



Transparency International: Nigeria

***IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY, QUALITY, AND
EFFECTIVENESS IN
PUBLIC EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY
IN ENUGU STATE OF NIGERIA***

**Application of Information and communications Technology
To the Improvement of Primary Education in Oji River Local Government
Area**

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1.1 Background

Nigeria is a resource-rich country with a very large number of poor people. The National Population Commission of Nigeria put the country's population, in 1991, at 88,992,220. It was estimated to be growing by 2.8 per cent per annum. The population of Enugu state was said to be 2,125,068 in 1991; and may be estimated at 2,970,372 in 2003.

The number of people in poverty in Nigeria has been increasing over the years. According to the World Bank, the number was 18.3 million in 1980; by 1996, it had increased, more than threefold, to 67.1 million. In relative terms, too, poverty level in Nigeria has been on the rise. Going by the figures supplied by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the extreme poor, as a proportion of total population in Nigeria was 28 per cent in 1985, 40 per cent in 1992, and 45 per cent in 1996/7. [Asobie, in DFID, 2003: 38-39]

In this sense, Enugu state is a microcosm of Nigeria. Created in 1991, Enugu state is endowed with immense mineral, agricultural and human resources. It has a wide variety of minerals, which alone, can provide a good basis for the development of its economy: 300 million metric tones of workable coal deposits (in the state headquarters, Enugu); 100 million tones of 31.9 per cent iron ore (in Udi and Nsukka Local Government Areas); a large reserve of lime stone, on the basis of which was established, in 1957, the Nigerian Cement Factory (at Nkalagu, near Enugu), with a capacity to produce 3,800 tons of cement per day; and 75 million tons of lay/kaolin, which provides a basis for a ceramic industry. [ENSG, 2000:12; and Eze, Mbah and Ezea, 1999:2-3]

The soil and climate of Enugu state are congenial for the production of food and cash crops. Enugu state lies largely within the semi-tropical rain forest of the south of Nigeria; but it also stretches towards the north, with its features changing gradually from rain forest to open woodland, and then savanna. It has a land area of approximately 8727.1 square kilometers. It has a good well-drained soil and a fairly equable climate. The mean temperature in the hottest month (February) is 36.2degrees centigrade; and the minimum temperature (usually recorded in November) is 20.3degrees centigrade. Its lowest rainfall is about 0.16cm³ and occurs in February; and its highest is about 35.7cm³ in July.

The kind of soil and climate in Enugu state has made possible the production of a wide variety of agricultural goods, for domestic consumption and/or export. The main cash crops which constitute a basis for a thriving agro-industrialization are: cashew – 668,335 trees in production resulting in 3,120 tons of cashew apples and 1,040 tons of cashew nuts; rice – 14, 000 metric tonnes; oil palm – wild and cultivated species; castor oil seeds – wild and cultivated species; and pineapple – approximately, 700 hectares under cultivation, including a seed orchard. [ENSG, 2001: 13]

The food crops which are now being produced in Enugu state, and of which the state has the capacity to produce in greater quantity are: yam – 700,000 metric tonnes; cassava – 330,000 m.t.; maize – 60,000 m. t.; cowpea – 1000 m.t.; melon – 13. 000 m.t.; pears; poultry – 850,000 layers and 500,000 broilers; and pigs – 100.000. Other food crops produced in unspecified quantities are: pigeon pea, sweet potato, kola nuts, plantain, bananas, mango, and citrus (oranges, lemons and grapes). [Ibid]

Despite these generous natural endowments, the vast majority of the people of Enugu state, like the people of Nigeria, in general, live in poverty. They live below the poverty line of US\$1 a day. At 340 persons per square kilometer, the population density of Enugu state is much higher than the national average, which is 96 persons per square kilometer.

The South-east of Nigeria, of which Enugu state is part hosts the largest number of poor people in Nigeria. The pattern of the incidence of poverty, by geographical zones, shows that the people of south-east geo-political zone are being impoverished at a rate faster than the national average. For instance, in 1985/86, the incidence of poverty among the Igbo households in south-east Nigeria was 30.9 per cent; but the national average was higher, at 43 per cent; By 1997, however, the positions had been reversed: the incidence of poverty among Igbo households had risen to 79.5 per cent; but, although the national average also increased, at 69.2 per cent, it was lower than that of the Igbo.

1.2. Rationale for Choice of Issue Area and Location of Study.

1.2.1. The Choice of Issue Area.

Far more important than the facts about Enugu state and its people is the matter of perception. The people of Enugu state are, predominantly of the Igbo stock. They are known as the "Wawa"-Igbo, as distinct from the "Ijekebe"-Igbo. The Wawa-Igbo see all Igbo as "an oppressed people and victims of injustice, in relation to other ethnic groups in Nigeria"; but they consider the Wawa (of Enugu state) the most oppressed and marginalized people. They are predominantly peasant farmers who, until recently, were treated as an inferior caste by the Igbo occupying the more southerly part of the south-east of Nigeria. Consequently, they have come to perceive themselves as a people engaged in a life-long struggle of freeing themselves from discrimination, prejudice, oppression, domination and marginalization, which they believe to have suffered for decades in the hands of the 'southern' Igbo. Their ambition is to uplift themselves into a condition of "dignity and justice" through relative political autonomy and accelerated pace of economic development.[Eze, Mbah and Ezea, 1999: 4]

In Nigeria, in general, and among the Igbo in particular, the poor place high hopes in education as a lever for socio-economic upward mobility. The Wawa-Igbo attribute their condition of relative under-development to "the historical accident of being exposed to Western education much later than their southern Igbo brothers".[Ibid:vi] They therefore attach special importance to education. At the national level, the

Federal Government of Nigeria, regards the creation of a critical mass of highly developed human capital as a *sine qua non* for socio-economic empowerment and development. This is reflected in its policy of universal basic education, which was made free in 1976, and in addition, compulsory in 1999.

