrayal of teachers by the State, perceived inequity in the distribution of investments in schools, and the lack of ability by inspectors to accurately evaluate schools and teachers.

It is reasonable to expect that addressing these issues could help improve teacher morale and management processes, which, in turn, impacts teacher attendance and performance.

While this report offers preliminary analysis of how these issues might be addressed through new systems or organizational processes, it also recognizes that any reform efforts in each of the identified areas would require deeper examination and further policy and programmatic efforts. Given the interest of the Edo State Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) in supporting education reforms, opportunities to leverage new technologies in these efforts have also been highlighted.

Ultimately, the authors believe that to successfully and sustainably address teacher absenteeism in Edo requires a closer examination of the factors that impact teacher performance. Addressing these factors may require a range of interventions from stakeholders across the education service delivery chain.

About the Project

This study aims to better understand the factors that contribute to teacher absenteeism in Edo State and identify opportunities to address the challenge.



Teacher absenteeism is a critical challenge in Edo State, yet there is a lack of sufficient and reliable data to help determine appropriate measures to address the issue. Discussions on teacher absenteeism have been dominated by government officials and the public; the perspectives of teachers themselves have remained largely absent from the conversations. To better understand the factors that lead to teacher absenteeism, and how it may be addressed, the World Bank Nigeria commissioned this research study.

Initially, this study also set out to evaluate whether citizen reporting on teacher attendance would be an appropriate and useful mechanism for addressing teacher absenteeism, and for promoting social accountability in the education sector in Edo.

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, observed

community capacity to objectively report on teacher performance, and structural challenges that impacted teacher performance, it was determined that citizen reporting, as initially conceived, would not be the best avenue for assessing and improving teacher performance.

In response to the initial prompt to better understand and address teacher absenteeism in Edo, this report presents some preliminary analysis on structural issues which may merit further examination by education sector stakeholders.

Given the interest and capacity of Edo's Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) in supporting education reforms, opportunities to leverage new technologies in these efforts have also been highlighted.

Methodology

To remain focused, the team grounded findings in the context of their potential impacts on teacher performance. Reboot employed a design research approach to gain a contextualized understanding of the teacher experience in Edo State and of the stakeholders within the state education system. Using data collection and analysis methods adapted from the fields of ethnography, journalism, design, and systems thinking, the team was able to identify the major pain points and obstacles that inhibited teacher attendance. Specific research methods included in-context depth interviews, group interviews, participant observation, artifact collection, and key informant interviews.

A team of five researchers—two Reboot researchers, one World Bank staff member, one local facilitator, and one representative from the Edo DICT—sought to engage a diverse set of stakeholders to understand teacher absenteeism from multiple vantage points. The research prioritized three groups of stakeholders: teachers (from both primary and secondary schools), communities (parents, students, community leaders, and other community members), and state and non-state education sector stakeholders (officials in policy, operational, and school-level management roles, and union leaders).

Respondents were recruited through referrals and snowball sampling. The 88-person sample was heavily weighted towards teachers. The team spoke with 32 teachers, 15 MoE staff (7 headquarters-based, 8 field-

based), 6 school-level administrators, 4 education parastatals staff, and 2 union leaders. Additionally, the team interviewed 12 parents, 6 community leaders or elders, and 6 students. Key informant interviews were conducted with 2 Nigerian academics studying the country's education system and teachers' issues; 2 World Bank staff managing education and ICT-related programming in Washington, DC, and Abuja; and 1 US-based teachers' rights advocate.

Contact details for government respondents that participated in the research is available at this link: <http://bit.ly/TM6Ruc>.

Fieldwork was conducted in urban, peri-urban, and rural locations spanning three Local Government Areas: Ikpoba Okha, Egor, and Ovia North-East. The team visited three primary and four secondary schools, conducted research both in the schools and in the communities around them. The sites were a representative mix of high-, average-, and low-performing schools, and selected both on the recommendation of the State Ministry of Education and through referrals from local residents based on desired characteristics stated by the research team.

The team was based in Benin City and conducted nightly synthesis sessions to analyze and draw connections between collected data, revise research questions, and reflect on process and adjust methods as necessary.



Research Challenges

The project team faced several challenges throughout the investigation. These included:

- **Logistics**
Time and logistical constraints prevented the team from conducting research in riverine locations, which typically have the highest rates of teacher absenteeism.
- **Access**
The team was only able to gain consent to speak with four staff on the state education boards which manage the public school system. Given their role in teacher management, the team feels this is an insufficient sample.
- **Materials**
The documents the team was able to collect from education sector actors were mostly blank templates. The research would have benefited from access to and greater analysis of completed documents, such as Annual Performance Evaluation Reports, schools' monthly returns, and inspectors' school visit reports. Completed forms, however, were often unavailable to the research team.
- **Timing**
Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the investigation was conducted during a particularly tense period in Edo. Four days before the fieldwork commenced, the Governor fired 20 teachers who were found absent from their posts during three unannounced school visits. During the first week of fieldwork, 41 school inspectors were similarly fired for negligence of duty. As such, the team observed no challenges with teacher punctuality or attendance during fieldwork. Many teachers were reluctant to freely share their experiences as teachers during such a sensitive period. This affected the team's experiences with respondents, and thus, our findings.

Despite the challenges, the team does not feel that they significantly compromised the quality or validity of its research findings. To the extent that we could, the team tried to verify collected data through multiple sources and divergent viewpoints, and to supplement perspectives that were under-represented in our primary data with secondary research.

For additional work that may build upon this investigation, the team highly recommends conducting similar research in riverine locations

(and other hardship postings for teachers); greater analysis of key, completed documents related to teacher and school management; further consultations with the education boards, particularly with mid-level and field-based staff across functional areas; and additional research of the same nature in periods where state-teacher relations are more normal.

Introduction

Teacher absenteeism is a critical challenge in Edo State that is deeply intertwined with broader policy considerations and systemic challenges in the education sector.

Teacher absenteeism is a critical challenge for the education sector in Edo State and has recently come under the public spotlight. Repeated absences lead to fragmented learning experiences for students and pose a significant hindrance to improving education outcomes in the state.

To the Oshiomhole administration's credit, it has spearheaded numerous reforms targeted at improving the management processes for public education. But several such initiatives have placed culpability on teachers themselves without addressing the contextual challenges that curb their performance. Additionally, the perspectives of actual teachers are often absent from public and policy discussions about teacher absenteeism.

Poor teacher morale and experience, which have significantly diminished over time through institutional teacher management challenges and broader policy initiatives, are at the heart of teacher absenteeism. Since the 1960s, Nigerian education policy has pursued the admirable international goal of education for all in primary schools. These policies have been ineffectively operationalized, however, leading to overcrowded classrooms and the recruitment of untrained teachers. Due to these shortcomings, the profession has come to be viewed as an 'all-comers job', negatively influencing public perceptions of teachers. Many teachers, therefore, feel unsupported, underappreciated, and pressured by unrealistic expectations.

These challenges have been compounded by a highly fragmented education system. The launch of the Universal Basic Education program in 2004 created new education boards to implement the

extension of free and compulsory education to junior secondary schools, but never clarified the distinction between these boards and their predecessors, which now operate in parallel. The convoluted roles and responsibilities of the education system's many actors has led to confusion over which body is responsible for paying teachers' salaries. Inconsistent compensation has forced many teachers to seek alternate sources of income, perpetuating the notion—even among teachers—that teaching is a part-time profession.

In Edo, recently enacted reforms ensure that teachers receive their salaries on time. Regardless of this improvement, economic growth and urbanization have shifted perceptions of what a decent salary is and where people want to live. Teachers are often less willing to take up rural and riverine posts, even though a centrally planned teacher assignment system means they have no agency in where they are posted. Many also still maintain the jobs and pursuits they sought previously, under less certain times.

In sum, the factors that influence teacher performance are deeply intertwined with broader policy considerations and systemic challenges in the education sector. This report probes these factors in greater detail, exploring the reasons for teacher absenteeism through an analysis of the teacher experience, institutional landscape, and policy context. It also outlines five issues which Edo State may wish to consider as it seeks to sustainably address teacher absenteeism and improve teacher performance.



The Teacher Experience

Poor morale is at the heart of teacher absenteeism.

*Understanding the education system's effects
on the teacher experience helps explain why.*



Understanding the issue of teacher absenteeism necessitates, first and foremost, understanding the teacher experience. In Edo State, teachers' careers are defined by numerous stages and are influenced by multiple actors. By tracing the teacher journey against current political and social forces in Edo, several opportunities to address teacher absenteeism (see page 52) begin to emerge.

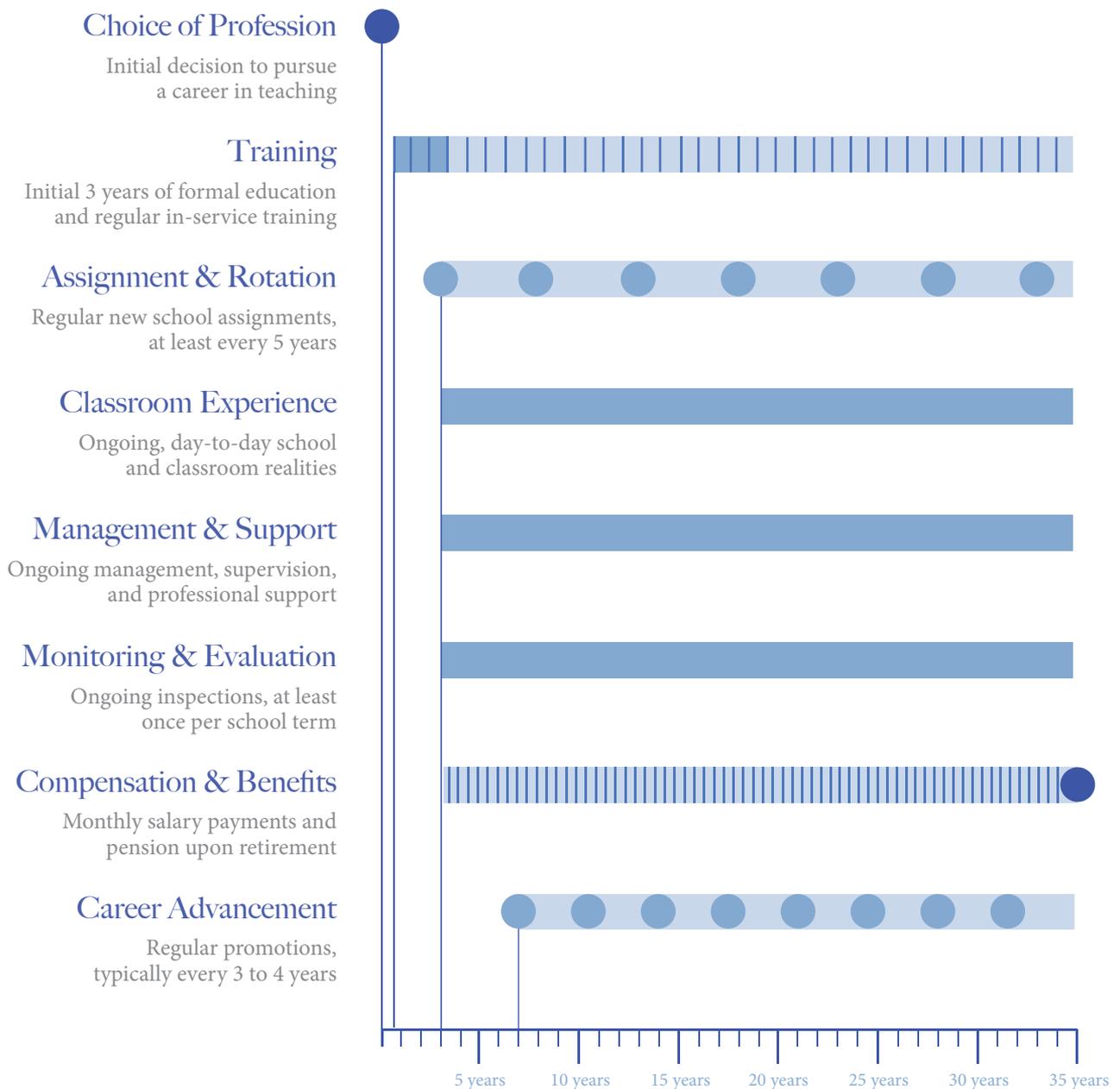
In selecting their profession, teachers are influenced by incentives both hard (e.g. competitive wages) and soft (e.g. contributing to social development). But once the decision is made to enter the field, the day-to-day experiences of teachers in Edo are largely determined by external actors:

Actors that Impact Teacher Experience

- **Education Boards—State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Post Primary Education Board (PPEB)**—that employ, deploy, and pay teachers;
- **Students, families, and communities** who use, care about, and benefit from the education system;
- **Principals and head teachers** who manage and supervise teachers daily;
- **Ministry of Education (MoE)** which sets policies that impact teachers, monitors and inspects teacher performance, and impacts their working environment in significant ways.

Teacher Experience Journey

Many factors shape the teacher experience. This diagram presents the key events or stages of a teacher's career, as well as its frequency and/or duration. Each event is an interaction between teachers and the education system; whether infrequent, regular, or ongoing, each one impacts—and is an opportunity to improve—the teacher experience.



Choice of Profession

Teaching is widely perceived as a career for second-rate civil servants. Those that choose it do so not out of desire, but out of necessity or convenience.

As a profession, teaching lacks respect in both the public eye and among teachers themselves.

Historical factors and institutional failures in teacher management have led to negative public perceptions of teachers.

Despite these factors, becoming a teacher requires a significant investment of time and money.

To achieve the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) requires three years and approximately NGN 180,000. This investment leaves teachers feeling a sense of professional lock-in that binds them to their job even if their interest or motivation wanes.

Despite the negative image, increasingly competitive compensation and benefits, job security, and a relatively light workload still attract many to teaching. The work schedule, and lack of oversight, allows teachers to maintain secondary sources of income or women to easily balance home and career obligations, reinforcing the long-held public view that teaching can be a part-time profession.



Training

Teacher training, both preparatory and in-service training, is ad-hoc, uncoordinated, and perceived as inequitably distributed. There is a gap between theory and practice in the responsibility for training, leaving teachers scrambling for information, resources, and organized support.

