

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR SDG 4

**An action toolkit for collaboration
in education systems**

Case Study on Lagos State

Acknowledgements

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The All Hands On Deck For SDG 4 Action Toolkit comprises a set of resources including toolkit, case studies, presentations, guides and facilitator notes, to support better collaboration and integration across national, subnational and regional education systems. All Hands On Deck For SDG 4 calls for affirmative action by all education stakeholders, so that governments can benefit from the experiences and expertise of the affordable non-state sector (ANS) through their voice in policy development, implementation, and monitoring.

These resources were developed in consultation with experts including government representatives, non-state providers, researchers, and civil society organisations. Their valuable inputs and insights are a welcome contribution, and are listed in Annexure 3.



The Global Schools Forum is a collaborative community of non-state organisations working to improve education at scale for underserved children in low- and middle-income countries.



IDP Foundation is passionate about strengthening the global education system, and giving children in all settings access to quality education.



Oxford MeasurEd is a global education consultancy dedicated to working with international partners to collect and analyse data, and improve learning for all children around the world.

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Executive Summary

The 2021/22 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 'Non-state actors in education: Who chooses, who loses?' called for all schools, whether public or private, to be recognised as being part of one system. This call to action requires that non-state providers, such as those within the Affordable Non-State sector (ANS) who provide education to marginalised communities around the world, be included in policy planning processes.

Currently most non-state schools (often referred to as informal schools or low-fee private schools) run with little support or regulation by governments. A lack of government engagement with the ANS means there is little supportive regulation of these schools in place to ensure a minimum level of quality within all education provisions. Alongside this, the lack of a collective voice for the ANS means they have limited opportunities to support the national education agenda.

All Hands On Deck For SDG 4, referring to the utility of all actors and providers, both state and non-state, in progress towards SDG 4, is an initiative which aims to resolve the challenges of a lack of recognition, integration and support, by creating resources and practical tools to foster better collaboration between the ANS and government.

All Hands On Deck For SDG 4 aims to find a way to support this direction, using a case study approach to synthesise common lessons across diverse initiatives which have built successful engagement between state and non-state actors.

This case study is one of a set of four being produced for the All Hands On Deck Initiative. We have chosen Lagos State as a microcosm of shifts in how low-fee private schools (LFPS) are engaged with, regulated, and supported by governments. It is a state in which a significant majority of schools are private, and in which the engagement between the state government and the LFPS sector has evolved significantly in recent times. This presents an opportunity to look at what factors have contributed to this change.

Lagos State also has a thriving eco-system of non-state organisations working to support better engagement between the government and the LFPS sector and a history of (public) international aid investment in the private schooling sector.

This includes research organisations, private schools' associations, financial institutions, partner governmental donors and organisations providing technical assistance to schools. The presence of this eco-system of ancillary organisations presents us with the opportunity to look at how state and non-state organisations can collaborate with each other, contributing to positive change in engagement between LFPS and government.

I Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the past decade, there has been progress made in growing the support for non-state actors' engagement with government. However, this space still does not include all non-state actors working to support education in underserved and marginalised communities. The affordable non-state sector, including low-fee or no-fee private schools, religious schools, and the ancillary services which support them, are often not engaged to support governments in policy planning, dialogue, implementation, and monitoring. This limits the diversity of experiences involved in formulating and implementing policies to expand inclusion to education.

In a more collaborative environment, governments, as duty bearers for education, would be able to rely on expertise from all non-state actors involved in education. All Hands On Deck aims to find a way to support this direction by using a case study approach, to synthesise common lessons across diverse initiatives which have built successful engagement between state and non-state actors. This forms the basis of a practitioner toolkit aimed at supporting non-state actors to engage government in education policy planning, dialogue, implementation, and monitoring.

1.2 This Case Study

This case study is one of a set of four being produced for the All Hands On Deck Initiative. We have chosen Lagos State as a microcosm of shifts in how low-fee private schools (LFPS) are engaged with, regulated, and supported by governments. It is a state in which a significant majority of schools are private, and in which the engagement between the state government and the LFPS sector has evolved significantly in recent times. While it has not reached an ideal situation, the level and quality of engagement in the sector has improved dramatically in the last decade. This presents an opportunity to look at what factors have contributed to this change.

Lagos State also has a thriving eco-system of non-state organisations working to support better engagement between the government and the LFPS sector and a history of (public) international aid investments in the private schooling sector. This includes research organisations, private schools' associations, financial institutions, partner governmental donors and organisations providing technical assistance to schools. The presence of this eco-system of ancillary organisations presents us with the opportunity to look at how state and non-state organisations can collaborate with each other, contributing to positive change in engagement between LFPS and government.

Key Case study questions:

1

How have different organisations working in Lagos state all contributed to improvements in the environment for regulation and collaboration?

2

How have these organisations collaborated with each other, or played complementary roles in achieving their goals?

3

What have been the catalysing factors in building momentum towards systemic change in engagement with the LFPS sector?

To answer these questions, we will:

1

Present the **findings** of the research. This is descriptive data aligned with the research framework. The details against each point in the research framework are shown in Annex 1, with a narrative summary presented in the main body of the report.

2

Draw **conclusions** from these findings. This is presented under three headings, aligned with the three case study questions. These will then be summarised into specific recommendations for organisations looking to build similar partnerships.

1.3 Methodology

We use an analysis framework (shown in Annex 1) to analyse **(1)** the political and issue context in the setting; **(2)** the geographical level, types of actors, core characteristics, and assets of the initiative; **(3)** goals and approaches, including targeting and **(4)** impact.