The programme of universal basic education has an enhanced importance and significance for the people of Enugu state. It is not, therefore, surprising that the Government of Enugu state declares, year after year, since 1999, that education is one of its top priorities. So does the Federal Government. Yet, the existential reality seems to question the commitment of the Federal Government and the Government of Enugu state to the provision of free primary education to Nigerian children. In September, 2000. The Department for International Development of the United Kingdom made the following observations about education in Nigeria:

"[In Nigeria today,} parents are less inclined to send their children to poor Schools. Most of the primary education is ineffective because of lack of teachers teaching resources and adequate infrastructure. The result is a high level of illiteracy among school leavers...

Government resources going into the sector are inadequate and uncoordinated.

Management is weak. Schools are heavily dependent on community support, Particularly for rehabilitation and maintenance, and there is heavy reliance on private, particularly Islamic education. Inadequate government funding results, in poor pay, with teachers frequently not paid over lengthy periods. Poor working conditions, inadequate facilities, little training supervision, and shortages of books and other reading materials contribute to low teacher motivation and effectiveness"
[DFID, 2000:6]

In a Doctoral dissertation produced in 1998, Ezeude referred to the report of a Technical Committee of 1997, which stated that "the SPEB set-up was bedeviled [sic] with managerial /accounting ineptitude and gross financial impropriety" [Ezeude, 1998:102]. The Committee, headed by Onyenania, had been asked to conduct investigations into the activities and accounts of the Enugu State Primary Education Board. The research results of John Ikechukwu Ezeude corroborated the findings of

the Technical Committee. According to *Ezeude*, officials of the SPEB, the Local Government Education Authorities as well as Heads of Primary Schools in Enugu state “agreed that with regard to provision and management of funds for primary schools, politics has led to inequitable distribution of funds to schools, under-funding of primary schools, due to proliferation of primary schools, disbursement of funds to primary schools based on loyalty to Education Secretaries, poor checks and balances in the primary schools, embezzlement of funds by some officials of State Primary Education Board and Local Government Authorities, imposition of examination fees (which are never accounted for) on pupils, improper accounts of expenditure in the primary Heads to Primary Board”. [Ezeude,1998:113]

From the existing literature, it is clear that the issue of transparency and accountability in the management of funds meant for primary education is critical for the successful implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme. Equally important is the question of communication between government and the local stakeholders, especially teachers and parents, and the latter’s participation / implementing the programme. In a study on the extent of primary school teachers’ awareness and involvement in the universal basic education in Enugu urban areas, Dr. Patrick Eya found that teachers had little knowledge of the goals and specific objectives of the UBE, its rationale, its ten implementation approaches and strategies, the responsibilities of the different levels of government, of voluntary agencies and non-governmental organizations, the number of teachers and classrooms required for the first year, and even the funding arrangement for the UBE scheme. [Eya,2004:1-6] There is therefore need to investigate the information and communications dimension of the primary education delivery service in Enugu state.

1.2.2. Choice of Location.

Oji River Local Government Area consists of rural areas and a semi-urban town, the Oji River Urban District, hosting an important hydro-electric power station, a historic leper settlement, a center for the disabled, a police college, a government hospital, a maternity, and the local government headquarters. Yet, the town lacks electricity, pipe-borne water, and telephone.

With a population of 86,361 in 1991, Oji River Local Government has about the smallest population in Enugu state, the smallest being that of Igbo- Eze Local Government Area (75,641, in 1991). Although it has , relatively, a large number of schools (65), when compared with some local governments with larger population (e.g. Aninri, 48 schools, population in 1991 – 222,638; Igbo-Etiti,51 schools; population – 138,401), yet quite a number of school-age children in Oji River Local Government are out of school.. The Research is focused on Oji River Urban. .

1.3. The Research Objectives.

The objectives of the research are three-fold. The first is to identify and analyze the problems and issues of transparency, quality and effectiveness in education public service delivery in Enugu state, using Oji River Local Government Area as a case study. The

second is to ascertain how the problems are, currently, being brought to the attention of the authorities, and the ways in which the authorities respond to complaints and petitions from heads of school, teachers, and parents, concerning the primary schools. The third is to devise, in consultation with the stakeholders, appropriate ICT model for the improvement of communication between the schools and the relevant authorities.

The focus of the research is largely on access to information and the inadequate state of grievance redress and feedback mechanisms on services to poor men and women and opportunities for ICT to strengthen those mechanisms.

1.4. The Research Problem.

The central research problem is the establishment of a link between, on the one hand, the lowering of the quality of primary education as well as the declining quantum of primary school enrolment and, on the other, the lack of transparency and public accountability in the management of resources for primary education in Enugu state. The differing perceptions of government officials and head teachers, teachers and parents need to be captured in order to devise effective communication

strategies and information techniques for improving transparency, quality and effectiveness in public education service delivery.