There are several actors involved in teacher training in Edo. A lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities between them leads to often overlapping and uncoordinated efforts. Accredited institutions of higher learning provide the minimum requirements for entering the teaching profession: either the NCE or a Bachelor of Science in Education. But once they enter the profession, the processes for in-service training are less clear.

Different actors at the education boards—the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB)—and at the Educational Resource Center (ERC) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) claim varying degrees of responsibility for planning and executing training, although federal policy only mandates the ERC to

organize training. Other regional and national actors such as the Niger Delta Development Commission and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) also provide additional support.

Uncoordinated training efforts means teachers' grasp of pedagogical techniques and subject matter is highly uneven. When new curricula are introduced, many teachers have limited opportunity to attend trainings, leaving them ill-prepared to teach new content.

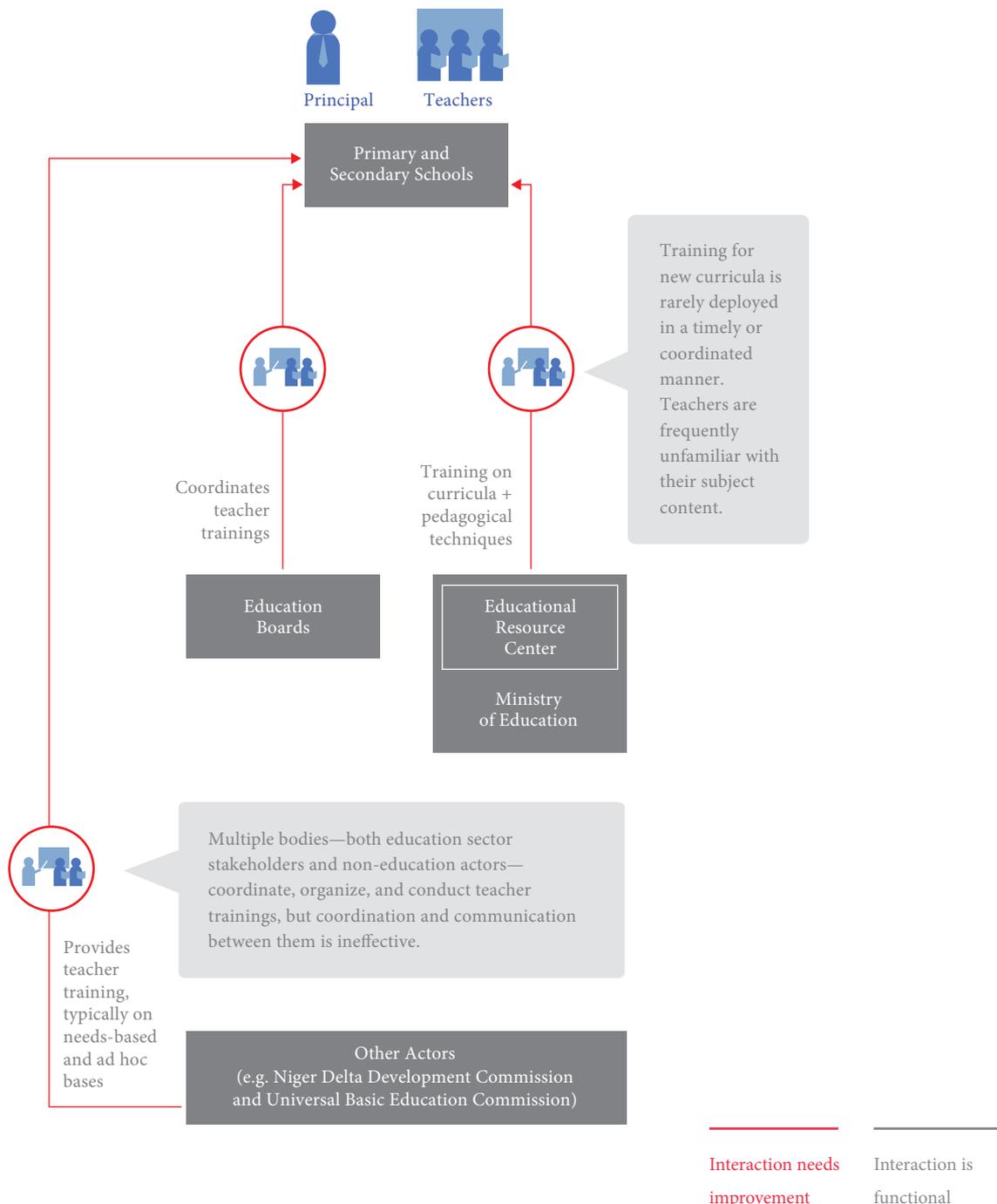
Teachers that attend training sessions are well compensated, a practice that may distort the effectiveness and inclusiveness of trainings. Teachers can receive NGN 7,000 to 10,000 to attend a multi-day training, incentivizing teachers to petition their principals or head teachers to attend, but leaving out others who are not as well-connected. In our sample, teachers in rural areas were far less likely to have attended trainings, as were secondary school teachers due to tighter resource constraints for post-primary education.

“I am studying the new English Literature scheme and texts at night, with a dictionary at my side.”

*Secondary School Teacher
in Urban School*

Teacher Training Mechanisms

There are several actors involved in teacher training. A lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities leads to overlapping and uncoordinated efforts.

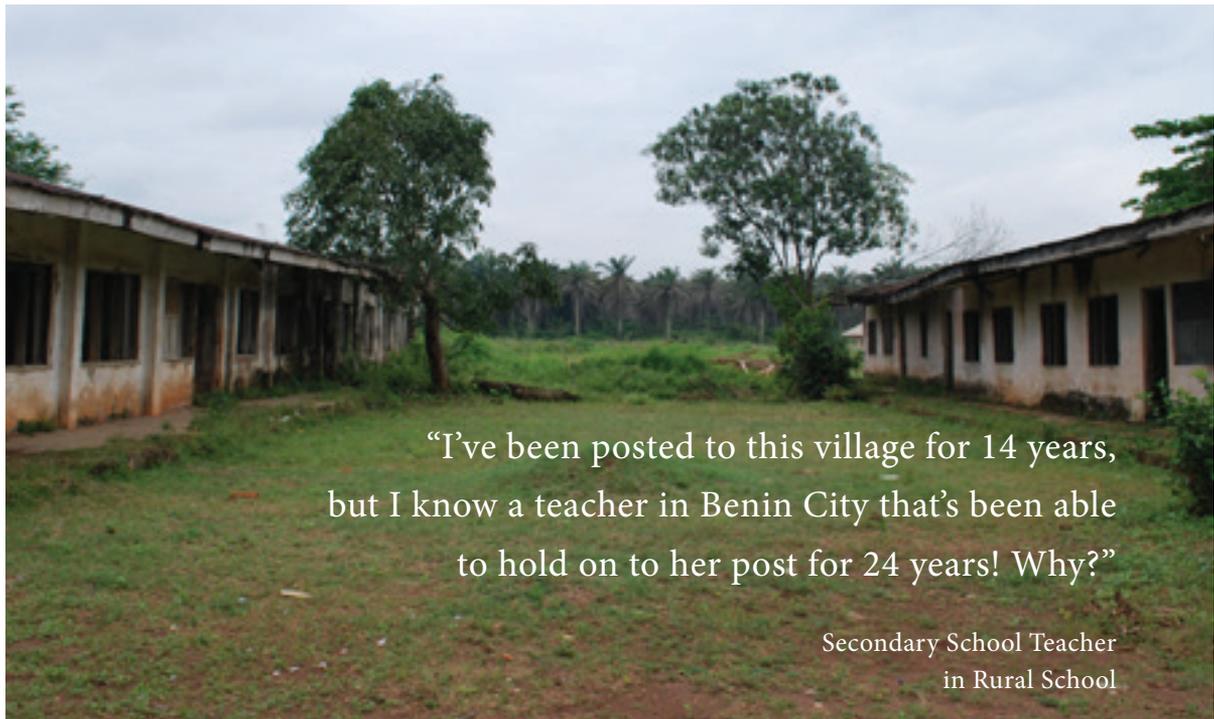


Assignment & Rotation

Teachers perceive policies and processes for determining school assignments to be opaque and stressful. Assignments do not always consider teacher preferences or school needs, and the management of postings constrains teachers' involvement in their assigned communities and their overall morale.

Nigeria uses a planned deployment system approach to teacher assignment and deployment, where education authorities, and the education boards in particular, centrally plan and execute teacher postings. The current process, however, leads to highly uneven allocation of teachers in the state and leaves teachers feeling like commodities in a massive, impersonal system.

This research showed that teacher assignment and deployment in Edo uses few formal considerations in practice. While the education boards admit they would like to consider factors such as unique



“I’ve been posted to this village for 14 years, but I know a teacher in Benin City that’s been able to hold on to her post for 24 years! Why?”

Secondary School Teacher
in Rural School

snapshot: *teacher deployment systems*

Centrally planned teacher deployment systems are common in many African countries.

A key challenge associated with such systems is their frequent inability to adequately staff rural schools or ensure teachers posted to rural schools perform to expectations.

The most common approach to addressing this challenge is to offer additional financial incentives for teachers in hardship postings. Some countries, however, are incorporating teacher preferences into the teacher assignment process.

Some have allowed districts and/or schools to advertise posts and select their own teachers, which typically result in better inter-district coordination, fewer unfilled posts, and reduced teacher absenteeism, but also an uneven distribution of the most qualified teachers.

Source: Mulkeen, Aidan.
Teachers in Anglophone Africa.
Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010.

school needs (e.g. each school's monthly reports indicate the subjects in which teachers are requested), teachers' past deployments (e.g. location, duration), and teachers' personal factors (e.g. marital status, children), they say it is too difficult to do so. The number of criteria they would need to track and incorporate is overwhelming for their staff.

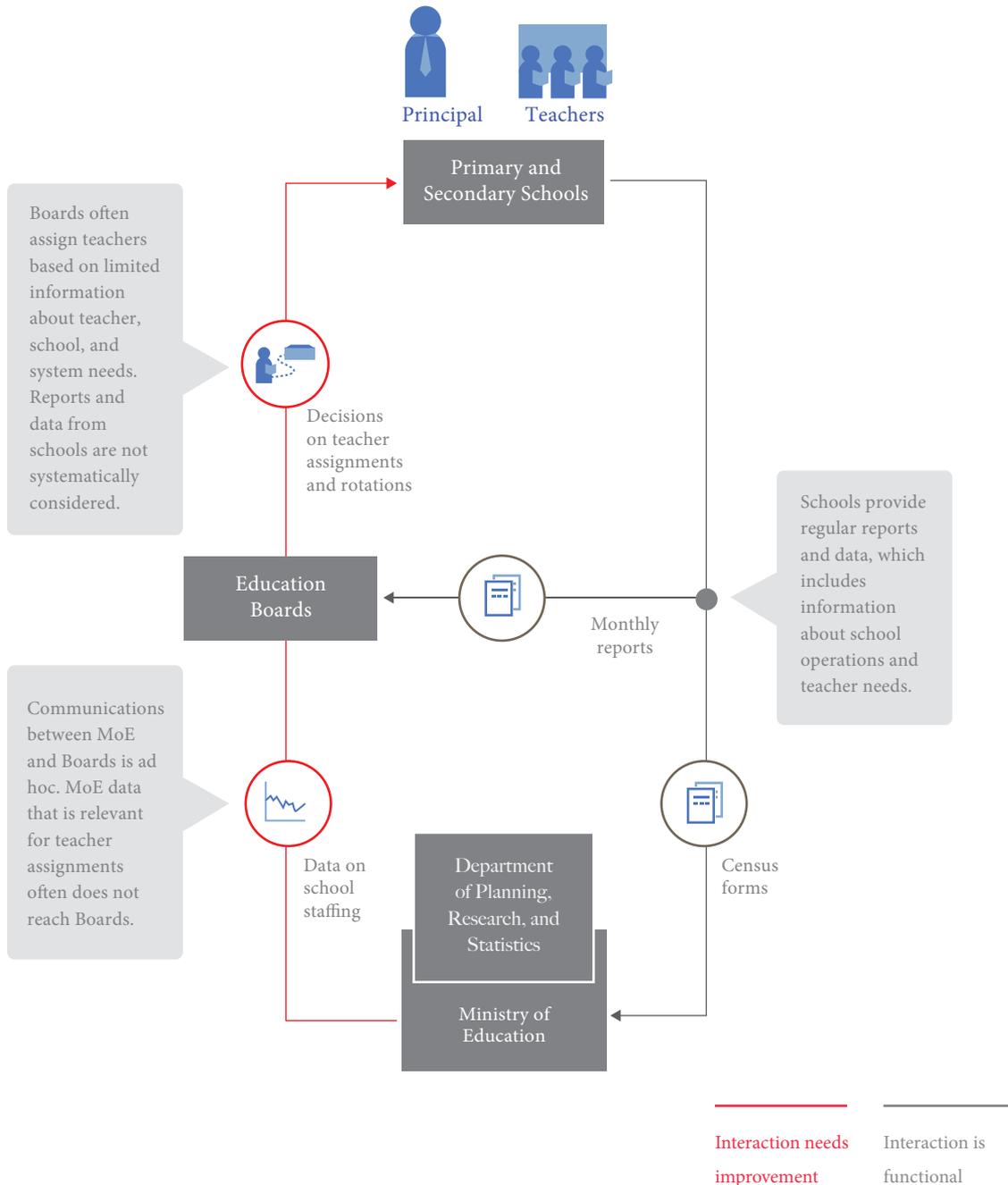
Teacher input is not solicited in the assignment process, leading to a sense of powerlessness and transience. Rural postings are largely perceived to be punitive, as teachers in rural areas often feel that both their schools and they themselves have been forgotten. Schools that are physically distant from MoE have decreased ability to petition for resources, and teachers in rural postings have been known to be left there for far longer than their required five years; in our research, we met one teacher that had been in a rural posting for 14 years and was extremely unhappy. Yet other teachers desire rural postings, but have no opportunity to express their preference.

Indeed, duration of teacher deployments are inconsistent and it is widely believed that the system can be gamed. When teachers receive a reassignment, principals or head teachers can lobby the education boards to keep them, but there is no clear protocol for doing so. Teachers thus feel pressured to curry favor with school administrators, sometimes with gifts, to maintain desirable posts.