There are two key sources of data for this case study. Firstly, we reviewed documents covering the context for non-state actors in Lagos State. We then conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives of all the organisations covered by this case study.

To answer the case study questions, we:

- Present the **findings** of the research aligned with the analysis framework, with a narrative summary presented in the main body of this report.
- Draw **conclusions** from these findings. This is presented under three headings.
 - The **first** is concerned with how the approach was informed by and adapted to the context.
 - The **second** looks at what lessons can be drawn from the findings, responding to the three specific research questions outlined above.
 - The **third** presents recommendations for organisations looking to undertake similar activities to those captured in this case study.

This structure is common across all the four case studies, with different specific questions being addressed under the first two sections of the conclusions for each, depending on the relevance of that case study.

In contrast to the other case studies for this project, this study does not look at the work of one organisation or initiative. Instead, it is a geographic case study, looking at the activities of all organisations within the sub-sector of private schooling in Lagos State since 2011. 2011 is chosen as a starting point, as it coincides with the UK Department for International Development (DfID) funded school survey, which was the first point at which the number of private schools in Lagos state was recorded.

Limitations of these Case Studies

It is important for us to note that this does not represent in-depth research or evaluation of the impact of any organisations. Instead, it is a case study, gathering reflections from those involved on the lessons they have learned from the process.

In this regard, none of the inferences made about the impact of any organisations referenced in this case study should be seen as certain. Rather what we present are the reflections on what has been learned in the last decade, by those who have been most closely involved. These reflections have been compiled and synthesised by the authors, with review and insight from those consulted.

Findings

2.1 The Lagos state context

Lagos State has a large and rapidly growing population. In 2023 it is estimated that more than 15 million people live in Lagos state, and Lagos city is the largest on the continent of Africa. Compared to the rest of the country, it has comparatively strong education outcomes, with high enrolment, attendance, and literacy levels¹ compared to other regions of Nigeria. The 2017/18 LEARNigeria survey found overall enrolment at 97 percent, but found that less than 20 percent of grade 3 students had reached a grade 2 reading benchmark.²

The scale of the private sector's involvement in education was until somewhat recently, relatively unknown. In 2011, a census was carried out which identified 12,000 private schools in the state of Lagos, compared with the 1,200 government schools in the state.³ The census estimated that 57 percent of the state's enrolment was in private schools. Since then, while no censuses have been carried out, estimates based on the number of schools opening each year place the current figure above 18,000 private schools, though the exact number is not known.⁴

In 2018, the average cost to send three children to a private school in Lagos State was found to be USD 135 per year, or just over 10 percent of the income of a family on the poverty line.⁵ It was found that less than 10 percent of schools were officially registered by the government, with low-fee schools (charging less than 10 percent of the poverty line income for the enrolment of three children) being less likely to be registered.⁶ This data shows that while the average private school in Lagos State will be affordable to a family living on a low-income, the lower the income of the family, the less likely they are to be able to afford to send their children to a registered school. A DfID-funded study to evaluate the DEEPEN (Developing Effective Private Education Nigeria) programme on the differences in learning outcomes between low- and medium-fee private schools (LMFPS) and public schools found that LMFPS learners were more proficient in English literacy, but learners in public schools were more proficient in⁷ numeracy at grade 2 level. The same study found⁸ that there were not clear benefits in learning outcomes for medium cost⁹ schools over low-cost schools (Ibid). These mixed results were replicated in the 2017/18 LEARNigeria study, which showed advantages for private schools in some subjects at some levels, and advantages for public schools in other subjects or at other levels.

1. <https://ierc-publicfiles.s3.amazonaws.com/public/resources/2015-NEDS-National-011716.pdf>
2. <https://learnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Learn-nigeria-report.pdf>
3. <https://edorennigeria.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/edoren-deepen-evaluation-framework-final-version-april-2015.pdf>
4. This is based on estimates provided in KIs by the State Ministry of Education
5. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0ebce285-6c7a-5bd5-b1af-8cd29c32ad66/content>
6. Ibid
7. https://beamexchange.org/uploads/filer_public/f6/fb/f6fbbac4-15b1-435c-95f9-c7d4e4c75bf2/edoren-deepen-evaluation-endline-technical-final_compressed.pdf
8. Ibid
9. <https://learnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Learn-nigeria-report.pdf>

There has historically been little engagement between the state government and the LMFPS sector. This is exemplified in the fact that before 2011 there was little attention paid to the number of private schools in the state. While most schools are private, and more than half of children are enrolled in private schools, public perception of these private schools is poor. There is a common public narrative reported which sees the LMFPS sector as exploitative of families with no other choices,¹⁰ despite evidence of general affordability of the sector.

2.2 The global context

The discovery that more than half of Lagos state learner enrolments were in private schools in 2011 transpired at an important moment, in relation to the global dialogue regarding private schooling provision. There was a growing realisation that non-state provision of education (which includes a mix of non-profit, for-profit, and faith-based organisations) was growing significantly. The percentage of students in low-income countries attending non-state primary schools, and the growth of non-state schooling,¹¹ had been expanding organically in the developing world in a bottom-up manner.

Private sector involvement in education, specifically, became the subject of vigorous debate as this realisation took hold.¹² Debate on the topic of for-profit private sector schools that cater to poor households, especially in low- and middle-income countries, was particularly divided.