1.5. The Hypothesis.

Our hypothesis is that the institution of effective information and feedback mechanisms in the relationship between government and teachers and parents in primary schools will lead to improvement in the transparency, quality, and effectiveness of the delivery of primary education in Enugu state.

1.6. Methods of Study.

The work was begun with library search on the problems of primary education in Enugu state conducted primarily by two research assistants – Jude Tochukwu Omenma and Sunday Ikechukwu Ani. This was followed by a preliminary visit to Oji River Local government headquarters. There, an informal interview was held with Mr. Joseph Owusi, a Deputy Executive Officer. On the same day, an informal interview was held with Mrs. Uche Ejike, a teacher in Universal Primary School, Mile II, Oji River Urban, who is also the assistant Secretary of the school's Parents /Teachers Association (PTA). On a second visit to Oji River, the team interviewed the Headmaster of the UPE School, Mile II, Mr. Virgihus Ezike, and the Secretary of the Local Government Education Authority, Mr. T.Umeh.

These interviews were meant to establish the nature and scope of the problems confronting the delivery of primary school education services in Oji River.

The interviews were followed up with three focus group meetings conducted on the 22nd of May, 2nd of June, and 3rd of June, 2004. The focus groups proved far more useful for the gathering of information than the interviews, because, they provided opportunity for the parents and headmasters to challenge some of the claims of the education and local government authorities, and for the authorities to throw light on certain gray areas of policy implementation.

The participants at the focus groups were drawn from among headmasters/headmistresses of primary schools, primary school teachers, parents,

and a non-governmental organization, "**the Great Five Forum**", and the Nigeria Union of Teachers (N.U.T.) based in Oji River urban.

In the interviews and discussions held at Oji River, several issues and problems bedeviling the provision of primary education services were highlighted. These included the issues of funding, financial management, transparency and public accountability. Others were the problems of staffing and staff welfare, adequacy of classrooms, libraries, Laboratories, equipment and facilities as they affect the effectiveness of service providers and the quality of services provided. Yet others were issues of communication and feedback.

2.1. Funding and Financial Management.

At the heart of the issues raised concerning the constraints to the delivery of primary education services in Oji River was inadequate funding, together with the resultant heavy financial burdens which parents are made to bear. From the common perspective of the teachers and the parents, the primary schools in Oji River are grossly under-funded. What is provided by government, through the SPEB, is mostly funds to defray personnel emolument costs. Even then what is provided comes rather late; consequently, the payment of the salaries of primary school teachers in the LGA is often delayed.

Funds are seldom provided for overhead costs. On the rare occasions that they are received, the amounts are so small that they are not of much use. According to the Headmaster of one of the schools in Oji River urban, between 1998/99 and the year 2000, the amount received in his school for overhead expenditure was N1,000 (one thousand naira) per month. This was paid for six months and then payment was stopped. In the year 2000, the amount was increased to N2, 000; it was paid only once and stopped. Since then, nothing had been received by him. Other headmasters, at a subsequent discussion, indicated that they were not receiving any money for overhead costs.

Similarly, no capital grants are disbursed to heads of primary schools in Oji River Local Government area. Nor do they receive money for the maintenance, repair or rehabilitation of damaged buildings. For such work, they depend upon occasional interventions from the SPEB, the Education Tax Fund (ETF), or the Coordinator of the Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.)

In reality, provision is made in the annual budgets of the Enugu state government for the funding of overhead costs, capital expenditure and the costs of rehabilitation, repair, and reconstruction of buildings in all primary schools in the state. With regard to overhead costs, for instance, in the year 2000, the sum of N870, 689,000 (eight hundred and seventy million, six hundred and eighty-nine thousand naira), was budgeted for overhead costs. In 2001, the amount budgeted for overhead expenditure was increased to N 1,251,397,000 (one billion, two hundred and fifty-one million, three hundred and ninety-seven thousand). In 2002, the sum of N 2,235,023,350 (two billion, two hundred and thirty-five million, twenty-three thousand, three hundred and fifty naira) was ear-marked for overhead.

It is not in doubt that funds for overhead expenditure do flow each year to the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). At the focus group discussions, the information was given that in 2003, for instance, the LGEA received the sum of N3,327,215.88 (three million, three hundred and twenty seven thousand, two hundred and fifteen naira, eighty-eight kobo) for over head expenditure, that is N277,268 per month. Although the LGEA considered the amount too small to be shared to the 65 primary schools in the LGA, the school heads themselves would have been quite happy to receive roughly N4,000 per month. After all, they were lamenting that they were no longer receiving the sum of N2, 000 (two thousand naira) which they had received once in the year 2000.

In the annual estimates of the Enugu state government, no provision is made for personnel costs for primary education. This is because it is the Federal Government that disburses the fund for the personnel emoluments of primary school teachers. What is specified in the State budget for primary education is the vote for capital

costs. Table 1, below presents the picture for Enugu state, for the period 2000 – 2004.