Current teacher deployment processes are stressful. Teachers are required to report to their new postings within two days of learning of a new assignment, and must begin teaching within a week. Frequent redeployment causes a sense of resignation to dealing with the inconveniences of being a civil servant. Reassignments can occur at any time in the school year, and often disrupt teachers' personal lives and reduce incentives to invest in their assigned schools.

Teacher Assignment Process

Current teacher assignment and deployment protocols often neglects both the needs of schools and the larger education system—as captured through various information sources—and the preferences of teachers themselves.



Classroom Experience

In the classrooms, teachers face challenges such as difficult teacher-student ratios, poor school infrastructure, variable student interest in education, and a lack of basic resources. Inconsistent enforcement of attendance and tardiness policies allow teacher absenteeism.

Many schools and classrooms visited as part of this study underscored the difficulty of being a good teacher in Edo today. Factors such as high student-to-teacher ratios, poor facilities, low student and family interest, and a dearth of basic resources like textbooks, combine to wear down teachers' resolves.

The research team observed as many as 100 students to one teacher in a classroom, making it extremely difficult for teachers to teach. In other schools, even if an appropriate student-teacher ratio is maintained for each class, a lack of usable classrooms means classes are merged into one larger class that several teachers co-teach. There may be 100 fourth-grade students with four assigned teachers. In response, some teachers teach in shifts, which also leads to high student-teacher ratios.



Poor school infrastructure and classroom facilities also demotivate teachers, who claim that they are the only civil servants that have to work in such dilapidated environments, where they and their pupils get rained upon. While they recognize the Governor's efforts in school renovations, teachers and school administrators lack understanding of how schools are chosen for improvement. While they recognize and accept that repairs are based on kinship, not need, valid and frequent petitions for improved conditions that go unmet are demoralizing.

Among students and families, the value placed on education is variable, particularly in rural areas. In agricultural communities, many students frequently miss school for family responsibilities such as farming or working on market days. The pervasive, negative stereotypes of teachers mean that students and their families do not always respect them, further impairing teachers' classroom experience.

When teaching schemes are updated, the supporting (and often expensive) teaching materials mandated for use by the MoE are not always distributed, leaving teachers scrambling to teach new, unfamiliar subjects without the required materials. Unsurprisingly, teachers perceive MoE and the curricula as out of touch with classroom realities. In some schools, teachers and principals may buy their own books and supplies to fill the void.

Teachers are expected to sign in every morning when they arrive at school, but school administrators do not enforce accurate attendance log inputs, and negative consequences for tardiness were until recently rare. It is not uncommon to see, on any given day, all teacher sign-ins at a given school recorded as "7:30 am". Some administrators grant teachers extra leave time and do not record it in the attendance log.

Some teachers justify tardiness by claiming their travel to and from school is part of the workday. Others do not understand why they must be in school when they are not scheduled to be in classroom.

**“Because of my relationship with the principal,
I received three days of leave off the books
to take my son to university in Lagos.”**

Secondary School Teacher
in Urban School

“SUBEB and PPEB assign and pay us, principals and head teachers supervise us, CIEs and ZIEs monitor us, NUT and ASUSS collect dues from us, but who listens to us?”

Primary School Teacher
in Rural School

Management & Support

Teachers lack effective management and support mechanisms, and have few channels for communicating with the system they work within. School administrators and inspectors have little formal incentive to invest in teachers, and few means to surface and address their grievances. Teachers’ unions are seen as largely toothless.

Teachers lack functional channels through which they can interface with the MoE. The Ministry’s inspectors—Chief Inspectors of Education (CIEs) and Zonal Inspectors of Education (ZIEs)—are the main link between MoE and individual schools and teachers. Due to several factors, including unrealistic inspection schedules and lack of feedback, many are disengaged from their work.

Providing professional support to teachers is part of school inspectors’ responsibilities, but few actually fulfill this duty. During visits, inspectors’ teacher-related tasks include observing their teaching, examining their logs and notes, and providing tailored feedback. In reality, interactions with teachers are usually brief and cursory.

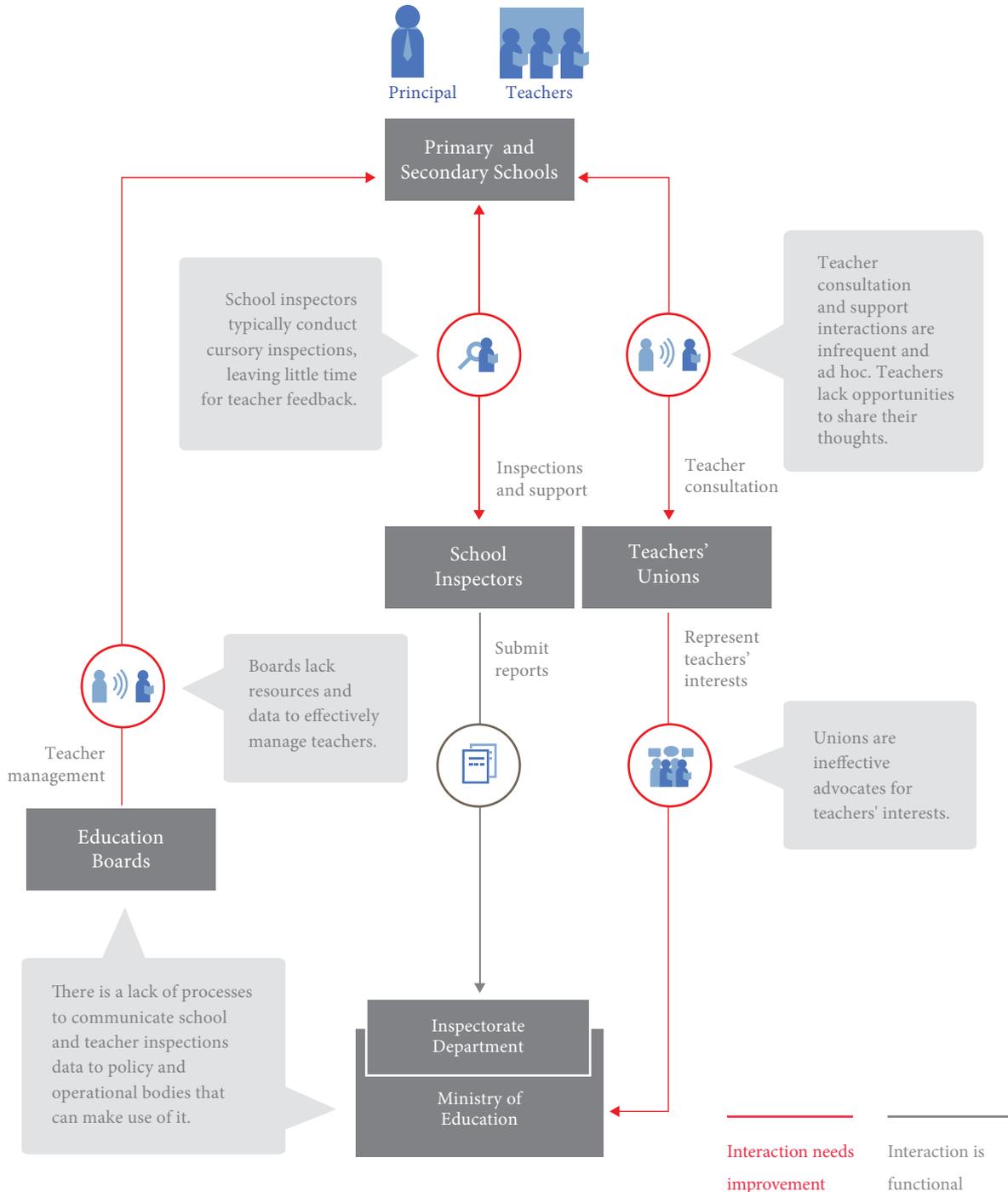
Inspections data is often not communicated to MoE departments that may benefit from field data in determining policies, nor to the education boards that manage the school systems. Communications between the MoE’s Department of the Inspectorate and other education sector stakeholders is ad hoc and infrequent, and teacher issues are no exception. Senior PPEB officials, for example, say that despite widely recognized teacher performance challenges and MoE’s significant field presence, PPEB has never received communications from MoE that has impacted its management of teachers.

The study observed varying levels of teacher management and support from school administrators. In the best cases, administrators were deeply engaged in their teachers’ success. One principal we met made repeat trips to the MoE to request textbooks, chairs, and other materials requested by his teachers. In other cases, principals neglect to address chronic absenteeism or other performance issues, for fear that doing so may harm their relationships with teachers or reflect badly on their own performance.

Unions traditionally protect and further the interests of their members. Most teachers interviewed in Edo did not understand their unions’ role in their careers and the bodies’ specific accomplishments in representing teachers. Union dues are automatically deducted from their salaries, and teachers accept it as standard protocol with little actual value. Some suspect union executives, particularly those from ASUSS, the union for secondary school teachers, of corruption and too-close ties with government.

Teacher Management & Support Structures

Teachers lack effective management and support mechanisms, and have few functional channels for communicating with the system they work within.



Monitoring & Evaluation

Edo’s education system is structured to collect data about teachers but not to act on such data. Various bodies monitor the education system but do not share data or resources. Teacher evaluations are of no material consequence.

While MoE, SUBEB, and PPEB all deploy school inspectors—the latter two only initiated inspection processes recently, due to the Governor’s recent emphasis on school monitoring—only MoE has the resources to conduct school visits regularly.

The MoE Department of the Inspectorate, the key body responsible for monitoring and evaluation of teachers, has been charged with producing results that it and its staff are not equipped or authorized to produce.



Inspectors lack the necessary time or resources to cover a large amount of schools and terrain, thus school visits are not sufficiently thorough. Inspections are usually light touch, and lack structure and consistent methodology. Visits are often under an hour for an entire school, and reportedly as short as 20 minutes. Thus, it is impossible for inspectors to provide the level of data that MoE may find most useful, nor the support that teachers may require.

During school visits, inspectors are supposed to check school attendance logs to determine teacher punctuality and attendance, and teachers' diaries to ensure they are following the official curricula and teaching schedules. In reality, inspections have largely become box-checking exercises and do not critically examine *how* teachers are teaching, only that they are in fact teaching. Inspectors are expected to be trained teachers, but the policy is not enforced and thus many lack the experience to be able to properly evaluate teachers. Inspection forms are given to inspectors with little guidance or instructions on how to use

them, resulting in reports that frequently lack adequate or actionable detail.

Many school administrators and teachers are able to learn the inspections schedule for their school, allowing them to plan for what are supposed to be surprise visits. In these scenarios, challenges such as absent teachers are impossible to detect.

Further, inspectors have no authority to inform policy or operational processes. While inspectors serve as a primary link between the MoE and teachers, their reporting efforts are one-way: they have no formal mechanism for translating their observations into policy recommendations. Interactions with MoE management staff are sporadic and only offer the opportunity for inspectors to convey specific issues at a given school rather than broader trends or systematic needs observed. The lack of feedback on their work, and the absence of meaningful outcomes as a result of their contributions, leaves inspectors disengaged and disinterested in their duties.

“I never know what happens to my reports.
They go to the Ministry, and I just wait and see.”

A Chief Inspector of Education
Edo State

Compensation & Benefits

Teachers are pleased about recent reforms in compensation value and reliability, but historical factors and perceived inequity mean compensation structures have been ineffective in motivating performance. Thus, some teachers pursue supplemental income.

While teacher salaries are competitive and raises follow the civil service promotion schedule, teachers are dissatisfied with their perceived inequity in compensation policies.

In March 2012, Edo State reinstated the Teacher's Salary Allowance (TSA), a supplemental monthly allowance for teachers. Although TSA is set by the federal government at 27.5 percent of a teacher's base salary, to date, Edo State has been unable to pay the amount in full. (The federal government sets teachers' salary and allowance structures but individual states are able to adjust these based on

budget constraints.) Officials estimate that the highest TSA that has actually been paid in 2012 is 15 percent. Many teachers perceive this to be unfair, given the challenges they face daily in their work.

Teachers in rural and riverine areas are especially critical of compensation practices, as hardship postings do not offer extra allowances. Such teachers feel they deserve bonus pay to cover the increased expenses associated with rural postings, such as long commutes or arranging secondary accommodation.

Given these factors, many teachers feel justified in seeking additional compensation, either through pursuing past income streams or devising new approaches.

“Since I don't get any rural allowance, I have found other ways to compensate myself and get the benefits I deserve.”

Primary School Teacher
in Rural School

snapshot: *trials in hardship allowances*

Several comparable African countries have experimented with offering financial incentives for teachers to take hardship postings, with mixed results.

Experiences across several countries suggest that the

incentives must be strategically targeted and sufficiently large to compensate for the increased burden and cost of living in a remote location.

In The Gambia, for example, a hardship allowance of between 30 to 40 percent of

salary, based on the distance of a school to a main road, motivated more than one-third of teachers who were not in hardship schools to request transfers to hardship, allowance-eligible schools.

Source: Mulkeen, Aidan.
Teachers in Anglophone Africa.
Washington, DC: World Bank, 2010.

Previously, when their salaries were not paid regularly, some teachers found secondary sources of income by establishing small businesses or securing part-time jobs. Today, not wanting to forgo the extra income stream, teachers have held on to these obligations even though payment irregularity has been resolved.

Other teachers choose to be entrepreneurial in schools. Some accept bribes to help students cheat on exams. Other abuses of power come in the form of using student labour to create goods that teachers then sell, or forcing students to attend and pay for additional tutoring.

The desire to supplement their salaries distracts teachers from their core duties and compromises their professionalism.

Career Advancement

Teachers have few opportunities for merit-based career advancement. Given the civil service's fixed promotion schedule, there are few incentives for above-average performance.

Teachers, as with all civil servants, advance in their careers based on their number of years of service. But, teacher promotions are not implemented on a regular schedule despite expectations. Promotion schedules are determined by civil service ranking: Levels 7 to 14 are automatically promoted every three years, and those at Level 14 and above are promoted every four years.