Initially, both sides of the debate were primarily driven by ideological perspectives – however, the sheer number of children attending private schools around the world forced debate to push past the ideological. This “pushing” included a greater commissioning of evidence on the private schooling market, a greater reliance on evidence regarding the quality of private school provision,¹³ a greater focus on the role of government in regulating private schooling provisions, and the development of new frameworks to support policymakers to engage with the private sector.¹⁴

10. This is reported from various KIIIs

11. “Non-state schools” is an all-encompassing term for a range of models of schooling provided by actors other than government. Providers differ in scale and scope across contexts, with different management structures, financing arrangements, relationship with government and the extent to which they are regulated (Aslam, 2017). The term “non-state” can encompass schools owned and managed by individual proprietors or private school chains, providers owned and managed by faith-based organisation, foundations, non-government organisations, communities or even states in public-private partnership arrangements (Aslam, 2017). In addition, the ways in which these different ownership and management arrangements are categorised differ across contexts (Baum, 2014)

12. Publicly financed and sensibly provided: An agnostic framework for managing public and private education. 2016. Lipcan, MacAuslan and Uppal.

13. See Day Ashley L, McLoughlin C, Aslam M, Engel J, Wales J, Rawal S, Batley R, Kingdon G, Nicolai S, Rose P (2014) The role and impact of private schools in developing countries: a rigorous review of the evidence. Final report. Education Rigorous Literature Review.

Department for International Development, Abdul-Hamid, Baum, Lusk-Stover and Wesley (2015). The role of the private sector in Lagos, Nigeria. World Bank.

14. See Lipcan, MacAuslan and Uppal. See Lipcan, MacAuslan and Uppal. Publicly financed and sensibly provided: An agnostic framework for managing public and private education. 2016. Lipcan, MacAuslan and Uppal.

It was within this global context that the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) funded DEEPEN (Developing Effective Private Education Nigeria) to improve learning outcomes in private schools – especially for children from low-income households in Lagos – and work alongside DFID public sector programmes in Nigeria. The DEEPEN programme aimed to:

- (1) improve the formal regulatory framework and informal cultural practices that undermine the private education sector,
- (2) improve the availability of information to parents, schools and policymakers for making decisions about education,
- (3) increase the accessibility of financial services and products to meet the needs of schools and parents, and
- (4) improve methods and teaching practices.

2.3 Description of Initiative (Characteristics and Assets)

2.3.1 History of Government Engagement with Low-Fee Private Schools in Lagos State

Rather than being a case study of one organisation or intervention, this case study looks at how engagement between the state government and the private sector has taken shape over time. Our case study begins with the DFID-funded DEEPEN programme, which was precipitated by the growing global dialogue on private school provision and the growing evidence base on the scale of this provision. The DEEPEN census of private schools in Lagos state was carried out in 2011 and was the first moment at which the true scale of private schooling in the state was publicly recognised. The history for the census lies in the DFID funded Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN). ESSPIN was a public education support project, but team members began to recognise the extent to which education in Lagos State was being delivered through the private sector. At the time, the government was seen as being hostile to engagement with this issue, and so to avoid a negative influence on ESSPIN's other work, a census of schools in Lagos state was funded through a separate DFID programme, which eventually became the DEEPEN programme.

The DEEPEN Programme focused on market-driven approaches to supporting private schools, specifically adopting the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach.

This placed emphasis on ensuring that regulation created an enabling environment for schools, that schools were financially viable, and that they were meeting the demands of populations by providing quality education.

2.3.2 The Current Support Eco-System for Low-Fee Private Schools in Lagos State

Currently, there are a range of organisations working to support low-fee private schools in Lagos state. These organisations include arms of the Ministry of Education, private schools organisations, and ancillary organisations focused on supporting the education sector. A mapping of the organisations included in this case study is shown in Figure 1.

ACRONYMS

COPSAL	Coalition of Private School Associations in Lagos
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
DEEPEN	Developing Effective Private Education in Nigeria
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
SEED	Sustainable Education and Enterprise Development
TEP	The Education Partnership