**Table 1: Allocation to Education as a proportion of Total Enugu State
Estimated Expenditure, 2000 – 2004.**

	1.	2.	3.		
Year	Total Est.Exp.	Capital Exp.	All. To Ed.	3 as % of 2	3 as % of 1
	(Nm)	(Nm)	(Nm)		
2000	10,863.376	4,283.096	295.000	6.89	2.72
2001	15,481.289	6,895.133	457.700	6.64	2.96
2002	17,100.826	8,112.278	599.054	7.38	3.5
2003	na	na	na	na	na
2004	22,298.830	9,888.00	1,071.00	10.83	4.80

Source: Budget Speeches of the Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Chimaroke Nnamani, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2004

In each of the years, the Governor of Enugu state specified the amounts that would be spent on primary education in the state. For the year 2000, it was N139 million or 47.1 per cent of the capital budget for education. For 2001, it was N166 million or 34.95 per cent. For 2002, it was 163.5million or27.29 per cent. The Governor also indicated, in each year, the specific items on which the monies would be expended. For the year 2000, the expenditure would be on the establishment of Primary /Neighborhood schools, and neighborhood centers for District Schools; funding of the

UNICEF-supported Basic Education programme; and the financing of the State Primary Education (SPEB) project.

The projects for 2001 were virtually the same as those for 2000, plus the rehabilitation of primary schools. For 2002, the items of proposed expenditure included: creating a solid base for the smooth and effective take-off of the UBE scheme; establishing 15 new primary schools in each of the 17 Local Government Areas; routine maintenance of damaged schools; renovation and rehabilitation of damaged primary schools; and the provision of 30,000 (4-seater) desks for primary schools.

Before 1997, when the Federal Government took the decision to withhold part of the share of the Federation account due to State and Local Governments and use it to defray the personnel emoluments costs of primary school teachers, which the Federal government undertook to pay directly by itself, the funding of primary education was done jointly by the Federal, State and Local Governments. In absolute figures, the quantum of funds contributed by the three tiers for primary schools then seemed substantial. Table 2 below indicates the amounts contributed between 1994 and 1996.

Table 2. The Contributions of State, Local and Federal Governments Towards Funding Primary Education in Nigeria, 1994 –1996

Year	States	%	LG Councils	%	Fed. Govt.	%	Total
	N		N		N		
1994	844,545,115	21.9	2,591,957,200	67.1	424,172,800	1.0	3,860,675,115
1995	1,363,653,962	10.5	10,608,338,420	82.4	911,504,250	7.1	12,883,494,632

1996	1,352,707,012	11.2	10,029,203,597	83.1	683,628,238	6.7	12,065,538,797

Source: NPEC, Nov/Dec, 1996; cited in R.O.E. Akpofure, et al., The State of Education in Nigeria. (Abuja UNESCO Office, October, 2000), p.46

These amounts appear enormous on paper. In reality, they do not amount to much. Take the highest total contribution of N12, 983.495million in 1995, when distributed among 774 Local Government Councils, it would amount to N16.77million for each Local Government Council. When the joint contributions were made by the three tiers of Government, teaching were owed several months of their salaries. Today, what primary School teachers complain about in Oji River is delay in the payment of their salaries, coupled with lack of money to maintain equipment and facilities and defray running costs, and promotion of reaching to higher grade levels without the attendant increase in the level of their take home- pay.

In lieu of capital grants to schools, the SPEB in Enugu state intervenes periodically in primary schools in Oji River to rebuild roofs destroyed by storm, to repaint an old school block of classrooms, or to rehabilitate and/reconstruct collapsing buildings. Sometimes, this kind of intervention is made by the Education Tax Fund, or the Federal Ministry of Education, through the UBE programme, or the Local Government Council as well as international agencies. For example, under the UBE scheme, many classrooms were constructed in Enugu state; four of these were built in Oji River Local Government area. Another illustration is the repair of damaged roofs in a classroom block in the UPE Primary School, at Mile2, Oji River by SPEB. Yet another example is the construction of 3,250 seats with desks for primary school pupils, by the Oji River Local Government Council.

These episodic or periodic interventions have not solved the problem of inadequate infrastructure at schools in Oji River. The number of classrooms in primary schools in

Oji River is grossly inadequate. Some of the school buildings came into existence several decades ago, and are now collapsing. Some of these are: Community School, Umumba, Achi; Community School, Amamkponato; Community School, Umuagu, Inyi, Central School, Awlaw; and Central School, Akpugoeze. In the last three schools, the contractor did a poor job and yet was paid.

The ad hoc manner of providing material assistance to primary schools in Oji River reflects lack of planning and budgeting on the part of the Education Authorities in the state. Ironically, it also discourages the School Heads and the Nigeria Union of Teachers from demanding for plans and budgets or asking questions about them. Nor do they consider budgeting a useful instrument of financial management. The argument is that the various levels of government are unwilling to provide funds for any other purpose than personnel emoluments, it is therefore of no use sending budget proposals to them are sending requests to release funds from the approved budgets.

2.2. The PTA and Financial Burden of Parents.

2.2.1 The Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA).

The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) was created in 1970, in the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), by the Government of East-Central State. East-Central state of Nigeria was the heartland of the Igbos who were the principal citizens of the defunct secessionist Republic of Biafra. The PTA was instituted as a response to the financial straits in which the government of a people defeated in war found itself. It was introduced as a mechanism for formally bringing parents and teachers together as partners in mobilizing community support in the funding and administration of schools.