Several education sector stakeholders, including senior officials at the education boards, agree that teacher performance should be a factor in determining career and salary advancements, but there is currently no protocol for incorporating performance metrics. Senior officials from PPEB say that, in theory, if a teacher receives poor marks on his or her Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER), it can be used to prevent a promotion. In reality, the APERs have no such impact. Positive performance reviews are similar in the lack of impact they have on teachers' careers—they will not increase the speed of career advancement. Teachers therefore have little reason to work to secure a positive evaluation or try to avoid a negative one.

As the education system has not historically encouraged or rewarded teachers for their personal or professional development, teachers have looked elsewhere for validation. Many obtain advanced degrees, despite the lack of incentives to do so, both for a sense of personal accomplishment and to expand their opportunities in pursuing other careers.

The system of automatic professional advancement, however, is beginning to change in Edo: Starting with the primary education level, teacher evaluations and interviews are being instituted as part of the promotion process. These processes are intended to consider a wider range of factors, beyond duration of service, in determining teacher effectiveness. This follows practices for teacher promotion newly adopted in several Nigerian states including Lagos, Oyo, Kaduna, and Ogun.

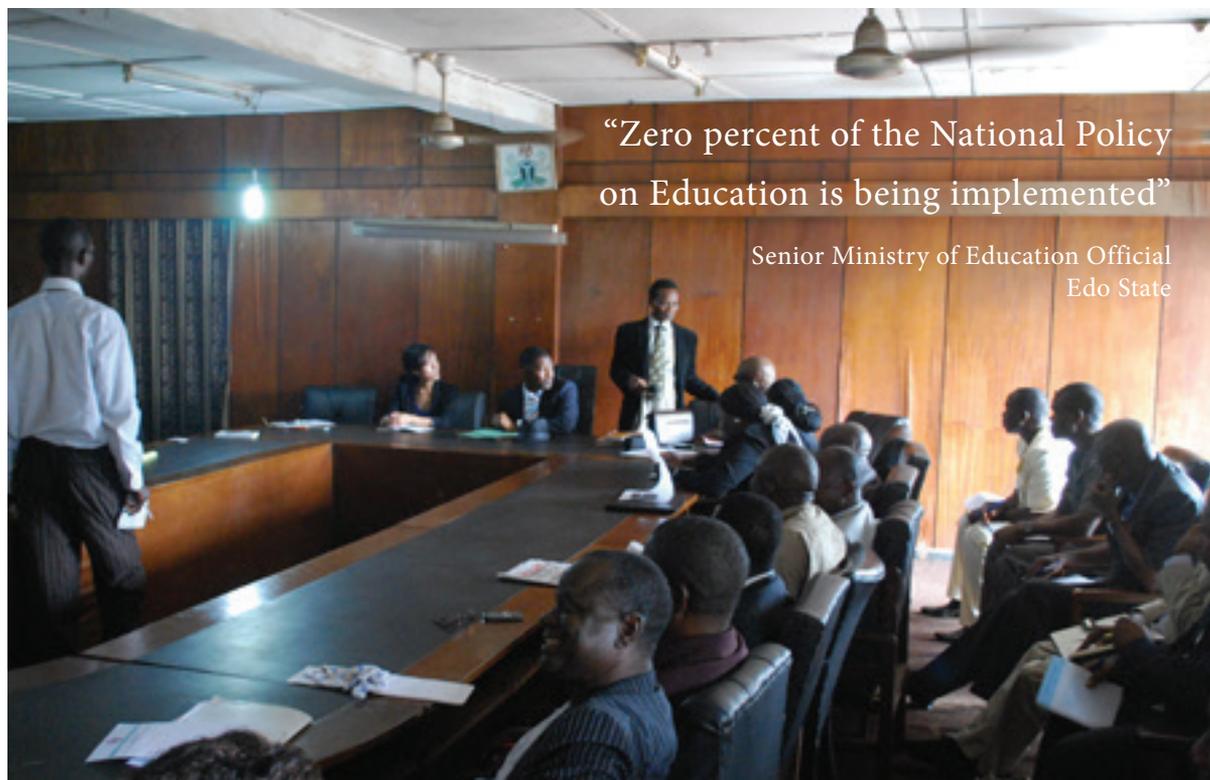
**“It has been six years—
where is my promotion?”**

Secondary School Teacher
in Peri-Urban School



Institutional Landscape

Teacher morale has significantly diminished over time. Contributing factors include institutional teacher management challenges born out of the disconnect between policy and practice, organizational fragmentation, poor communications, and limited accountability.



As the previous section highlighted, numerous external actors wield significant influence over the day-to-day experiences of teachers in Edo State. This reality is in part attributed to institutional fragmentation. Since Nigeria introduced Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 2004, the roles and responsibilities of education system stakeholders have become confused and conflated. Edo is no exception. As a result, numerous bodies pursue different agendas, and there exists a large chasm between policymakers and operational implementers.

This section explores the different roles and activities of these varied stakeholders, in addition to offering an analysis of core structural challenges in the current institutional landscape.

Key Stakeholders

The public education system in Edo can broadly be divided into three groups of stakeholders, namely those that fulfill managerial, operational, and supporting roles:

- **Management:** Ministry of Education
- **Operations:** Education Boards
- **Support:** Teacher Unions

MANAGEMENT:

Ministry of Education

The Edo State Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the overall management of education delivery in the state. In this role, the Ministry oversees the development and implementation of educational policies. MoE also supervises the various institutions responsible for the technical administration and provision of education.

The Ministry is headed by a commissioner and consists of 10 departments, only a few of which interact directly with schools. Three in particular play a role in teacher management:

Inspectorate Department

The Inspectorate Department is responsible for the evaluation of all public and private schools to ensure they maintain acceptable standards of education service delivery.

Of the 10 MoE departments, the Inspectorate is the only one with strong staff presence at the Local Government Area (LGA) level. The Department's Chief Inspectors of Education (CIEs) coordinate activities at the MoE field offices and manage the collection and communication of data about the management and development of schools and teachers in each LGA.

Educational Resource Center (ERC)

State Educational Resource Centers (ERCs) are responsible for the planning and provision of instructional materials to all schools. In this role, they acquire and circulate educational equipment to schools in their jurisdiction and to centers at the LGA level.

ERCs also provide technical services for the research, design, and evaluation of curriculum, pedagogical tools, and instructional media.¹ They are also intended to manage teacher training, with a focus on educational technology.

Department of Planning, Research, and Statistics (DPRS)

The Department of Planning, Research, and Statistics (DPRS) is primarily responsible for collecting data and conducting the school census. The DPRS, therefore, functions as the “data warehouse” of the state education system.

The Department also oversees the MoE supplementary budget with oversight from the Ministry of Budget, Planning, and Economic Development. As a result, it plays an important role in determining teachers' compensation and planning their promotions.



Opportunities & Challenges for MoE

There is presently great momentum for education reform at the MoE, and from the general populace as well. Recent events have also led to honest reflection among diverse MoE staff, and the recognition of the Ministry's role in contributing to teacher absenteeism, and of the fact that that current policies and programs may be wanting.

There are several factors, however, that may constrain MoE's ability to be effective:

The first is the perceived futility of efforts. At all levels of the Ministry, some staff feel that no matter how sound the work they submit, those more powerful often easily overrule them. For example, construction planned for one region will be overruled if the Governor makes a public appearance and makes

promises to another region. Thus, staff feel their efforts are ultimately futile. Disjointed departments and lack of coordination across activities undermine the State's ability to make decisions around education reform based on field evidence and the fullest set of relevant information.

As the primary link between school-level staffs—teachers, head teachers, and principals—and the state and local governments, the Inspectorate Department is a vital link in relaying school information to decision-making bodies. Although field reports collated by the Inspectorate are forwarded to other departments, few expect actions to be taken based on the reports; if actions are initiated, they are rarely systematically documented and tracked.

The Inspectorate also lacks adequate resources to monitor schools and teachers. Theoretically, each Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) has its own team of inspectors who are to collaborate with state-level MoE inspectors. In practice, this does not occur. The ERC in Edo similarly lacks the necessary resources to offer adequate teacher training.

There seems to be reluctance to share information and responsibility—which is tied to funding—with operational offices, particularly the Education Boards.

The DPRS also faces numerous challenges, beginning with the lack of channels to collect and share data with other MoE offices and key sector stakeholders. A senior DPRS official says the Department has no data on teachers other than the number in each school and their genders—and even the quality of that

information is suspect. This data deficit stems from an absence of mechanisms that allow the Department to enforce the completion of the census forms. Furthermore, senior DPRS officials say that they do not scrutinize submitted budgets, suggesting a lack of planning oversight. Staffing decisions are made with insufficient information about sector needs or available resources to meet those needs, leading to operational and human resource challenges.

And finally, inertia is convenient. Reform would likely mean those that have benefitted from lax budget approval and tracking processes will try and prevent reforms from being operationalized. The budgeting process is currently perfunctory, and there are no incentives to make it evidence-based or to justify or track expenditures.

OPERATIONS:

Education Boards

At the state level, two parastatals exist to operationalize education policy and manage the school system:

State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)

Formed in 2004, with the promulgation of the UBE, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) manages the administration of primary and junior secondary education in Edo, and is responsible for enforcing UBE policy.

It handles the transfer, deployment, promotion, and discipline of frontline education staff at primary and junior secondary schools, including teachers. In theory, it approves the training and retraining of both teaching and non-teaching

staff, and retires and re-absorbs primary school teachers in the state.

SUBEB is also the main allocator of resources for primary education at the state level and is responsible for the transfer of funds to LGEAs to administer teachers' salaries. It is well connected with many partners and able to secure federal money from the UBEC, receiving UBE grants through the Edo MoE. Many of its functions require approval from the MoE or the Governor.

Post Primary Education Board (PPEB)

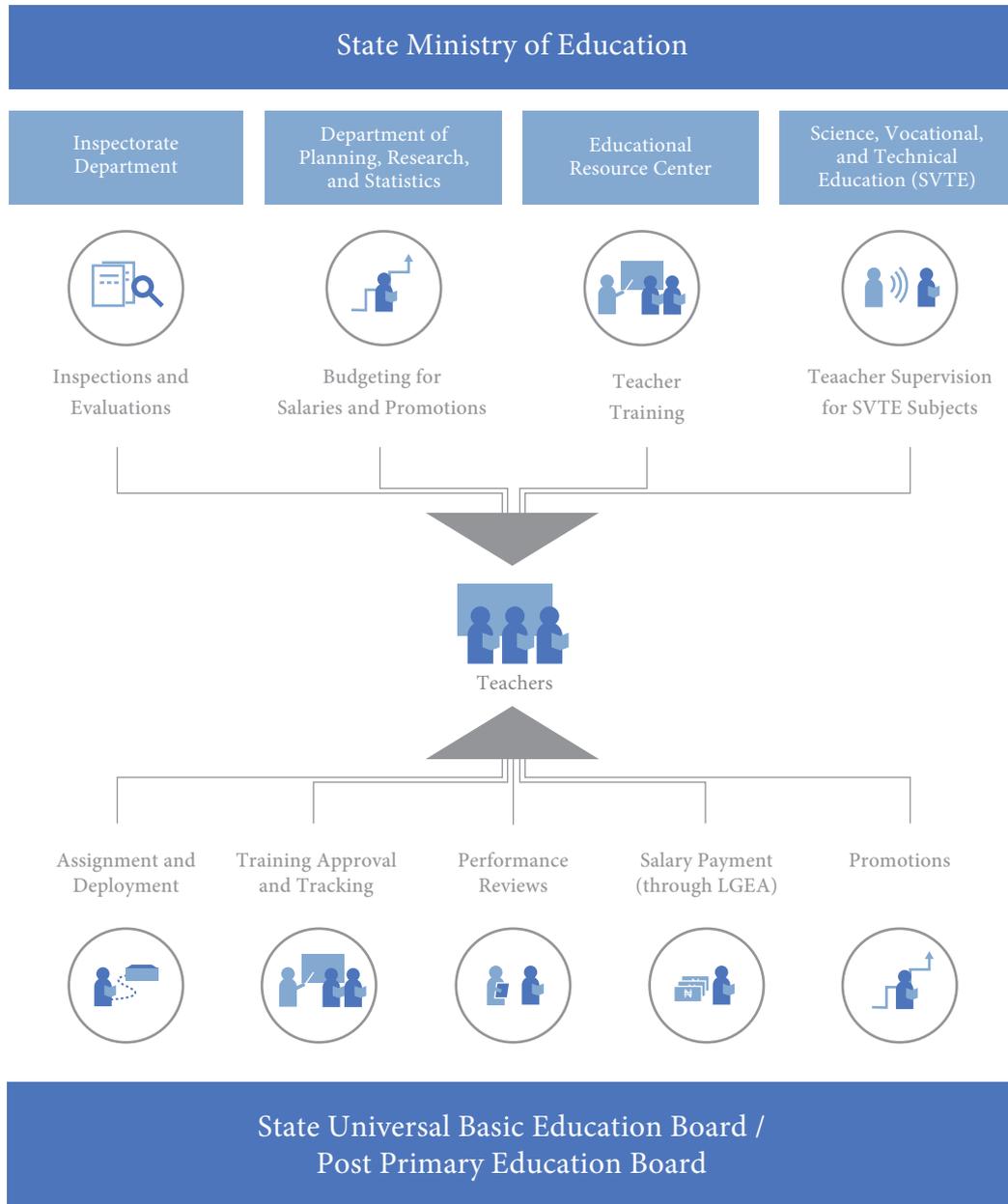
The Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) functions as the primary manager of secondary schools.