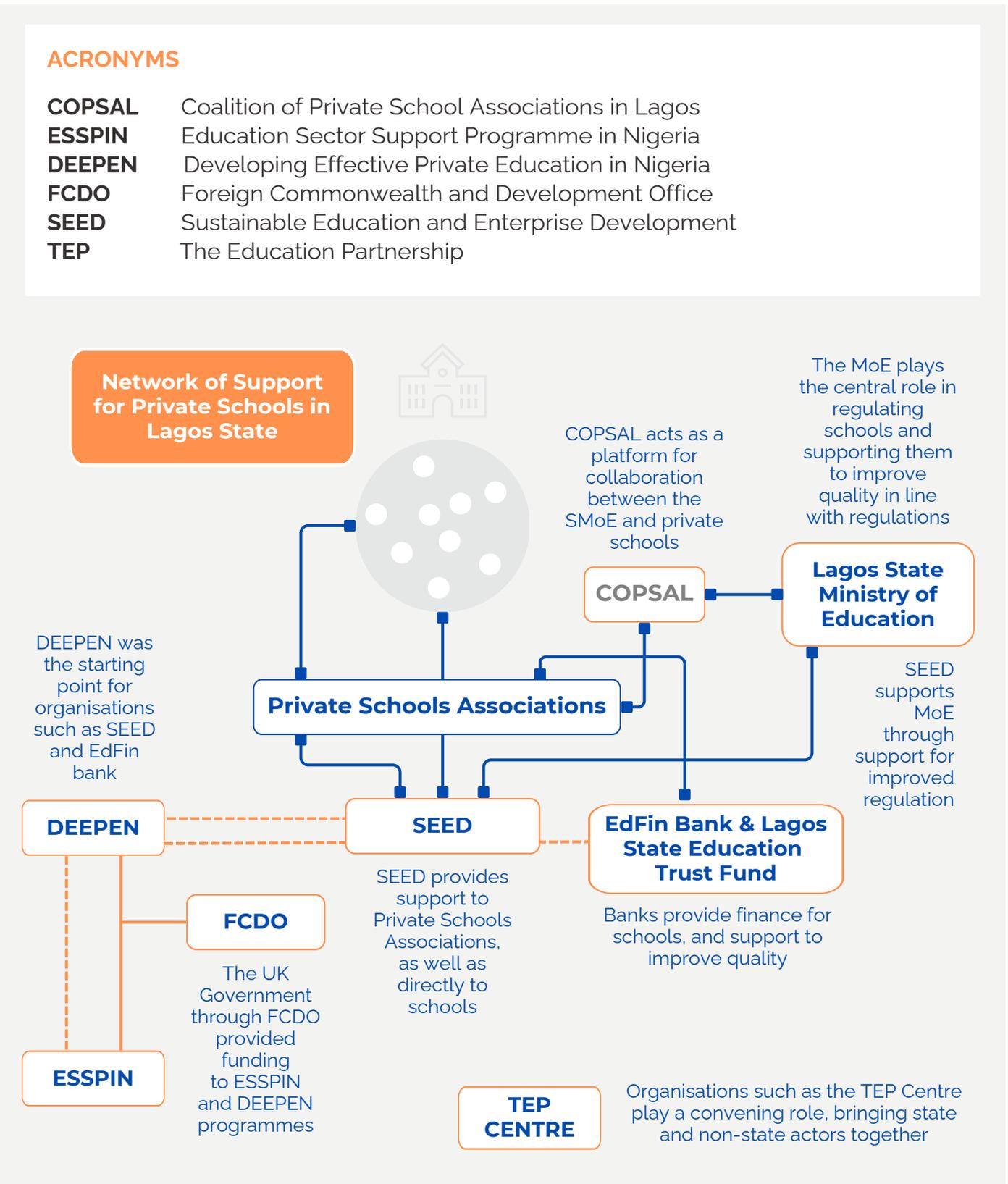


Figure 1: Mapping of the Eco-system for LFPS in Lagos State

It includes:

Lagos State Ministry of Education: The SMOE is the central supportive and regulatory agency for low-fee private schools. In its regulatory capacity, the Office of Education Quality Assurance (OEQA) is responsible for the registration, approval, and oversight of LFPS. The SMOE's role also entails providing support to LFPS to help them reach the minimum standards expected by the state government. An example of this support is the Coalition of Private Schools' Associations in Lagos (COPSAIL), a platform established by the SMOE to communicate with and address the needs of private schools (though not exclusively LFPS).

Private Schools Associations: These are the primary mode of organisations for LFPS in the state. They generally bring together schools aligned by specific criteria, such as the religious denomination of schools. They act as an advocacy platform for member schools, and as a point of communication between individual schools and the state government, currently facilitated through the COPSAIL platform.

Sustainable Education and Economic Development (SEED): SEED is an example of an ancillary organisation with a wide-ranging portfolio of activities aimed at supporting improved quality of education in LFPS. SEED originated from a sub-component of DEEPEN but has since become a standalone non-profit organisation. The activities of SEED focus on investing in improving quality of school leadership, teaching, and student learning in LFPS. This is done through support from school analysis through the School Quality Assessment Tool (SQAT), as well as other interventions specifically targeting school quality. SEED also functions as a convenor of networks, bringing together PSAs to have a collective voice with the SMOE.

EdFin Microfinance Bank and other financing institutions: Another priority of DEEPEN was to improve the funding environment for LFPS in Lagos State. Previously those schools which had not yet achieved registration were not able to access traditional business financing, which inhibited their ability to invest in education quality, and to reach registration. EdFin aims to provide finance to these schools, along with a range of services to support loanees with effective use of finance. Other institutions providing financing to private schools include the Lagos State Education Trust Fund (LSETF).

The Education Partnership (TEP) centre: The TEP centre is an example of an organisation not specifically focused on supporting the LFPS sector, but which includes non-state education in its approach to supporting improvements for education more broadly. The TEP centre's work focuses on exploring (research), engaging (convening), and executing (direct support). Research includes LEARNigeria, a national citizen-led assessment; convening includes hosting NEDIS, the National Education Innovation Summit; and the execute pillar includes programmes such as the Integrated Teachers Capacity Development Programme.

While this is not an exhaustive list of organisations working with the LFPS ecosystem in Lagos State, it shows a loosely collaborative coalition of actors working to support the sub-system. This includes organisations with very different mandates, and very different technical competencies, all working in collaboration with LFPS.

2.3.3 Eco-system Characteristics and Assets

We will first look at the types of individual organisations included in the ecosystem, before considering the characteristics and assets of the 'coalition' at large. For further information on how these characteristics are defined and derived, see Annex 1.

The four types of actors identified in our research framework are all represented in Lagos State. The range of organisations working to support LFPS in Lagos State means that a wide range of **technical issue experts** are included. This includes expertise on research, financing, teacher training, communications, advocacy, regulation, and others. While political support for LFPS is by no means universal, there are **political insiders**, most notably, the Hon. Commissioner for Education, Lagos State, who are supportive of LFPS. While they are no longer a significant presence, it could be argued that the UK government's investment and intervention was not only the action of a **high-level influencer**, but the catalysing factor in bringing together the coalition. Finally, the coalition includes **influencer communicators** such as SEED and the TEP Centre, who play a strong convening role.