On establishment, the PTA was given multiple roles in achieving effectiveness and quality in primary education service provision. Indeed, the governing constitution of the National PTA of Nigeria (NPTAN) outlines the following as its major functions:
*providing a platform for parents and teachers to meet, exchange views, analyze

issues, make recommendations and pursue implementation of decisions on matters affecting education;

*cooperating with Federal, State and Local Governments **to achieve high standard of academic performance, discipline, morality, service and integrity of schools;**

*fostering mutual understanding, harmonious relationship and cooperation among parents and teachers in the fulfillment of their aim; the welfare of the school and the students;

*creating a healthy and sympathetic understanding of the education policies and programmes of government and influencing them to create climate for their reception;

*infusing into the children a sense of security through regular discussion of the issues that affect their academic performance and general welfare;

*ensuring stable, uniform and high standard of discipline both at home and school;

*enabling the teaching staff have a greater insight into the home background of their students, their difficulties, problems and emotional disturbances;

*encouraging regular visits to schools by parents to see their children at work and play with a view to familiarizing them with the aims and objectives of the school.[Okwor, 1998:101-102]

In practice, the PTAs have concentrated on providing financial and material assistance to schools. Its methods of mobilizing funds for primary schools in Enugu state seem to have narrowed down to imposition and collection of levies mostly for capital projects in schools. This orientation has something to do with the circumstances of its birth. The institution of the PTA was, in the first instance, a signal, by the East-Central Government, which re-christened 'public service', and called it '**community service**', that it was not ready and willing to fund education at the primary level alone. It, therefore, endowed the PTAs with formal recognition and statutorily defined and standardized their role in all primary and post-primary schools in the state. Thus, right from its inception in Nigeria, the PTA became preoccupied with fundraising activities carried out mainly by levying parents and pupils. It has

since become fundamentally a fund-raising organ which, unlike its counterpart in Britain, is not much concerned with public accountability.(A study carried out in Britain showed that for the majority of the lay members of the PTA, their concern was with accountability; they viewed the PTA largely as a mechanism by which the school head and his staff would give an account of the running of their school).[Ibid:84]

In Oji River, officials of the PTAs, including the chairmen of the PTAs of each school, perceive themselves as part of the administration of the school. They interpret their role, not as providing a check on the school head and the teachers to avert or minimize professional malfunction and administrative corruption, but as an instrument for mobilizing funds from parents and pupils for the use of the school authorities. At the focus group discussions they joined the school authorities in defending the imposition of a number of levies on parents and fees and charges on pupils who are supposed to be enjoying “universal, free basic education”, fully funded by government. The practice of the imposition of levy on parents by the PTAs was also defended by the Secretary of the Local Government Authority who asserted that the policy of government is that the schools are to look inwards for the running of the schools.

2.2.2. The Financial Burden of Parents.

The parents whose children are in school in Oji River carry rather heavy financial burdens. The weight of that burden is indicated by the following financial and material contributions which they are required to make:

- a. Purchase of school uniform for each child in schoolN250
- b. Purchase of Physical Education(PE) uniform for each child in school...N250
- c. Renting of five core World –Bank donated textbooks provided by government
At N20 per text book per child per annumN100
- d. Purchase of other recommended text books
- e. Fee for Extra-mural lessons given by the class teachers

- f. Approved school fee.....N90
- g. Purchase of handwork/handcraft or money in lieu of handwork
 - Primary 1-3: a broom per child every fortnight at N20 a broom = N100-N120 per term or N300-N360 per annum;
 - Primary 4-6- two brooms per child every fortnight at N20 a broom =N200- N240 per term or N600-N720 per annum.
- h. Seeds and seedlings for planting in the school farm.
- i. Periodic levies on parents, ranging from N400-N800 in two or three years
- j. Periodic levy on pupilsabout N100 a year.
- k. Graduation ceremonies levyabout N300 per parent.

A typical parent is expected to pay, at least, N1,050 (one thousand and fifty naira) for each child in the primary school within one year. This sum includes: the approved levy of N90 naira per child per year. money for/in lieu of handwork- N300; cost of renting five core texts per year – N100; cost of purchase of four other texts N200; provision of seedlings for the school farm –N100; periodic levy on parents –N160; periodic levy on pupils – N100. Not included here are cost of purchase of school uniforms and Physical Education uniforms, and money for extra-mural classes. If a parent has three children in, say classes 1-3, he will have to pay, at least, N3,150 (three thousand one hundred and fifty naira) to keep them in school. This amount appears to be little, and was, indeed, described as “not much” by one of the parents even though she had not been able to pay all her levies as due. It should, however, be borne in mind that we are dealing with the Igbo people of south- east Nigeria among whom the level of poverty is on the increase. A study carried out jointly by the World Bank and the Central Bank of Nigeria showed that, in 1997, the proportion of households in the south-east zone which fell within the bottom monthly income bracket of between N1000 (\$7.5) and N5000 (\$37.3) was 45.5 per cent. The proportion was higher than the national average (39.1 per cent) It was also higher than for all other geo-political zones, except north-west (45.8 per cent) and south-south (46.4 per cent). [CBN, 1997:96]