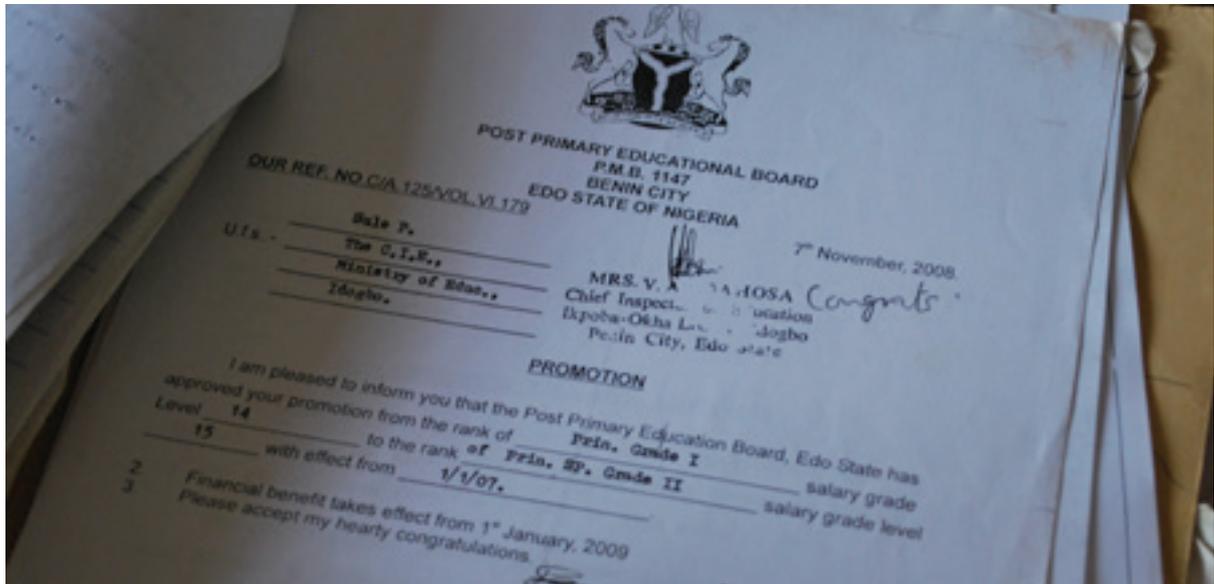
PPEB is responsible for the collection of school fees and remittances to the government treasury, school operational expenditure accounts, and staff salaries, as well as school records and welfare statistics for the secondary school system.

Within its jurisdiction, is also responsible for the recruitment, deployment and training of teachers.

Key Interactions Between State Education Stakeholders & Teachers

Numerous actors wield influence over the experiences of teachers. This diagram highlights a few key government stakeholders and their core functions, as relevant to teachers in Edo State.





Opportunities & Challenges at the Education Boards

There is keen interest from the leadership of both SUBEB and PPEB to leverage their organizations' operational expertise in the policymaking process, and in producing constructive dialogue around teacher management reform.

There are several challenges, however, that will limit their effectiveness. Historically, the relationship between the Boards and the MoE have been strained. Understanding effective ways to collaborate and share resources will take time, and trust.

Similar to the challenges discussed around MoE, what the education boards are responsible for and what they are able to achieve often differ. The Boards lack field capacity, which means their visits to schools occur irregularly and infrequently and they will rely on MoE for field capacity. Despite its mandate to liaise with teachers, the education boards have little interaction with teachers after their initial deployment other than to reassign them, since payments are processed automatically.

Further, there is tension between the two education boards themselves. The introduction of UBE and the creation of SUBEB as its primary operational body resulted in a clash between the existing operational body for education, PPEB. The roles and responsibilities between the two education boards became conflated.

And finally, there have been recent corruption scandals surrounding teacher recruitment procedures. Recently, the Edo PPEB was found to be charging NGN 200,000 from applicants for teaching jobs to improve their chances of being hired. The Governor then implemented a freeze on recruitment.⁵

SUPPORT:

Teacher Unions

Nigeria currently has two teachers unions:

Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT)

Nigeria's largest and oldest teachers' union, the Nigerian Union of Teachers was formed to foster unity among teachers in Nigeria and raise the status of the teaching profession.⁶ NUT is headed by an executive council and has offices in every state and in 774 LGAs.

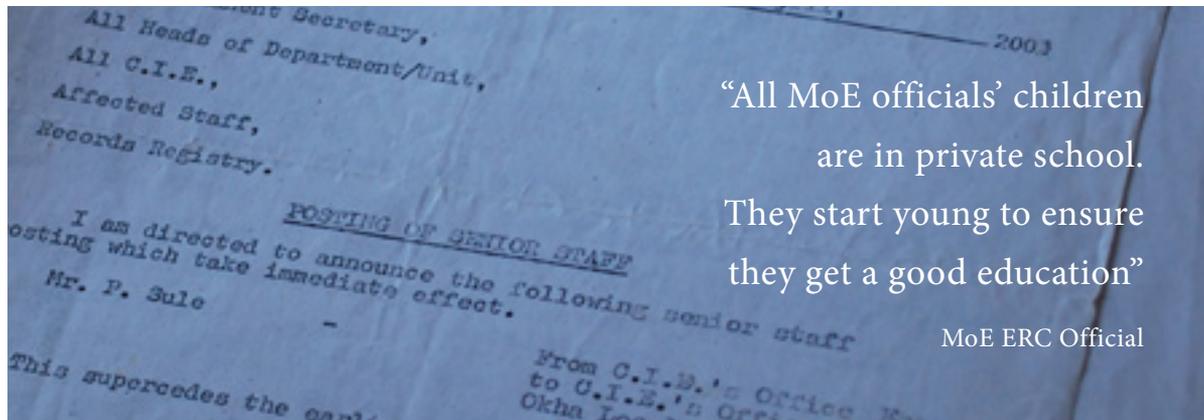
Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools (ASUSS)

The Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools (ASUSS), a group of secondary school teachers, began as an offshoot of NUT in February 2011. The constitutionality of ASUSS has since been disputed, particularly between NUT and ASSUS. Although the union has received approval and recognition as an autonomous body from state governments, it has yet to receive certification from the federal body.⁷

Teachers in Edo see both more as professional social networks than effective advocates for their interests. Teachers question the unions' ability to effectuate change for the teaching profession. Most do not understand the unions' role is or how they have helped teachers in the past. Unions collect an dues from each teacher (approximately two percent of salaries), which some suspect yields nothing and others believe it supports the leadership of NUT and ASUSS.

Historically, NUT has had a tense relationship with government, which has limited its effectiveness in driving pro-teacher reforms. One example is NUT's advocacy for the implementation of the Teachers' Salary Allowance (TSA) to motivate strong teacher performance and counter the brain drain from the teaching profession.⁹ While the federal government recently approved the initiative, it took over a decade of advocacy. But state governments were not required to implement it.⁹ And so in July 2011, NUT members in Edo went on strike in July 2011 to protest the State's failure to recognize and pay its TSA. Tensions between the MoE and teachers escalated when the Commissioner of Education deemed the strike "criminal" and said that protesting teachers would be fired.¹⁰

ASUSS has had better relations with the government and many perceive it be a government loyalist, as it is trying to gain recognition from the federal government. Many believe that ASUSS has been cautious about taking oppositional stances. This often puts the body at odds with NUT, which does not recognize ASUSS as a union, on different issues.



Key Challenges

In addition to the specific issues concerning the individual stakeholders discussed previously, a broader set of structural challenges afflict the institutional landscape of Edo's education sector.

These include a disconnect between people who formulate policies and those who are affected by them, a culture of patronage, ineffective communications, and limited institutional accountability mechanisms.

Disconnect & Patronage

Those who make policy often lack a grounded understanding of the day-to-day challenges faced by civil servants. Most elected officials and MoE decision makers attended private schools from childhood onwards. This rift between policymakers and practitioners leads to the unrealistic expectations placed on civil servants, teachers, and other school staff.

This disconnect partially stems from a longstanding patronage-based human resource system in Edo State, and elsewhere in Nigeria, where relationships, not merit, enable career advancement. State Commissioners are appointed by the State House of Assembly and confirmed by parliament. In 2011, all such nominees were accepted within

weeks, suggesting a lack of scrutiny, even when candidates lacked practical experience in the sector for which they were being nominated. The previous Commissioner for Education, Ekpenisi Omorotionmwan, lacked any experience in education—he had been a telecommunications executive—but his family was politically well connected. Other key roles are determined by similar means.

Patronage politics further exacerbate the MoE's lack of understanding of the public education system it manages, yielding unrealistic expectations and impractical interventions for its challenges.¹¹

Ineffective Communications

There is a lack of structured, regular means of communications between key education officials and the institutions they represent, impeding knowledge sharing in the public education system. Infrequent, topical workshops are the only times when the MoE and the education boards convene. Ineffective information sharing has led to uninformed teacher management decisions by policymakers, which then manifests in challenges at the school level.

For example, it is difficult for SUBEB to access the census data collected by the DPRS. The census collects information about student enrollment and staffing needs, and is critical to making decisions regarding teacher assignment and deployment. Without this information in the right hands, understaffed and overcrowded schools, or inadequate teacher assignments are all the more likely.

Communications challenges limit the real-world impact of education sector civil servants, as their work does not always reach those that can effectively use their inputs. Staff motivation suffers as a result. Unable to see how their day-to-day work relates to the overall education system, and lacking incentives to produce quality and accurate data in general, many reports and staff activities become perfunctory exercises.

Limited Accountability

The public education system in Edo has few functional mechanisms to ensure its various initiatives are delivering on their stated objectives. Project timelines are irregularly adhered to, staff performance metrics are non-existent or not enforced, and job performance and correlated results are not systematically measured and monitored. Additionally, the patronage-based promotions system diminishes incentives for good job performance. A dearth of evidence-based planning and oversight further diminishes incentives for staff and institutions to execute programs as proposed, as plans may often be inappropriate or unrealistic given the context or available resources. As such, maintaining the status quo is a comfortable *modus operandi* for most MoE staff.

At the teacher level, there are no formal support mechanisms in place to allow for grievance redressal. This inhibits effective teacher management as there are no avenues for teacher feedback to be heard and acted upon. At present, there are several ways for teachers express their views on their challenges and professional experiences—through school inspectors, teachers' unions, and other MoE field staff—but these information collectors have few means to surface their concerns and interests to others that can act on them. Thus, while the education system has multiple avenues for ensuring teachers are performing as expected, similar accountability mechanisms do not exist for the education system itself.

EDO STATE OF NIGERIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BENIN CITY
2012 PRIMARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

LGA-NAME: IKPOBA-OKHA

LGA-CODE: [11]

SCHOOL STATISTICS

H-CODE	SCH-NAME
134 ✓	PRIME PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
135 ✓	LONRICH PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
136 ✓	GREENFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
138 ✓	MADONNA NURSERY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
140 ✓	ZION FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
141 ✓	IGBINEDION MONTESSORI PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
142 ✓	GLORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
143 ✓	PATRICIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
144 ✓	GOOD FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL, BENIN CITY
145 ✓	EDEN CITY GROUP OF SCHOOLS, BENIN CITY

Policy Context

Nigerian education policy has strived to achieve basic education for all school-age children.

While admirable in intent, these policies have been ineffectively operationalized, resulting in negative public views of teachers being perpetuated and parallel education systems being established.



Historical Overview

Currently, Nigeria's highly decentralized education system means that no single tier of government has absolute control of public education, particularly at the primary level. This state of affairs, however, is very different from where the education system began.

British colonial rule during the 19th and early 20th centuries established Nigeria's first formal education system, laying the foundation for current educational policies, laws, and administrative practices. From 1914 until Nigerian independence in 1960, the colonial education system was highly centralized. Although this system was criticized for failing to adapt to the Nigerian context, leading to a disconnect between education service delivery and the reality of students' lives, it also emphasized the importance of high-quality teachers in a sound education system.

Introduced in 1882, the first education ordinance in Nigeria laid the foundations for a professional teaching force in the country. By establishing teacher certification and examination processes, it raised

barriers to entry into the field. The colonial system also invested heavily in teachers, allocating 20 percent of all grant-in-aid for education towards teacher development.¹² This investment in teachers contributed towards higher quality educators and elevated the status of the profession; during this time, teachers were highly respected and recognized as leaders in their communities.

This status began to change with the passage of the Universal Primary Education Act in 1954. After Nigerian independence, and the subsequent market liberalization, the demand for educated labour increased rapidly. Many teachers left the profession to pursue jobs in the more lucrative private sector. Those who remained came to be perceived as second-string public servants—teachers by obligation, rather than by choice. These events marked the beginning of the teacher motivation crisis in Nigeria; subsequent policy efforts attempting to respond to this crisis have only compounded the issue and have failed to adequately address the root causes of poor teacher morale.¹³

Teachers in Nigeria / Key Milestones

	Event	Impact on Teachers
<p>1954 Universal Primary Education</p>	<p>Free and compulsory universal primary education (UPE) was introduced in Western Nigeria, leading to rapid increases in student enrollment, nearly double over two years. Eastern Nigeria implemented UPE in 1956 as well, but intra-party conflict within the ruling party and strong opposition from the Catholic Mission led to its collapse in 1958.</p>	<p>To respond to the increase in demand, the government began employing unqualified teachers en masse. This practice, combined with the impacts of market liberalization, led to the negative public perception of teachers as second-rate public servants.</p>
<p>1972 Udoji Commission</p>	<p>The Udoji Commission brought all civil servants in Nigeria under one unified salary scheme, the Harmonized Public Service Salary Scale (HAPSS).</p>	<p>HAPSS greatly improved teacher welfare and status. It brought public sector salaries closer to those of the private sector and ensured teachers enjoyed comparable salary status with other civil servants, boosting teacher morale.</p>
<p>1976 Olusegun Obasanjo Military Regime</p>	<p>UPE was introduced at the national level to stimulate school enrolment, but the scheme was launched without adequate planning, school infrastructure, qualified teachers, or monitoring. The Obasanjo regime also devolved the responsibility of education provision to the states.</p>	<p>The decentralization of education provision allowed states to create their own policies. Many states created unified teaching service regulations to govern the working conditions of teachers and enacted school management boards to localize decision-making around teachers.</p>
<p>1979-83 The Second Republic</p>	<p>Founded in 1979, the Second Republic drafted a constitution placing education on the concurrent legislative list, meaning that all tiers of government shared in the responsibility and authority of education provision. The federal government retained most of the power, but in some states, primary education was decentralized to Local Government Councils.</p>	<p>With primary education on the legislative list, education management became unstable as responsibilities and roles between the different governmental levels became convoluted. Oftentimes, this resulted in the inadequate and inconsistent delivery of teachers' salaries.</p>

	Event	Impact on Teachers
1999/2004 Universal Basic Education	<p>The Universal Basic Education (UBE) program introduced in 1999, and signed into law in 2004, stipulated that the government provide free and compulsory education for every child of school-age. UBE introduced a nine-year basic education program for early childhood education (six years of primary and three years of junior secondary).</p>	<p>Observers claim that UBE made teaching an ‘all-comers job’. As school enrollment increased, so did demand for teachers, and many without sufficient training were accepted as teachers. Public perception soon evolved to see teaching as an occupation for those who could not secure other work.</p>
2006 National Action Plan	<p>The National Action Plan (NAP) was a federal plan to facilitate the implementation of UBE to achieve the Education For All and Millennium Development Goals by 2015. As part of its efforts, the plan presented an analysis of the Nigerian education system and government initiatives to address its challenges.</p>	<p>The goals (e.g. “100% of all school-age children enrolled in primary school by 2009”) and strategies set by NAP did not consider the ability or capacity of schools or teachers to handle the increased demand. Increased student loads and poorly designed management systems further demotivated teachers.</p>
2007 Teachers Registration Council Act	<p>Recognizing the need for the professionalization of teachers, the federal government began registering certified teachers—those holding a Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE)—and providing professional training for those without the required degrees.</p>	<p>Professionalization of the field has increased the amount of teachers who hold NCEs and thus augmented the overall quality of teachers in Nigeria. Public perception of teachers has been incrementally improving as a result.</p>

Recent Developments

Since Governor Oshiomhole assumed office in 2008, he has made education reform in Edo a signature issue. His initiatives have largely focused on infrastructure and facility upgrades in schools and the creation of model schools. These efforts have drastically improved working conditions for teachers in certain schools. Oshiomhole also implemented a direct deposit system for teacher salaries in 2009. By streamlining the compensation process and providing consistent paychecks, the Governor's e-pay initiative has provided teachers a sense of financial stability.