Looking at the four characteristics of champions, as outlined by our research framework, we see mixed results for the coalition of actors working to support LFPS in Lagos State. The range of organisations in both the state and non-state sector are demonstrating **capability** in their work. Likewise, as the coalition contains state and non-state organisations, it is as **influential** as it could be. Our findings on the **alignment** of the coalition are more mixed. While there is a growing consensus, and language around a common goal of improving education for all in Lagos State, there is not necessarily alignment on how to reach that goal. Individuals from state and non-state organisations report remaining mistrust between different actors. Finally, there is a demonstrated **commitment** to the issue from all organisations working to improve the quality of education in LFPS. This is tempered by the reality that political commitment to what is seen as a contentious electoral issue will always be fragile, and dependent on politics.

In addition to these characteristics, our framework presents four assets, which organisations in Lagos State could bring with them into the coalition working to support LFPS. Using this framework, we find mixed results in both **public support** and **financial resources**. While most children are in private schools, there is widespread distrust of these schools in the public, and it is seen as a politically-sensitive issue. Since the DEEPEN project, financial resources for supporting LFPS have been scarce. This has, for example, prevented a repeat of the DEEPEN school census from being carried out. Through private financing for schools, and member contributions to organisations like SEED, this situation is improving.

The **formal authority** within the coalition is represented by the SMOE and is therefore strong. The final asset of the coalition is its **skilful leadership**, since the work of DEEPEN, work in the sector has been catalysed by individuals who have provided dedicated, skilful leadership on both the state and non-state sides.

2.4 Approach

The range of actors covered by this case study are all working towards improving access to quality education. However, each organisation brings different approaches and strategies to achieve these goals. This means that there is not a single theory of change, or understanding of how goals will be achieved.

The **overall goal** for all the organisations considered for this case study is to improve education for children in Lagos State. As most children in Lagos State are in private schools, there is a consensus that this goal cannot be achieved without support to improving the quality of education in low-fee private schools.

Using the three approaches from Kingdon's Multiple Streams Approach (MSA) included in our research framework we see different organisations engaged in each of the three streams. Kingdon's MSA notes that a window for sustainable policy change opens when there is a clear recognition of a problem, a trusted policy solution to that problem, and the political will to put that policy solution into practice. Programmes such as DEEPEN, and organisations such as the TEP Centre and SEED focus their work on producing data to frame the **problem**, ensuring that conversations on what needs to happen are grounded in evidence from schools. While there is no consensus on the best **policy solutions**, the SMOE, along with SEED and EdFin bank, are all working on practical solutions for improving the quality of education. The **Politics** stream is multi-layered. Within the government, advocates within the SMOE are working to create political space for improving regulation of, and support for schools. Outside of the government, organisations such as SEED and the PSAs (and DEEPEN before them) are working to shift the political space within the government, to ensure that support to LFPS remains on their agenda.

The activities of the organisations included in this case study do not fit neatly into our research framework categories. While the individual mandates of the included organisations are described earlier, their activities fall into the following broad categories (where alignment exists with one of the four channels described in our research framework, it is included in brackets):

Regulation:

This is the main responsibility of the SMOE, who aim to use regulation to create an enabling environment for schools, while ensuring that minimum quality and safety standards are met.

Research (Advocacy):

Organisations like the TEP Centre and SEED aim to use research and evidence to push for a better operating environment for schools, and better quality of education in schools. This can be through collecting data on learning (e.g. through LEARNigeria) or through providing tools for assessing school quality (e.g. through the School Quality Assessment Tool). DEEPEN had previously used the evidence from the school census conducted as part of ESPINN to support its model of market-based support.

Convening (Coalition building):

This is the primary function of the PSAs, and is also an activity used by SEED (to convene networks) as well as the TEP centre (through the NEDIS forum, for example).

Financing:

By providing funding to schools, organisations like the EdFin bank aim to improve the supply of quality education in Lagos State. Lagos State also provide funding for schools through the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF).

Training/Upskilling (Advising):

All the organisations covered by this case study focus on providing technical support to LFPS. This takes a variety of forms, and can focus on improving school leadership, school management, teaching, and assessment of school quality/learning outcomes.

2.5 Impact

There is no data that can be used to say whether learning outcomes for children in private schools in Lagos State have improved in the past 10 years. This is not an indication that improvement hasn't happened, but rather that the evidence is incomplete. There have been a variety of studies looking at quality of education in public versus private schools, and the most recent analysis draws a similar conclusion to DFID's ground-breaking evidence review on the topic in 2014: There is moderate evidence that children attending private schools achieve better learning outcomes, but the size of the difference is small, and the causal factors unclear.¹⁵

However, the debate has since moved on from this single focus. While private schools continue to serve the world's poor, the focus lies on improving market systems around private school provision, improving the regulatory framework and role of government in regulating private schools, improving the evidence base and improving the affordability and teaching practices in private schools.

15. Akmal, M, Crawford, L and Hares, S. 2019. Low-Cost private Schools: What have we learned in the five years since the DFID Rigorous Review. [Source](#).

In Lagos State, there has been a substantial improvement in making the market work for the poor, the availability and implementation of regulatory frameworks and the availability of information on private schools. All of this speaks to improvements in the quality of engagement between state and non-state actors.

With that said, some individuals consulted for this case study were pessimistic about the quality of the relationship between the government and LFPS. There is much to do, with an uncertain number of schools still unregistered, and a significant amount of mistrust between unregistered schools and the SMOE. However, looking at the changes in the sector over the last ten years, significant progress has been made. When those associated with the DEEPEN initiative speak of the reception of the first school census, they recall an environment in which information on private schools was not welcome in conversations in government, and where the primary approach to regulation was to close unregistered schools. This has changed dramatically, with the intentions of the current government being to use regulation to create an enabling environment, and to proactively engage with ancillary organisations in the sector. For schools, while many will not yet reach the standards for registration set by the government, the presence of more representative networks, and more engagement from organisations offering technical and financial support to schools, is likely to be having a positive impact on the quality of education being provided.