Generally, parents in Oji River are willing to make sacrifices to ensure that their children have basic, especially primary, education. Nevertheless, some of the poor parents are unable to bear what, in their economic circumstances, constitute heavy financial burden involved in sending their children to school and keeping them there. Some of them therefore give their children out to other people, as housemaids or servants, to be trained either in school or in some craft or occupation. Many of the parents struggle to cope but, still they resent the manner in which the levies and unauthorized charges are imposed. Some of the parents are unable to pay the levies and charges promptly because, often they are imposed at the middle of the academic year, without sufficient notice to the parents. As one of the parents, a participant in the focus group discussions, explained: "I am a civil servant: I depend entirely on my salaries, and I would like to know, at the beginning of each academic year what levies and charges I should pay on behalf my children in the school for the year. But, the levies are imposed often in the middle of the year. I am therefore unable to pay all the levies in the same year". This is the view of many other poor parents. A levy of N500 (five hundred naira) imposed on each parent with a child in the UPE, Mile II Primary School, Oji River in 2000 has not been paid by some parents by June 3,2004. The same applies to a levy of N400 (four hundred naira) imposed on parents in another school, Amaetiti community primary school. By the first week of June 2004, 25% of the parents had not paid the levy because they were poor. The school authority had to resort to pleading with teachers and the neighboring church for financial assistance. A sympathetic church had to come to the aid of the school by defraying the cost of the reconstruction and repair of the damaged school building for which the levy was imposed.

As the participants, especially parents and teachers, in the focus group discussions observed, the PTA-levy approach has not solved the financial problems of the primary schools. Dependence on it has had adverse consequences for both the effectiveness and the quality of primary education service delivery in Oji River. This point is illustrated in the section dealing with issues of quality and effectiveness.

Like the parents, the teachers of primary schools in Oji River, especially the Headmasters, also believe that the PTA levies and unauthorized charges imposed on the pupils are not, and cannot be viable substitutes for adequate funding of schools by Federal, State and Local Governments. Some of the teachers are, themselves, parents. They therefore feel the weight of the financial burden imposed on parents as well. Besides, as teachers they also suffer from the delay in the payment of their monthly salaries; the payment of their basic salaries without the attendant allowances or fringe benefits; their being promoted to higher positions only nominally and not financially; and the general lack of teaching aids. They therefore readily join the parents in demanding for increased funding of primary schools by all levels of government.

Government officials however see the matter differently. They argue that the funding of primary schools is not the sole responsibility of government. Parents, the communities and churches should contribute to the finances of schools; after all, many of the schools were initially built by communities and churches and later handed over to government to run. Strictly speaking, then, they are not government schools. They are community schools as the names of most of them indicate. The school authorities should, therefore, look inwards in the search for funds. The teachers and school authorities should be resourceful and creative.

Government officials at the local government level also lament the over-centralization of the authority to disburse funds meant for primary schools and to incur expenditure on behalf of the schools in both the National Primary Education Commission –NPEC (or the Federal Government itself) and the State Primary Education Board –SPEB (or the State Government). Take the issue of lack of funds for overhead expenditure, the State government proposed that 10 per cent of the Personnel Emoluments be set aside as overheads, but SPEB reduced it to 5 per cent. In reality, however, what SPEB made available to the LGEAs was less than 1 per cent. By 2002, SPEB therefore had a lot of materials in its store, purchased for the schools which it proceeded to dispatch to them through the LGEAs. The LGEAs and the primary schools are in fact at the mercy of the SPEB in each state, since they disburse what amount pleases

them and retain the rest for direct purchase of materials. Thus, while before the creation of new local government councils in Enugu state, Nsukka Urban received N600,000 a month from SPEB, Udi received N400,000, and some other local government councils got between N100,000 and N200,000 per month. After the creation of the new local government councils, some received between N50,000 and N80,000 per month from SPEB for overhead expenditure.

As their response to the centralization of authority, the attitude of the local government authorities has been to virtually turn their back on the primary schools. They do not fund them at all. Occasionally, however, they intervene to provide seats for the pupils or make other material donations to them from time to time.

2.3 Transparency and Public Accountability.

Promoting transparency and public accountability in financial management of primary schools is crucial for the achievement of high quality and effectiveness in the provision of primary education services in Enugu state. Openness of the planning and budgetary process and involving teachers and parents in the process can transform their attitude to the running of schools radically. Giving them information about what revenue is allocated to primary schools, letting them know, at first hand, how such moneys are disbursed and spent will make them have a real sense of ownership of the schools and go a long way in closing the communication gap between the government authorities that supervise primary schools and the teachers and parents of the schools.

At present, the budgetary process, as it relates to the primary education sector, is rather opaque. The principal participants in the process are the senior officials of the SPEB, and the State Ministry of Education. The Primary School Headmasters send to the SPEB, through the LGEA, returns on the number of staff in their schools, their ranks and salary grade levels and their annual salaries. The LGEA prepares annual, partial budgets, containing just cost of personnel emoluments and cost of overhead. This is sent to SPEB, and forms the basis for a full budget by SPEB for the primary schools in the state. What is released to schools when the budget is passed into law

as the state Appropriation Act is not, however, what reaches the schools. For instance, in one financial year, the state government proposed 10 per cent of the recurrent costs as overhead costs; SPEB reduced it to 5% per cent; eventually, the LGEAs got less than one per cent.