While the Oshiomhole administration is to be applauded for these efforts, the reforms undertaken to date do not adequately address structural challenges that face the state's education system. Initiatives such as the Executive Teaching Program—launched in October 2012 and in which high-ranking officials in the state government (governor, deputy governor, commissioners, and directors) serve as guest teachers twice a week in select schools—have been criticized as political maneuvers to attract federal funding.²⁹ These shortcomings are further compounded by a largely punitive approach to teacher absenteeism and limited education spending.

Approach to Teacher Absenteeism

Public servant negligence—and teacher absenteeism in particular—has recently come into the public spotlight in Edo, with the Governor himself spearheading efforts to “sanitize” the State's education system. A series of unscheduled school inspections has resulted in the high-profile dismissal of 20 teachers and 41 school inspectors and local government education officers, followed by an immediate promotion of junior school inspectors into newly opened posts.³⁰

Allegations of corruption in teacher recruitment practices has led some to speculate that the board members at the state-level PPEB may be next to go. The Governor's spontaneous and severe measures have sparked controversy among unnerved civil servants.

“States have not been forthcoming in providing counterpart funds just as many of them are unable to account for past allocations. [W]here these are not provided, the law forbids [UBEC] from giving these monies out to states.”

Dr. Mohammed Moddibo
Executive Secretary

Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)

Education Spending

Although the Edo State Government has claimed education as a priority area, its support for improving the education system, measured by fiscal allocation and spending, has flagged in recent years. (See following page.)

Most international education experts agree that developing countries should allocate over 20 percent of their budgets to the education sector.³¹ Other comparable countries in Africa have heeded these guidelines, and allocated a fair amount of their annual national budgets to education: South Africa (26 percent), Cote d'Ivoire (30 percent), Ghana (31 percent), Kenya (23 percent) and Uganda (27 percent). In 2012, Nigeria allocated 8.43 percent of its NGN 4.7 trillion national budget to education.³² In Edo State, sector allocations in 2011 were NGN 5.55 billion (7.2 percent of the State's total budget), down from NGN 7.22 billion (11.6 percent) in 2010.³³

Further, budget planning and performance in Edo were found to be lacking. Revenue accrual consistently tends to be less than projected, making planning for education—and, thus, for teachers—exceptionally difficult. Without the receipt of expected income, promotions and other teacher management and support services that might be considered extraneous are often foregone.

Ineffective budget performance appears to be largely tied to the dependency of the State on external funding support for core activities. Much of the State's revenue, for example, comes from the capital receipt of federal grants; in education, this comes from the UBE scheme. Although designed to increase transparency and interstate competition,³⁴ the unrealistic constraints put in place by the federal government has effectively halted education funding.

According to the executive secretary of UBEC, from 2006 onwards, Edo has not accessed UBE funds for the development of primary schools due to its inability to match the federal fund or to account for previous expenditures of UBE funds.³⁵ In response, the Governor says that the counterpart funding for UBE was not spent because the opposition People's Democratic Party, which dominated the State House of Assembly at the time, blocked the spending.³⁶

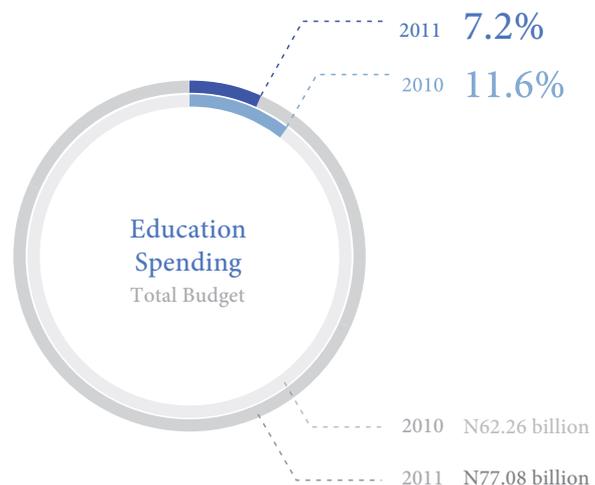
Given the diminished financial resources allocated by the State, lapses between actual and predicted revenue, and overall poor budget performance, the planning component for education management becomes obsolete. Schools, students, and teachers suffer as a result.

Education Expenditure in Edo State

Flagging Commitment:

Diminishing Financial Support for Education

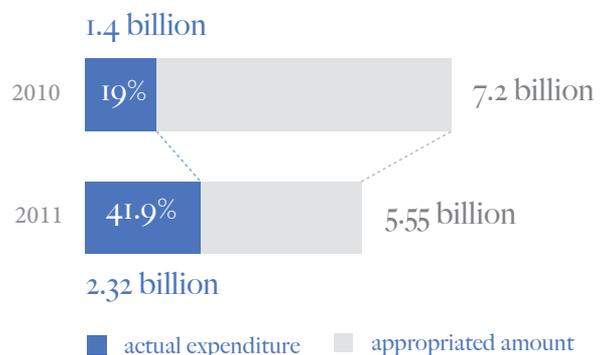
Despite strong policy statements on prioritizing education sector investments, publicly stated budget allocations are facing a decline. The last two years have seen a decrease in education sector allocations as a percentage of the overall budget.



Budget Performance:

Performance of the Capital Budget for Education

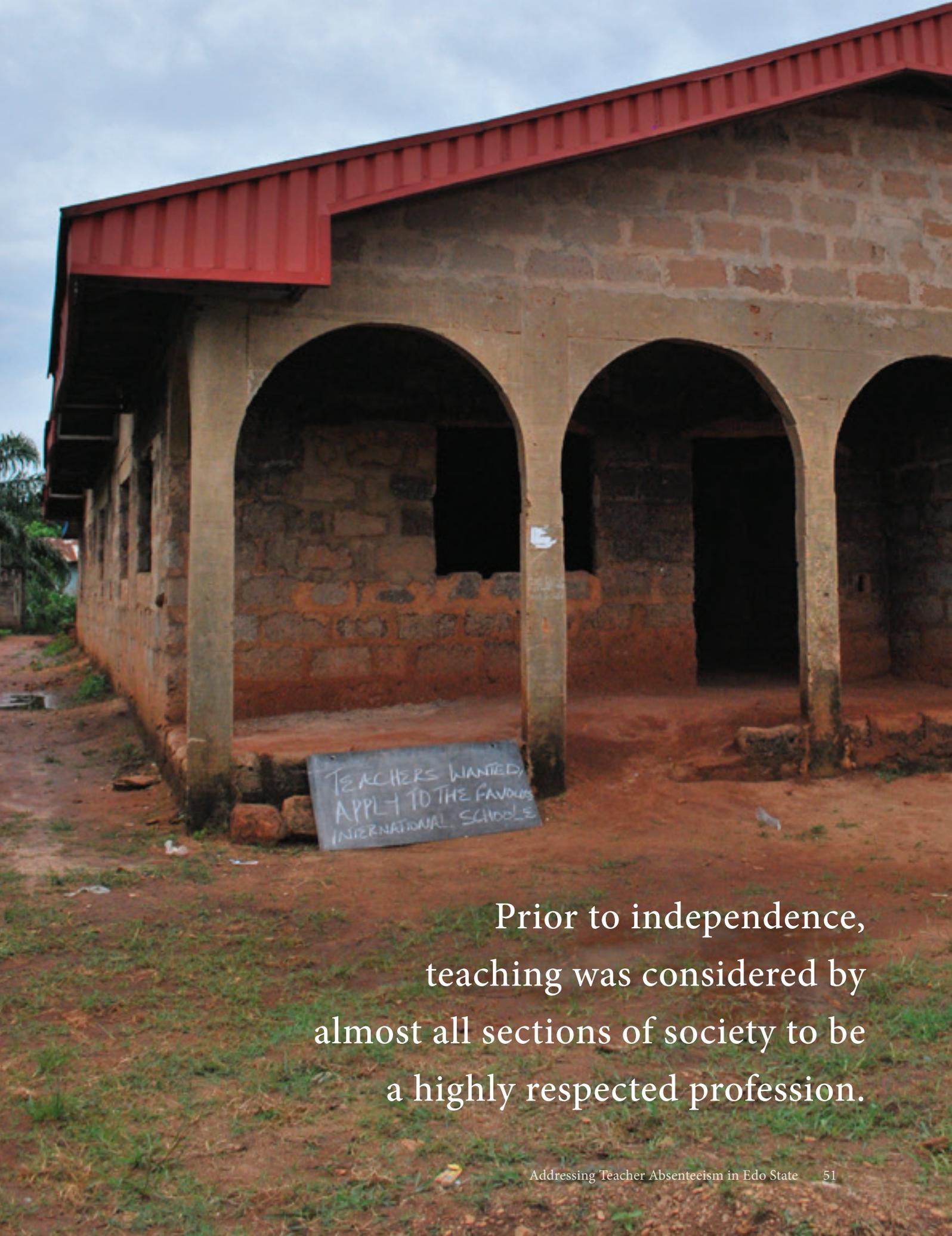
Capital expenditures are also performing poorly. In 2010, only 19 percent of the capital budget was executed, or NGN 1.4 billion of actual spending against NGN 7.2 billion in planned spending. Performance improved in 2011 with 41.9 percent budget execution, or NGN 2.32 billion executed against NGN 5.55 billion in planned spending. The significant variation in makes charting a recent trend difficult.



Budget Planning:

Actual Income is Less than Projected Income

Income for the education sector frequently falls far short of projections. In 2010, the Ministry of Education only received 64 percent of projected internal revenue. Capital receipts performed even worse with only 13 percent realization of projected income.



Prior to independence, teaching was considered by almost all sections of society to be a highly respected profession.

Opportunities

Five issues have been identified for Edo State to consider in developing long-term interventions to address teacher absenteeism. These issues address:

- teacher frustrations with assignments,*
- lack of accountability in teacher and school management,*
- the negative portrayal of teachers by the State,*
- perceived inequity in sector investments,*
- and limited capabilities of school inspectors.*



Issues for Further Exploration

While discussions of teacher absenteeism in Edo have often focused on the nonchalance of teachers and those that supervise them, this research shows that a range of systemic challenges within the public education sector contribute to teachers' poor performance. Many teachers feel disrespected and unsupported, and believe that the education system places unrealistic expectations on them. Low teacher morale is the result. Combined with a lack of effective management and oversight of teachers, these factors leads to high teacher absenteeism and subpar performance.

Such issues relate to broader policy and political considerations that were outside the scope of this present investigation. Yet this research did yield preliminary analyses on structural issues which

may merit further examination by education sector stakeholders seeking to address teacher absenteeism in Edo. This following section presents five such issues. While these are far from comprehensive, they do touch on different issues that negatively impact teacher performance.

It is reasonable to expect that addressing these issues could help improve teacher morale and accountability, thereby positively impacting attendance and performance. While this report offers some preliminary analysis of how these issues might be addressed through enhanced systems or organizational processes, it is, however, based on the supposition that reform in any of the identified areas would require further efforts to address related policy and programmatic challenges.

It is possible that some of these issues could be addressed in the near-term, while there is political interest and public momentum around education reform in Edo. Concurrently, the Edo State Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) has brought expanded capacity to deploy platforms and processes for improving the management and operational systems of state ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). This capacity could also be leveraged in addressing challenges faced by the public education system.

Ultimately, we believe that to successfully and sustainably address teacher absenteeism requires a closer examination of the factors that impact teacher performance. Addressing these factors may require a range of interventions from stakeholders across the education service delivery chain.

The recent dismissals of teachers and inspections staff in Edo has contributed to an entrenched sense that these public servants are cogs in a machine that are easily acquired and easily disposed of, rather than valued colleagues that provide a critical service. Thus, reversing the sense of resignation and ‘commodification’ among frontline education sector civil servants is an urgent priority.



Beyond teachers, it is important to consider the chain of actors involved in education service delivery. Inspectors, for example, are also demotivated in their work. With unrealistic school visitation schedules, lack of resources to perform their jobs, and no discernable outcomes based on their work, it should come as no surprise that inspector performance is suboptimal.

To improve staff performance, it is first critical to improve staff morale. Human resource theory has

proven that individuals perform at their best when their unique worth and professional contributions are valued. Sector processes and recent state actions against teachers suggest teachers and inspectors feel neither in their current roles. Without addressing this fundamental issue, it will be very hard to substantively improve teacher attendance and performance. While addressing staff morale will be a long process, by demonstrating a shift in orientation today, MoE may be able to begin the process of change.

Opportunities for ICTs

Given Edo's recent advances in open government, and DICT's role in building the Education Management Information System (EMIS), three of the featured issue areas highlight preliminary ideas on how information and communication technologies (ICTs) may be leveraged in support of education reform efforts.

While there is great potential for ICTs to support the delivery of quality education in Edo, a key benefit of integrating ICTs into programmatic efforts is the dialogue it facilitates. Conversations

about developing technology tools, platforms, and related processes are useful in education reform efforts because they often prompt and focus critical dialogue around education policies and institutional processes.