Discussion

While significant progress has been made, there is still a lot that needs to be done to make Lagos State an archetype for engagement between state and non-state organisations. What makes it an educative case study for All Hands On Deck is the progress that has been made from a low baseline. There was previously no collaboration between state and non-state organisations on the issue of LFPS – but now, constructive conversations are being had, based around a shared vision which views the sector as one education sector, rather than a private and a public sector. Here we present some reflections on what has been learned from this journey.

3.1 How did the approach adapt to the context?

The prevalence of LFPS in Lagos State was the driving factor that shaped activities in the state. Once there was credible data to outline the scale of the sector, it became practically impossible for it to not be a defining policy issue in the state. The attention being paid to the issue by the state government, and by organisations working on education in the state, is a direct consequence of the scale of the issue.

In addition to the scale of the issue, the eco-system of actors developed approaches largely aligned to the contextual needs, as defined by DEEPEN. The DEEPEN programme identified the 'market failures' in the provision of private education as being due to:

- i) a lack of information on quality to support parental choice,
- ii) booming demand allowing poor schools to survive,
- iii) a mis-targeted regulatory regime, and
- iv) uneven access to financial and technical support for schools.¹⁶

Since then, work from state and non-state actors has aligned to these needs. For example, the MoE's work has focused on the regulation and maintenance of minimum standards, while non-state organisations have supported information for parents, and access to financial and technical support.

The work done by DEEPEN had a significant influence on re-framing the discussion around private schooling in Lagos State. Much of the work being done now has some connection to DEEPEN, and it is viewed as a seminal project for the sector. However, there is no direct evidence to say that the approaches taken are directly informed by the knowledge base that DEEPEN built on the market-based challenges of LFPS. We cannot discount the possibility that the needs identified by DEEPEN are the most relevant for the LFPS sector in Lagos. However, from what we can infer, organisations in Lagos State have programmes aligned with the current evidence based on the contextual needs of LFPS.

16. <https://edorennigeria.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/edoren-deepen-evaluation-framework-final-version-april-2015.pdf>

3.2 How did the characteristics of the individual/organisation inform the effectiveness of the approach?

3.2.1 How have different organisations working in Lagos State all contributed to improvements in the environment for regulation and collaboration?

Looking at the activities of organisations in Lagos State in the last 10 years, we can draw conclusions on which activities have been impactful in improving collaboration:

- **The government is the central duty holder for education, including regulation of the private sector, and is a key actor in supporting better engagement.** Regulation is a key point of contact between the government and schools and is therefore a point for collaboration and communication between state and non-state actors. From the side of government, this becomes productive when it is an activity in enabling, building trust, and supporting those schools who have prioritised quality. For schools, regulatory structures allow for an opportunity to demonstrate the value of the sector, and to advocate collectively for better support and more constructive regulation.
- **Building relationships with champions in government is an important activity for non-state actors, but politics may disrupt them.** This is particularly true in cases where support for LFPS is contentious, such as in Lagos State. For non-state organisations supporting the LFPS sector, it is important to recognise the value of individual advocates for the sector. These advocates can act as champions within the government system, keeping focus on the issue. The risk of this approach is that these individuals, whether political or civil appointees are likely to change. Organisations in Lagos State have placed their focus on being prepared for this, having a clearly aligned message that can be used to maintain consistency across relationships.
- **There is value in spending time on framing the issue:** This has been the lasting influence of the support of the UK Department for International Development (DfID) through the DEEPEN programme. Whether directly or indirectly, the DEEPEN school census and the research done on market-based reforms have set the tone for debate in the state. While the programme activities themselves undoubtedly informed what came later, the work on generating evidence and a theoretical framing for the challenge has been invaluable. This shared understanding of the issue creates a common ground on which previously opposed organisations can meet.
- **Constructive dialogue and common goals help to build productive relationships:** Most actors in Lagos State have adopted a pragmatic standpoint, in which the focus is on how to improve education for all children, regardless of whether they are in public or private schools. This means that the debate is structured around deriving the best from the current situation, placing the education of children at the centre of all discussions. This pragmatic stance in Lagos State means that currently discussions are at a point where all parties rest on clear evidence.

3.2.2 How have these organisations collaborated with each other, or played complementary roles in achieving their goals?

Throughout this case study we have referred to a “coalition” of organisations operational in Lagos State. This is an informal coalition, where organisations share a common goal, but otherwise are completely independent, and not always aligned on approaches or activities. In Lagos State, this coalition includes:

- Advocates/public voices
- Networks of schools with connections to communities
- Champions for positive change within the government
- Technical agencies who can provide practical support
- Evidence generators
- Facilitators who can bring different groups together

Each of these roles played an important part, strengthened by acting in loose coalition.

While there are no formal collaboration agreements between organisations, as we outlined in section 3.1 there is a theoretical alignment in how organisations work to support improved quality in the LFPS sector. Focusing on any individual misses how their work contributed to creating an enabling environment, and the role that collaboration and complementary skills play. The case of Lagos State demonstrates that this does not need to be a formal coalition, but rather a constellation of actors with a theoretical alignment, and a willingness to communicate and collaborate.

3.2.3 Lessons Learned on the Work of the Donor

The case of the LFPS sector in Lagos State is a case of Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Approach in action.