SPEB looms very large in the management of primary schools. Much power is centralized in it and it has significant discretionary authority, two factors which undermine the process of public accountability and create room for corruption. According to the participants at the FGDs, it is SPEB that pays teachers' salaries, employs staff, and deploys them to the LGEAs. SPEB is the channel through which schools, either directly or through the LGEA, receive special grants from government (Federal and State) for the UBE programme or from the Education Tax Fund (ETF) for equipping, schools, reconstructing, repairing, rehabilitating, or constructing (new) school buildings. Also money from the State Government for overhead expenditure flows to LGEAs through the SPEB. Indeed, capital projects for primary schools are usually described in the annual estimates of the State Government as "SPEB Projects". The same description is applied to projects for primary schools funded under both the ETF scheme and the UBE programme.

The amount of money that flows through SPEB to the Primary Schools is very substantial. In Tables 3, 4, and 5 below, we provide an indication of the magnitude of the funds involved.

Table 3. Budgetary Allocation to 'SPEB Project' made specifically, by ENSG

Year	Total Allocation to Education	Allocation through SPEB	%
	N million	N million	
2000	295.00	20	6.78

2001	457.70	25	5.46
2002	599.054	n. a	-

Table 4: Grants from the ETF to Primary Schools in Enugu State through SPEB.

(1999 – 2002)

Year	Amount
	(N million)
1999	68.00
2000	24.48
2001	47.60
2002	59.50
Total	199.58

Source: Education Tax Fund, Abuja, Funds Allocation and Reconciled Projects
To the Institutions in the South East Zone, (1999 – 2002)

Table 5: Amounts Allocated to SPEBs of the South Zone by ETF

(1999 – 2002)

State/SPEB	Amount Allocated
	(N million)
Abia	199.58
Anambra	246.54
Ebonyi	152.62
Enugu	199.58
Imo	318.98

Source: Education Tax Fund, Abuja, Funds Allocation and Reconciled Projects

To the Institutions in the South East Zone (1999-2002)

A fuller picture of what proportion of the Education Tax Fund is allocated to primary education in Nigeria may be seen by presenting the national disbursements by the ETF to primary schools, through SPEBs, as a proportion of total allocation to all levels of education.

Table 6: Disbursements From ETF to Primary Education, through SPEB, as a Proportion of Total Allocation to all levels of Education, 1999-2001.

Year	Total Alloc. To All	Alloc. To SPEBs	%	Alloc. To State	%
	Levels of Education			Ministries of Education	
	(N million)	(N million)		(N million)	
1999	8,669.08	3,117.60	35.95	657.0	7.58
2000	3,095.14	919.020	29.69	511.56	16.53
2001	1,407.17	324.75	23.08	96.27	6.84

Source: Education Tax Fund, in the Champion Newspaper, 2001.

The State Primary Education Boards in Enugu state do not disburse the moneys they receive on behalf of the primary schools to them. Rather they use them to make procurements and execute capital projects on behalf of the schools. In Oji River, Enugu SPEB has undertaken the repair of damaged buildings, (e.g. one of the buildings destroyed by rainstorm at Mile II U.P.E. primary schools) the construction of pupils' desks and seats, and the distribution of bundles of zinc and bags of cement. These activities are carried out through contractors; and SPEB has not always ensured that the twin principles of transparency and accountability are applied in the

contracts executed. As indicated earlier, in some schools in Oji River, namely, Central School, Enu Achi, Community School, Umuagu, and Central School, Awlaw, a contractor did a poor job of repairing and reconstructing some damaged buildings; yet, he was paid. The chairman of SPEB approved the payment.

SPEB is not always able to justify the claims it makes about work done, given parallel claims by the Enugu state government itself as well as the Federal Government. Since the UBE was re-launched in 1999, only about four or five new classrooms have been constructed in Oji River: 1 in Oji urban/central; 2 in Inyi; and 1 in Ugwuoba. Yet, in its returns to the ETF, which provides some of the funds for the UBE programme, SPEB in Enugu state made the following claims:

*In the year **2000**, SPEB in Enugu state spent N24,557,984.45 in the renovation or rehabilitation of 22 primary schools at between N1.007 million and N2.543 million per School. In Oji River Local Government Area, renovation/rehabilitation was carried out only in one school, namely, Community Primary School, Umuagu-Inyi, at a cost of N1, 030,352.

*In **2001**, SPEB in Enugu state spent N47, 600,000 in the procurement of 7,000 four- seater desks for the pupils at N4, 505 each; and the procurement of 4, 590 sets of Teachers' tables and chairs at N3, 500 each.

*In **2002**, SPEB in Enugu state spent N59, 500,000 for the construction of 34 three-room class-room blocks at various (un-named) primary schools in the different Local Government Areas of the State at N1, 750,000 each.

Parallel to these claims by SPEB, the Enugu State Government declared that it allocated the sum of N80 million for the establishment and rehabilitation of primary schools in Enugu state in 2000; set aside N60 million for the rehabilitation and establishment of primary schools in 2001; and allocated a total of N163.50 million for the renovation and rehabilitation of damaged primary schools in 2002. In 2004, the ENSG made further claims: comprehensive renovation of 180 primary schools in the state; provision of 51,000 four seater desks (3000 per LEA); and 5,800 tables and chairs.