To maximize their potential for positive impact, ICT solutions should be accompanied by complementary programmatic interventions and developed with both management and operational staff at the relevant MDAs. Close collaboration between technical partners (e.g. DICT and/or others) and

their client MDAs will help ensure interventions are well suited for current capabilities and available resources. The design and development process should be inclusive of any other intended users, including teachers, operational staff, and other education sector stakeholders (e.g. parents, community elders), to ensure usability and fit.

In light of this, each ICT opportunity area also outlines identified interests among relevant stakeholders who should be included in the development of each.



ISSUE 1:

Frustration with the Teacher Assignment System

Aspect of Teacher Experience

- Assignment

Description and Impact

The location and duration of assignments are a key challenge for teachers, arguably even more so than their stated frustrations around compensation. While the education boards responsible for teacher deployment have expressed the desire to consider teachers' personal factors (e.g. location, marital status, preference for rural postings, and other factors) and multiple systemic variables (e.g. number of years in current posting, balance of specialized teachers in each school), insufficient information on teachers and limited human resources constrain their ability to do so.

Teachers are also frustrated by how new postings are communicated to them. Currently, they are informed that they have been reassigned by their principals or head teachers. They must then travel to the education board offices in the state capital to learn what their new posting is. These protocols are upsetting to teachers because travel to Benin City may require significant time and cost, they often receive less than two days' notice before they must report for duty at their new assigned school, and their new posting may require significant changes to their lifestyles. For teachers that are posted to hardship locations, there is the fear that they may be "forgotten in the bush"—left in postings past the stated five years—which leads to stress and anxiety over reassignments.

Combined, these factors lead to a perception of insensitivity, inequity, and lack of transparency in how school assignments and deployments are determined, communicated, and managed. The result is a reduction in both teacher morale and the desire to perform well in new postings.

Potential Areas of Intervention

Develop protocols and processes to help MoE and Education Boards balance sector, school, and teacher needs in determining teacher assignments, and to ease the communications, support, and management processes around new deployments and reassignments.

Some ideas for consideration:

- **Processes could be developed to inform communities of new teachers assigned to their schools, and to engage them in welcoming new teachers.** Particularly in rural and riverine areas, many families value education highly and proactively contribute to supporting or enhancing teachers' experiences in their communities (e.g. through informal gifts, or "bush allowances"). Mechanisms to coordinate their efforts with teacher postings and provide them a formal means of supporting teachers could help improve teacher morale and engagement in new schools.
- **Mechanisms could be established to give teachers more advance notice about new assignments** to ease teachers' transitions to new schools, particularly in hardship postings. This would also provide teachers with more time to plan for relocation, prepare students for their departure, and transition in a new school and location.
- **Assignments could be determined based on a mix of education sector policies, schools' needs, and teachers' preferences.** For the latter, education boards may consider personal factors as well as teachers' deployment histories—for example, the number of or duration in hardship postings for each teacher would be considered in determining their future assignments. Protocols could also enforce current policies for assignment durations, which are five years.

Potential Barriers

- Education sector stakeholders that benefit from the current teacher assignment system may oppose a more transparent, automated system that makes it harder for them to exert influence.
- Developing effective and equitable protocols for teacher assignments will be difficult. While ICTs can ease the process by automating the consideration of key factors, ultimately, this will be a complex task that will require significant upfront investment in design and close monitoring of implementation by sector stakeholders.
- If ICTs are used for the process, there are at least two management information systems (MIS) with teacher information in Edo—one for salary payment (used by the e-pay system) and an EMIS module (which has static data and is currently unused)—which can be built upon. Determining how to do so, identifying and working with the appropriate stakeholders, and avoiding duplication of efforts may be early challenges.

Opportunity 1: *Supporting Effective Teacher Assignment through EMIS*

There are currently two MIS that hold data about teachers in Edo: the salary e-pay system and EMIS. There is the opportunity to configure and/or extend one of these systems to track the variables that are important to assignment decision-making; to inform

the process of teacher assignments, reassignments; and to support more effective deployments.

At its core, such a system could help the education boards factor teachers' family obligations (e.g. marriage, children, as

verified by official records/documentation) and professional aspirations (e.g. certain teachers prefer rural postings for increased opportunities for school-level career advancement), alongside school and sector needs in determining assignments.

Additional functions may include:

- Tracks assignment durations to ensure postings comply with the current five-year policy. The system could alert the education boards three months prior to the completion of a teacher's five-year posting, to enable them to plan for reassignment of that teacher.
- Utilizes geographic information systems (GIS) to consider teachers' reasonable ability to commute to various locations in determining assignments.
- Manages assignment-related communications with teachers to provide teachers more advance notice for new postings. At a specified period before a teacher's posting has expired, teachers could receive SMS notifications with information about their new post as soon as it has been assigned, avoiding the need for travel to the education boards to receive their new assignment.
- Notifies communities of new teacher assignments to help facilitate integration of teachers with their new environment. Families that are registered could receive an SMS with new teachers' information and contact details once a posting is assigned to their children's schools—and a reminder within one week of the new teacher's arrival/start date—to allow them to prepare to welcome new teachers, if they wish.

Stakeholder Interest:

The Department of Planning, Research, and Statistics (DPRS) at the Edo State Ministry of Education (MoE) has expressed great interest in such a system, with senior leadership being particularly vocal about the Department's support. The education boards, and the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) in particular, have also expressed interest to make their assignment system more efficient and to coordinate more closely with MoE. This system also presents opportunities to expand synergies between MoE and DICT, building upon existing MIS and related processes to support teacher management.



ISSUE 2:

Lack of Accountability in School Inspections Processes

<i>Aspect of Teacher Experience</i>	<i>Description and Impact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring & Evaluation• Career Advancement	<p>Currently, policies around school inspections place unrealistic expectations on Chief Inspectors of Education (CIEs) and Zonal Inspectors of Education (ZIEs). Infeasible school visitation schedules, lack of defined protocols, and lack of enforcement of recruitment standards (all CIEs and ZIEs are supposed to have direct experience as teachers but this doesn't always happen) have resulted in demotivated school inspectors that often do not adequately perform their duties.</p> <p>Further, inspectors' reports are infrequently reviewed and there are no formal processes to consider their reports in policymaking or in the management of the education system. CIEs and ZIEs thus feel that their jobs are neither of any material consequence; and up until very recently, have there been checks to ensure they are submitting quality reports.</p> <p>As such, school inspections, as currently designed and implemented, have limited efficacy and impact in monitoring and improving teacher performance.</p>

Potential Areas of Intervention

Revise inspections procedures to be more realistic, useful, and to ensure they have meaningful impact on teachers' performance in the classroom.

Processes may be revised to:

- **Incorporate follow-up procedures for previously reported issues** to ensure there is progress towards addressing or resolving previous challenges. School inspection reports have the potential to be one of the most valuable information sources for MoE stakeholders seeking to improve education service delivery. To realize this potential may require systematic processes for reviewing and acting upon these reports by bodies that have the mandate and resources to address identified challenges.
- **Account for MoE capacity and resources** to ensure inspectors are equipped to do the job required of them. As of October 2012, visitation schedules as mandated by the then-Commissioner of Education seemed unrealistic—and, in some cases, physically impossible given travel schedules and available staff resources. Such policies necessitated inspectors conduct extremely short school visits and/or possibly devise other means to try and meet their targets.
- **Have standardized data collection protocols** to enable easier analyses of inspections data and thus decision-making by policymakers. Greater consistency in the type of data, level of detail, and other factors in inspectors' reports would allow sector stakeholders to more easily compare schools and thus enhance the utility of school inspections and their documentation.

Potential Barriers

- Revising the school inspections system and providing strong management and oversight throughout implementation will require significant human and financial resources that may not be available.
- Several strong patronage systems incentivize poor accountability in the school inspections system, which then discourage structural improvements to inspections processes.



ISSUE 3:

State Communications are Antagonistic toward Teachers

Aspect of Teacher Experience

- Choice of Profession
- Classroom Experience

Description and Impact

The public narrative around teachers in Nigeria has been increasingly negative for several decades: teaching is regarded as an ‘all-comers job’ for those who cannot find better work. Further, the Governor’s recent words and actions suggest that all teachers and inspectors in Edo are lazy.

The respect individuals command is a significant contributor to job satisfaction, and thus performance. Communications that publicly disrespect teachers have left them feeling antagonized and threatened, and may be detrimental to their motivation and thus job performance.

Beyond the impacts of antagonistic communications, research in Nigeria has shown that teachers that actually perform better when they receive praise, both by those that manage them and by the government.³⁷ While chastising and monitoring teachers have yielded short-term improvements in teacher attendance, studies show that long-term positive impacts on job performance requires motivators such as public recognition and a sense of achievement.³⁸

Potential Areas of Intervention

- **Revise public communications messaging.**

In communicating about its new teacher management policies, the State has the opportunity to demonstrate that moving forward, the education system will weed out underperforming teachers and no longer will teaching be a job for second-rate civil servants. In the near-term, this can alleviate the feelings of persecution by teachers, which leads them to improve performance out of fear and not desire—ultimately a short-term solution, as it requires constant monitoring. Over time, by helping meet their need for respect, this could help improve motivation and the desire to perform well.³⁹

- **Review existing programs to examine utility in addressing teacher morale.**

Edo State currently has several programs targeted at addressing teacher performance. Programs such as the Teacher Executive Scheme (TES) are valuable for public communications, but may be less effective in addressing teacher morale and performance compared to other potential interventions. (With TES, for example, some teachers perceive it to be more political publicity rather than genuine efforts to improve teacher management). In light of the State's limited resources, the utility of such programs should be examined before further investments are made.

Potential Barriers

- Revising communications messages could undermine the narrative created by the Governor that he is Edo's "Monitor-in-Chief", a framing that the Oshiomhole administration has used to gain support among national-level education stakeholders and the general public in Edo.



ISSUE 4:

Inequitable Distribution of Investments

Aspect of Teacher Experience

- Classroom Experience

Description and Impact

School infrastructure and facilities improvements have been a key priority area for Governor Oshiomhole. Renovations have improved classroom conditions for educators and students alike. While this is welcome, a lack of understanding as to how investment decisions are made has frustrated teachers who are not in renovated schools. Schools with the worst conditions are not always the ones that are considered for improvements; this upsets communities as well as teachers, who feel that they are the only civil servants that work in such poor conditions.

The perceived inequity and lack of transparency in the State's school infrastructure investments doesn't just demotivate teachers, it frustrates school inspectors as well as it undermines their work in reporting on facility needs. Given the lack of feedback on these reports, inspectors—as stated previously—feel that their work is of little material consequence. This leads to reports are of variable quality, and it diminishes their authority and credibility among the teachers and schools they visit.

Potential Areas of Intervention

- Increase the transparency, and thus perceived equity, of education sector investments, starting with school infrastructure and facilities. If teachers feel they have a better understanding of how and why investments are made, it is possible that their alienation from policy-makers will be reduced.
- One way to address the issue could be to adapt EMIS operational processes to integrate data from ongoing school inspections. Inspectors' collected data about school infrastructure could be integrated into EMIS' school facilities module to ensure that the information is up-to-date and reflects field realities. Such data may include: current state of buildings, number of students and teachers negatively affected by substandard facilities, inventory of facilities and equipment, among others.
- Budget allocations for school renovations could then be informed by EMIS data.

Potential Barriers to Reform

- The current lack of formal process in determining infrastructure investments may benefit a variety of actors who prosper from control over where and how capital expenditures are implemented. They are likely to oppose a system that increases the visibility of decisions.
- Responsibility for maintenance of school facilities is placed on both the education boards and the MoE. A lack of clarity in roles and infrequent communications lead to diminished accountability for performance.
- EMIS is not yet implemented, thus protocols for its management and usage are as yet unclear. EMIS project managers are still determining how it may be used and who its primary users may be—this particular application may not align with their initial hopes for the system. (Conversely, given the Governor's commitment to school infrastructure, public interest in the topic, and demonstrated EMIS functionality, it remains an effective option to pilot and test EMIS.) There is also the potential risk that EMIS, once implemented, may not operate as initially conceived.

[Note: EMIS has been identified as one potential way of consolidating and managing data on school facilities. Although EMIS has not yet been deployed, it does already include school facilities modules—albeit the current data is static and only covers a few dozen schools. Helping manage school renovations could therefore be a pilot application of EMIS. As this issue was not a focus topic of the project, this research did not surface other processes for maintaining school facilities data. MoE's Department of Schools and the education boards may also have existing management systems for this information that should be considered in addressing this issue.]

Opportunity 2: *Needs-Based Investments in School Facilities*

There is an opportunity to revise EMIS' school facilities module, and how it is used, to enable more transparent decision-making around school renovations.

Processes may be established to integrate information about school facilities from CIE and ZIE visits, the Local Government Education

Authorities (LGEAs), and/or other actors with firsthand knowledge of the conditions of schools.

MoE's Department of Schools and other relevant bodies can inform resource plans for school renovations based on up-to-date, field-derived data.

Features of the module and associated processes may include:

- An initial baseline of data on the status of infrastructure and facilities. This is already in progress, but may need to be extended to cover a more representative range of schools in Edo.
- Allows MoE field staff (particularly CIEs and ZIEs) to update module data based on their observations during school visits and their school facilities and inventory reports.
- Communicates decisions around facilities improvements and timelines to principals and head teachers and/or other stakeholders (e.g. community-based school management committees or teachers' unions) via text message or other channels.

Stakeholder Interest:

EMIS project managers are interested in testing the system with live users. A test application is yet undetermined—and given the high-profile, executive branch interest in school infrastructure improvement—focusing on school buildings and facilities seems like a promising pilot application.

At the MoE, the Director of Schools and DPRS say they don't have adequate information on infrastructure conditions at the school level. As such, a system that integrates and coordinates operations to create a database of infrastructure information is appealing to both departments.



ISSUE 5:

Inspectors Lack Means to Accurately Evaluate Schools & Teachers

Aspect of Teacher Experience

- Monitoring & Evaluation

Description and Impact

The research surfaced several challenges that make it difficult for CIEs and ZIEs to complete effective inspections, as discussed in Issue 2 earlier in this section. Beyond revising inspections processes, there is a question around the capacity of inspectors to conduct strong assessments of teachers and schools, given their limited number. As there is limited time and incentive to conduct a thorough examination of each school, inspections are often short—as brief as 20 minutes in some instances—and perfunctory.