It began with the 2011 school census, which presented a clear view of the problem to be addressed, that is the proliferation of unregistered private schools, driven by a mismatch between supply and demand in the education sector. State and non-state actors then built a theoretical framework for policy solutions, which has been (directly or indirectly) put into practice in the long term by a constellation of state and non-state actors. Throughout this, organisations worked to use evidence to strengthen the political expediency of implementing the policy solutions.

While this demonstrates the catalysing impact of the 2011 school census, it also shows that no one piece of work can create lasting change. The school census was a light-switch moment for the sector in illuminating and quantifying the issue. What it did was open an opportunity to begin to shift a political narrative, and to work on policy solutions which could be implemented once that window of opportunity was opened. The lesson to be learned from this is that individual pieces of research can be influential, but only when there is a concerted effort to build on them, and a political will to look for, and implement solutions.

3.3 Recommendations on building momentum for systemic change

This case study reflects on the work done by a range of state and non-state organisations over a period of 10 years. Over this period, we can say that the work of these organisations has built momentum behind the cause of improving the quality of education provided by the LFPS sector. The recommendations that we can draw therefore relate to how to build momentum behind an issue of systemic change. They are applicable to both state and non-state actors looking to enact change.

1

Map your eco-systems against the system needs. Whatever the challenge you are looking to address, or the policy change you are looking to enact, you should see yourself as part of an eco-system of actors. Mapping both the system's needs, and the work being done by other actors in the systems can allow you to think systematically. This means viewing your own organisational theory of change as part of a greater theory of change, and that your activities may not be sufficient on their own to enact change, but can contribute to a wider push for system change.

2

Where no system for change exists, focus on crystalising the issue. It may be that when you come to mapping you see that, considering the scale of the issue, there are no, or few other actors working on it. It may be that the issue is at a nascent stage where there is still not a clear or aligned understanding of what the issue is, and what the system needs may be. If this is the case, the most impactful activity may be to conduct research that can frame the issue and begin a move towards a shared vision for change. Doing so means navigating the process of generating evidence that will be credible for a range of audiences, who may have ideologically opposed views.

3

The relationship between narratives and evidence works in both directions. For example, in the case of the DEEPEN school census, if the narrative around the evidence generated was one of government failure, it is likely that it would have been received defensively. Instead, the narrative was one of practical opportunity to improve the quality and equity of education in the state. Conversely, if a narrative is built without evidence, it may be perceived as an attempt to lobby for an organisation's interest. In cases of contentious issues, a focus on both credible evidence, and narrative building is particularly important.

4

Build activities on an understanding of problem, policy, and politics.

The case of Lagos State is a good case study in the practical application of Kingdon's MSA. When planning activities, it is useful to think through:

- i) Is there is a clear evidence-based framing of the problem?
- ii) Is there a policy solution which can be presented to address the problem? And,
- iii) Is there political opportunity to implement this solution?

Your role in addressing these needs, will depend on your expertise as an organisation, as well as the expertise of the eco-system at large.

5

Include trust and relationship building in your activities. This has been the case in Lagos State for all state and non-state actors, ensuring that all activities work to build trust between organisations, and relationships with individuals. For non-state actors it helps to have advocates within the government who understand and support the envisaged change. For state actors, regulation and policy formation should be a way to build trust in the work of the government among non-state actors.

Annexure

i Annex 1 – All Hands on Deck Research Framework

Data Point	Details	Link to Frameworks	Scoring (Initial)
1. Context for Initiative			
Political Context			
1.1 Political Space	Is there political space for civil-society/non-state engagement in policy discussions? Is the system democratic or autocratic? Open or closed?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Open/ Mixed/ Closed
1.2 Decision makers' openness to influence	Are there for engagement on policy formation? Does the government involve outside voices in technical discussion and reflection?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Collaborative / Mixed/ Non-Collaborative
1.3 Stability of policy sub-system	Are there rapid changes happening in policy at the national level, or is there stability in government? Has the prevalence of non-state providers been changing dramatically?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Stable/ Mixed/ Unstable
1.4 Global Connection	Do international organisations have a strong presence in the system? Are they heavily involved in dialogue and policy formation? Is there significant donor funding for education?	Adapted from "geopolitical considerations" point from Champion Building Framework	Weak/ Mixed/ Strong
Issue			
1.5 Prevalence of non-state actors in education	What proportion of the student population is outside of the public system?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Low/ Moderate/ High
1.6 Issue Sensitivity	How sensitive is the issue of non-state education providers? Is it a subject that has been widely debated? Are there important organisations who oppose broadening inclusion?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Sensitive/ Mixed/ Supported
1.7 Stage in the policy process	Do clear policies exist for governing/supporting non-state education providers?	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Nascent/ Emerging/ Established

Data Point	Details	Link to Frameworks	Scoring (Initial)
2. Characteristics & Assets of Initiative			
Description of Initiative			
2.1 Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local National International 	Based on supposition from Patillo (2022) on the importance of location	Select one
2.2 Type of Actor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical/Issue Experts Political Insiders High-Level Influencers Influencer Communicators 	Taken from Champion Building Framework	Present/Absent for each point
Characteristics & Assets			
2.3 Core characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influential Aligned Committed Capable 	Taken from Champion Building Framework	3-point scale for each point
2.4 ASSETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Authority Enthusiastic Public Support Financial Resources Skilful/Influential Leadership 	Adapted from ACF assets	3-point scale for each point
3. Approach of Initiative			
3.1a Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System Change Policy Change Attitude and Behaviour Change 	Taken from Naeve et al (2017)	Present/Absent for each point
3.1b Description	Description of the overall/long term goals of the programme	--	Short written description
3.2a Target Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Policy/solution Politics 	Based on Multiple Streams Approach	Present/Absent for each point
3.2b Description	Description of any specific outcomes that precede the achievement of the overall/long term goal of the programme	--	Short written description
3.3a Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising (insider) Advocacy (outsider) Lobbying (insider) Activism (outsider) Coalition Building (mixed) 	Adapted from Hearne (2020)	Present/Absent for each point
3.3b Description	A short description of what the key activities of the initiative are.	--	Short written description