Many inspectors also have or develop relationships with the teachers and administrators they assess. As a result, although inspections are supposed to be surprise visits, many schools know when their CIEs and ZIEs will come. Teachers are therefore punctual and in class, with all the correct documentation, for inspections. This does not allow inspectors to get an accurate sense of teachers' performance, and consequently limits their ability to provide useful feedback and support to teachers.

Potential Areas of Intervention

- MoE may want to consider revising inspections processes to include community inputs, which can in turn allow inspectors to be more efficient and targeted in their school visits, and to get a more accurate portrait of the challenges within each school, as perceived by the users of the system.
- Existing channels for community feedback such as parent-teacher councils and town halls could be used to enable parents, students, and others to input on the quality of education in schools, using a variety of indicators. While indicators may include teacher punctuality and attendance, it is critical that they include a broader range of indicators around school and administrator performance. This ensures that the systemic issues that impact teacher performance may also be considered.
- Community feedback on each school could be aggregated for their inspectors before their school visits, allowing inspectors to focus on a more targeted set of issues and make the most of their limited time in each school. MoE field office staff could receive the feedback as well, and be responsible for ensuring CIEs and ZIEs are incorporating the feedback into their inspections.
- There could also be an opportunity to use community elders as informal inspectors—a suggestion directly and indirectly offered by several respondents—which would make use of their idle time and leverage their social statuses to create informal pressure on teachers to perform.
- Combined, these factors may positively teachers' performance. First, teachers' recognition that they are being evaluated, even if informally, on a regular basis and not just during anticipated inspections, may impact performance. Second, addressing this issue may allow inspectors to focus their limited time on investigating already identified challenges and supporting low-performing teachers.

Potential Barriers

- In areas where teacher absenteeism is more severe, parents and other community members often do not have the necessary experience or information to accurately assess the quality of the education system. Especially in rural areas, many were not themselves educated, and thus may equate cosmetic improvements (e.g. a new coat of paint on the schools) with more substantive improvements in the quality of education they receive.
- Input from communities can be easily distorted by local politics and self-interested stakeholders. The selection of indicators and the processes for verifying and integrating community input must be carefully considered, and processes to evaluate the objectivity of submitted data may need to be established.
- New or additional feedback could overwhelm the capacity of MoE and/or education board staff who have shown limited existing capacity or interest in responding to community preferences. Managing community expectations and establishing channels for communicating about received feedback would be important.

Opportunity 3: *Community-Supported School Inspections System*

By itself, community input will not address any of the core challenges that lead to teacher absenteeism and subpar performance. This is why the research team did not recommend an ICT-based community monitoring system for teachers. Yet there may be value in incorporating community input in existing

school and teacher monitoring channels, such as the MoE's school inspections, to improve the overall quality and relevance of inputs to support these inspections.

Although human feedback channels (e.g. local reporters, village elders) should be considered in the design of

such a system, there may also be an opportunity to leverage ICTs to facilitate the collection of community feedback.

The MoE could, for example, use a mobile platform that allows communities to submit input to their local inspector via basic text messaging.

This extension to the current inspection system could include features such as:

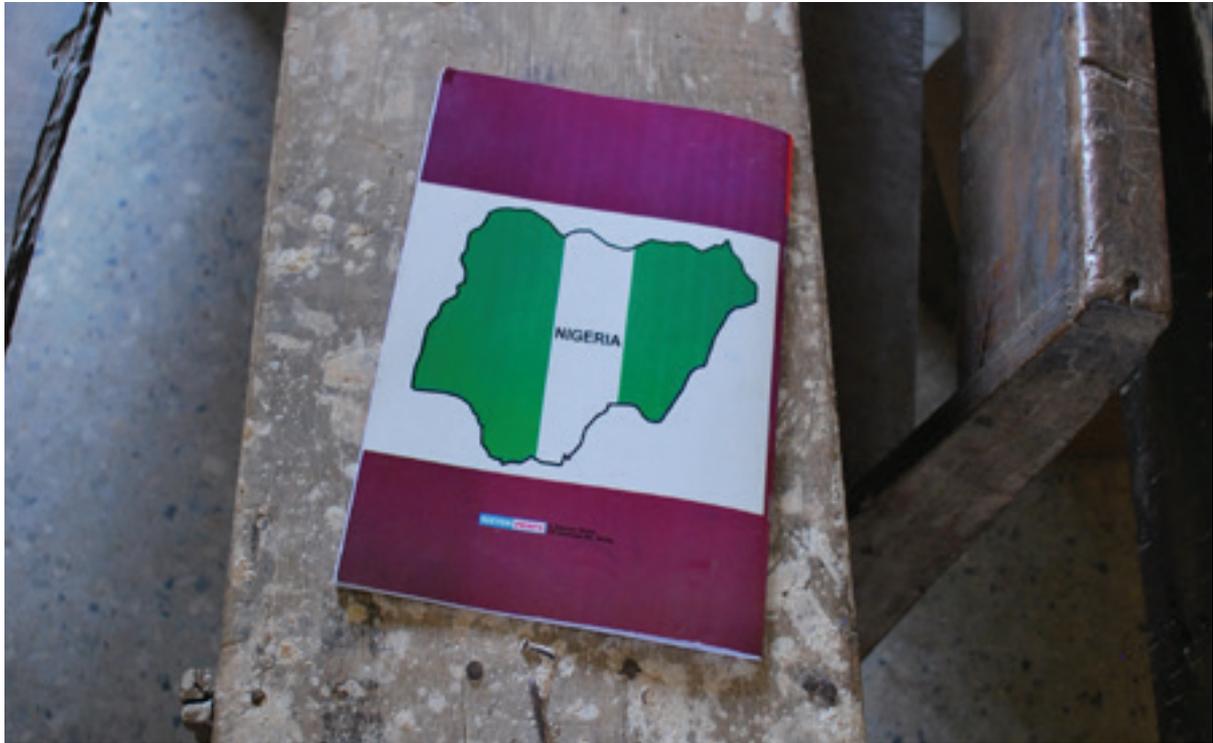
- **Allows citizens to send in feedback on teacher and school performance** via structured text messages (e.g. letters or numbers that correspond to pre-specified answers in response to a question) and/or free-form text messages (e.g. messages that have no specific structure). Determining the appropriate system configurations would require further community and school-level research.
- **Uses an open-source software platform** to allow implementers to adapt functionality from other deployments, or to easily extend the system to new contexts or applications.
- **Data feeds into a web-based dashboard** that allows implementers to visualize feedback from communities, and organize it by categories (e.g. date, location, type of feedback) as appropriate for their management and decision-making.
- **Allows implementing staff to communicate with community members to get more data on reported challenges.** Inspectors that require more details about a submitted issue could solicit them from the individual that reported it. Communications could occur via text message with both parties' contact details protected to ensure privacy.
- **Free to use** based on the utilization of a reverse-billed mobile shortcode by the implementer. This functionality is to be confirmed. While it is theoretically possible, previous experiences with configuring technology systems to allow a free service have been challenging and time-consuming. It is also worth considering a pay-for-use model, where users are charged a nominal sum to send feedback. This would allow the system to be more sustainably operated, and to encourage greater implementer accountability, as users will only continue to pay for the system if they see visible results.

Stakeholder Interest:

A similar idea (community monitoring of teacher attendance) has been discussed with DICT, loosely based on the experiences of the World Bank with similar systems in other states. CIEs and ZIEs have also requested greater support in their inspections work. Communities have expressed the desire to be involved in the management of their schools; several respondents, particularly parents and those in rural areas, had raised such an idea.

Conclusion

Successful and sustainable interventions to address teacher absenteeism require a close examination of the factors that impact teacher morale and management, as well as consideration of the chain of actors involved in teacher management and education service delivery.



Over the past five years, the Oshiomhole administration has built significant momentum and popular support for education reform in Edo State. But the manner in which the State has approached the issue have neglected some of the structural challenges that lead to poor education service delivery. This is particularly true in the case of teacher absenteeism.

Edo State's recent and abrupt dismissals of teachers and school inspections staff has alienated these public servants and their colleagues. The Governor's recent actions have contributed to their already entrenched sense that they are cogs in a machine that are easily acquired and disposed of, rather than valued colleagues that provide a critical service. To address poor performance among these frontline education civil servants requires first reversing their sense of resignation and commodification.

This research found that the true drivers of poor teacher attendance and performance is low motivation, a result of historical factors and systemic challenges in the public education system. Given this understanding, it suggests that current attempts to address absenteeism by blaming teachers for their supposed incompetence fail to address the root causes of poor performance.

Beyond teachers themselves, it will be important to consider the chain of actors involved teacher management and education service delivery. This research found that school inspectors—key actors responsible for overseeing teacher performance and providing teacher support—are also demotivated and disengaged from their work. Their negligence of duties thus means that underperforming teachers have few effective checks on their work, or the support and coaching they need to improve.



To improve staff performance, it is first critical to improve staff morale and management systems. Human resource theory has proven that individuals perform at their best when their unique worth and professional contributions are valued. Recent events in Edo suggest that teachers and school inspectors feel neither at present. Without addressing these fundamental issues, it may be highly challenging to substantively improve teacher attendance and performance.

As a result, this report puts forward five issue areas which the State may wish to consider as it seeks long-term solutions to addressing teacher absenteeism. These issues relate to teachers' frustration with the current assignment system, lack of accountability in school inspection processes, negative portrayal of teachers by the State, perceived inequity in the distribution of investments in schools, and lack of ability by inspectors to evaluate schools and teachers.

It is reasonable to expect that addressing these issues could help improve teacher morale and management,

which, in turn, impacts teacher attendance and performance. While this report offers some preliminary analysis of how these issues might be addressed through new systems or organizational processes, it also recognizes that any reform efforts in each of the identified areas would require further policy and programmatic efforts. Given the interest of the State in leveraging information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support education reforms, opportunities to do so have also been highlighted.

Ultimately, the authors believe that to successfully and sustainably address teacher absenteeism in Edo requires a closer examination of the factors that impact teacher morale and management. Addressing these factors may require a range of interventions from stakeholders across the education service delivery chain.

We are hopeful that Edo State can continue to build upon its efforts in education reform and to improve teacher performance and advance quality public education in Edo.



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Annex: Methodology

Research Methodology

This research took place from October 5 to November 9, 2012, with the fieldwork component running from October 15 to 26, 2012.

Qualitative field research was conducted with a focus on three broad groups of stakeholders: teachers (from both primary and secondary schools), communities (parents, students, community leaders, and other community members), and state and non-state education sector stakeholders (officials in policy, operational, and school-level management roles, and union leaders). Methods included in-context depth interviews, group interviews, participant observation, artifact collection, and key informant interviews.

Research was conducted in three primary and four secondary schools spanning urban, peri-urban, and rural locations in Edo. The team conducted research in three Local Government Areas: Ikpoba Okha, Egor, and Ovia North-East. Research sites were a representative mix of high-, average-, and low-performing schools, and were both recommended by the Edo State Ministry of Education (MoE) and randomly selected by the team based on referrals from community members.

Respondents were recruited through referrals and snowball sampling. The 88-person sample was heavily weighted towards teachers. The team spoke with 32 teachers, 15 MoE staff (7 headquarters-based, 8 field-based), 6 school-level administrators, 4 education

parastatals staff, and 2 union leaders. Additionally, the team interviewed 12 parents, 6 community leaders or elders, and 6 students. Key informant interviews were conducted with 2 Nigerian academics studying the country's education system and teachers' issues; 2 World Bank staff managing education and ICT-related programming in Washington, DC, and Abuja; and 1 US-based teachers' rights advocate.

Contact details for government respondents that participated in the research is available at this link: <http://bit.ly/TM6Ruc>.

Research was conducted by a team of five researchers—two Reboot researchers, one World Bank staff member, one local facilitator, and one representative from the Edo State Directorate of Information and Communication Technology (DICT). The latter two researchers were from Edo and knew the local landscape well, and the DICT researcher was not identified as a government employee to any respondents. Researchers were all trained in design research techniques.

Most interviews were conducted in English; in situations where a local dialect was preferred, local researchers led interviews and interpreted into English. The team was based in Benin City and conducted nightly synthesis sessions to analyze collected data, revise research questions, and reflect on process and adjust methods if necessary.

An initial workshop to introduce the study was conducted at the Edo State MoE, and attended by the Commissioner of Education, several MoE directors, field-based MoE staff, representatives from state education boards, union leaders, and DICT and World Bank staff. (Since the research commenced,

the Commissioner and several of the MoE staff have since been removed from office.) A research findings workshop was conducted with a similar group of stakeholders at the end of fieldwork to share early findings and collect feedback.

Research Challenges

The team faced several challenges throughout the fieldwork.

Time and logistical constraints prevented the research team from visiting any riverine schools, which typically have the highest rates of teacher absenteeism.

Despite repeated attempts, the team also struggled to speak with more staff from the Edo State education boards which operationally manage the school system. The team was only able to get the perspectives of four staff members from the parastatals (one from the State Universal Primary Education Board, three from the Post Primary Education Board), which the team feels is insufficient given their critical role in school and teacher management. For any additional work that may build upon this report, the team highly recommends further consultations with the education boards, particularly with mid-level staff across functional areas.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the fieldwork was conducted during a particularly tense period for teachers and education sector civil servants in Edo State. Just four days before the fieldwork commenced, the Edo State Governor had fired 20 teachers who were absent from their posts during three unexpected school visits. Then in the first week of fieldwork, the Governor fired 41 school inspectors. As such, teacher punctuality and attendance were

not issues during the team's visit. Many teachers, describing the period as one of unfair persecution, were reluctant to speak to the team, or may have been less honest in their responses. While all researchers were trained in navigating sensitive topics, and were able to coax many respondents to open up, the mood in Edo during fieldwork had impacts on the team's experiences with respondents.

Despite the challenges, the team does not feel that any of them threatened the research. To the extent that it could, the team tried to verify information received from sources that may have felt threatened with other sources, or to supplement perspectives that may have been underrepresented in our primary data with secondary research.



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January 2013

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