Data Point	Details	Link to Frameworks	Scoring (Initial)
4. Impact of Initiative			
4.1A Achievement of Goals	To what extent has the initiative achieved its goals.	None	Not Achieved/ Partially Achieved/ Fully Achieved
4.1B Description	Description of what goals have been achieved and what evidence exists to affirm this	None	Short written description
4.2A Achievement of Intermediate Outcomes	To what extent have other, intermediate outcomes been achieved?	None	Not Achieved/ Partially Achieved/ Fully Achieved
4.2B Description	Description of any other successes of the initiative so far	None	Short written description
4.3A Success in Delivering Approach	To what extent has the initiative been able to deliver its planned activities?	None	Not Achieved/ Partially Achieved/ Fully Achieved
4.3B Description	Description of what activities have been undertaken	None	Short written description

ii Annex 2 – Findings for Lagos State against Research Framework

Context in Lagos State

1.1 Political Context

Political Space	Open , but fluctuating
Decision makers' openness to influence	Open, but fluctuating – currently senior officials working collaboratively, but this hasn't always been the case
Stability of policy sub-system	Unstable
Global Connection	High

3.2 Issue Context

Prevalence of non-state actors in education	High – over 80 percent of enrolment is in private schools
Issue sensitivity	Moderate – less so than it was, but it is a highly politicised issue
Stage in the policy process	Emerging – significant improvements over the past ten years, but still a lot of change needed

Characteristic & Assets of Organisations within Lagos State

2.1 Geography

Level	Sub-national
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2.2 Types of Actors

Technical Issue Experts	Yes – from the beginning, the issue coalition has been driven by technical expertise in a range of sub specialties, including research, financing, communications and advocacy
Political Insiders	Changing over time – the informal alliance of organisations now working on this issue does include government officials, as well as those well connected to the government. This has not always been the case though.

High-level influencers	Yes – the non-state organisations involved have been associated with individuals and organisations who had pre-existing influence. This began with FCDO (then DfID) and the DEEPEN project, which was built on ESPINN, which had already built credibility.
Influencer communicators	Yes – organisations such as TEP centre have a strong public presence

2.3 Core Characteristics

Influential	Yes – catalysing force was DEEPEN, which at the time was built on a strong FCDO influence
Aligned	Mixed – as a loose coalition, there are competing priorities and perceptions of the challenge. However, over time a common language has emerged which has placed emphasis on the role of government as regulator, and on improved outcomes for children as the common goal.
Committed	Yes – Coalition being driven by individuals and organisations with long term commitment to the issue and to the sector
Capable	Yes – high degree of capability across the sector

2.4 Assets

Formal Authority	Mixed – While there is collaboration between the MoE and others working on the issue, the coalition is loose, and alignment on policy solutions not always clear
Enthusiastic Public Support	Weak – Issue is controversial in Lagos State, with public support for LFPS being mixed
Financial Resources	Weak – Since DEEPEN, there is limited funding for non-state actors to build engagement. Financing environment for schools improving, but this does not extend to organisations supporting the policy environment.
Skilful/Influential Leadership	Strong – Several key figures in the coalition have played an important leadership role in progressing discussion

Goals & Approaches of Organisations working in Lagos State

3.1 Goals

System Change	While no explicit common goal exists, all organisations share an intention to improve the quality of education being delivered by LFPS
Policy Change	Focus for policy change varies, but is focused on improving the regulatory environment for LFPS, both to ensure standards, as well as to create an enabling environment for LFPS
Attitude & Behaviour Change	NA

3.2 Target Stream

Problem	Yes – Focus on ensuring that evidence exists to highlight the need to support LFPS
Policy/Solution	Yes – Providing tools, structures and policies to improve quality in the LFPS sector
Politics	Yes – Building political alignment on the issue of supporting LFPS

3.3 Approaches

Advising	Yes – Providing data and technical support to MoE where requested
Advocacy	Yes – Using evidence on the LFPS to push government attention
Lobbying	No – Focus across organisations on ensuring that evidence underlies all activities
Activism	No – As above
Coalition Building	Partially – Not officially, but loose coalition is forming between organisations

Impact of Organisations in Lagos State

4.1 Goals for Private Schools

System Change	Partially Achieved – Some early indications that quality of education is improving
Policy Change	Partially Achieved – Regulatory environment is improving, with positive intentions for further improvement
Attitude & Behaviour Change	NA

4.2 Target Stream

Problem	Achieved – The work done by DEEPEN, and continued by others, has been essential in drawing attention to issue of LFPS
Policy/Solution	Achieved – Some positive results for building solutions for the LFPS, but hard to say clearly what the impact has been
Politics	Partially Achieved – More alignment than previously, though work left to do.

4.3 Approaches

Advising	Achieved – Organisations have produced credible evidence supporting improvements
Advocacy	Achieved – Evidence is being used to push conversations in the state
Lobbying	NA
Activism	NA
Coalition Building	Partially Achieved – No formal coalitions, but a good degree of coordination between diverse actors working in the sub-sector

iii Annex 3 - Acknowledgements

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