There were claims, too, by the Federal Ministry of Education- [UBE Annual Report 2001 Pp28-29], under the UBE Programme. The Department of Planning, Research and Statistics of the UBE in its annual reports claimed that in 2001, it awarded phases 1 & 11 contracts for the construction of 3096 blocks of three classroom units, 3096 head teachers offices, 3096 stores, and 9288 VIP toilets in all 774 Local Government Areas. This amounted to 4 blocks of three classrooms for each LGA. It coordinated a nation-wide monitoring of class room construction project to assess the quality and quantity of the works carried out. It also commenced a procurement process by advertising for indication of interest from prospective contractors for the construction and supply of furniture. Truly, in 2001, the UBE reconstructed one of the damaged buildings in UOE primary school, mile 2, Oji River.

If these claims are correct, then some explanations need to be made on why the primary schools in Oji River Local Government area are in such a sorry state. It is estimated that about 70 per cent of the primary schools in Oji River Local Government Area are dilapidated; they are in much need of re-building, renovation and rehabilitation. Also, the number of tables and chairs for teachers in the Schools is grossly inadequate. According to one primary education official at Oji River LGA, in some schools, there may be no chairs and tables for teachers. They have to make do with the low forms and seats meant for the pupils. Until recently, primary schools in Oji River also lacked enough seats and desks for the pupils. The situation was significantly improved with the construction and donation to the schools, of 3,500 seats.

In our particular school of focus, the following questions were posed to the participants at the focus group discussions and the following responses obtained:

Questions	Answers
Do you have the following facilities in your School?	
a. Adequate number of classrooms	No.
b. Well-equipped science laboratory	No.

c. Well stocked library	No, but there are books for the library.
d. Adequate number of qualified teachers	Yes, there are 20 teachers.
e. Computers and Printers	No.
f. Typewriter and Cyclostyling machine	No
g. Tables and Chairs for staff (teachers)	Not enough; 14 have tables, but no chairs
h. Seats for all the pupils	Not adequate in number.
i. Electricity	No.
j. Pipe-borne water supply	No
k Telephone connection and line	No
l. Toilets (Water system)	No toilet of any type.

The participants were then asked the following questions:

If you do not have any of the items /equipment listed above, how does your school cope with lack of it/them?

Questions	Answers
a. Alternative for classrooms	We merge two classes.
b. Alternative for science laboratory	We make use of a classroom
c. Alternative for library	We use a particular classroom for class work and as library.
d. Alternative for computer and printer	We patronize commercial business centers
e. Alternative for typewriter/cyclostyling business	We make use of the services of machine centers.
f. Alternative for tables and chairs for staff	Some teachers provide chairs for

	<p>them</p> <p>selves; sometimes, the PTA makes some tables and chairs.</p>
g. Alternative for seats for pupils	Parents buy the seats, and the pupils bring them from home
h. Alternative for electricity	Natural light emitted by the sun.
i. Alternative for pipe-borne	Water Streams/artisan well/direct water from borehole dug in the 1930s
j. Alternative for telephone	Commercial GSM booths
k. Alternative to toilets(water system)	Resort to nearby bush/ or the storm-destroyed classroom block.

Thus, in one of the primary schools in Oji River Local Government area, lessons are given to students of different classes in one room; or two classes are merged and handled by one teacher for lack of space, making for inefficient teaching and learning. The inadequate classrooms are also used as laboratories and libraries. Teachers provide their own tables and chairs. Parents buy not only books and school uniforms, but also seats and forms for their children in school. The pupils fetch water from streams and artisan wells, and most of them go to school with their own drinking water. The pupils and teachers ease themselves, when pressed, in the nearby bush. People who live near the school convert a partly destroyed classroom block into a public toilet.

The above sorry picture of "free primary education" , was painted by teachers, parents and government officials about the UPE Primary school, mile 2, Oji River established in 1976 as a model primary school. It hugely questions the claims of SPEB concerning the amount of rehabilitation and reconstruction work which it has carried out in primary schools in Oji River. The classroom block that is now used as public toilet was destroyed by rain-storm in 1998. It has remained un-repaired even though money has apparently been allocated for its reconstruction.

This situation seems to confirm the finding of Ikechukwu Ezende[1998 :28] that,

“Even where the Federal government makes available funds for physical facilities and equipment, the political appointees managing the affairs of Primary Education Board, Enugu appear to be diverting the funds.”

He cited Onyenania, et al. [1997], as stating in their technical report that the SPEB, Enugu *“is plagued by managerial/accounting ineptitude and gross financial impropriety”*, and illustrated this with ‘established cases of embezzlement of funds in the board.’

A major factor responsible for the persistence of lack of public accountability and transparency in the management authorities of funds meant for primary schools in Oji River is the high centralization of public spending authority coupled with dearth of public information on the return of the central/state. The school PTAs do not have information about the fund allocation to, or of moneys meant for them, from the Federal, State and Local Governments or from the UBE programme, the ETF special disbursements, and grants by international organizations. As far as the parents and teachers in Oji River are concerned, the fact is: there is inadequate funding of primary schools in Oji River by the Federal, state and local governments. Given this lack of information, any one can use the money meant for them and they may not be aware

The second factor that underpins the lack of public accountability and transparency in the management of primary school finances in Enugu state, in general, and Oji River, in particular, is the ineffectiveness of the official anti-corruption agencies, especially the offices of the Auditors-General for the State and the Local Governments. The accounts of the Primary Schools are never audited. There is no auditor for the schools. There is an internal auditor for the Local Government Education Authority. There are also SPEB auditors, who visit the L.G.E.A’ s from time to time. There are also external auditors, the Local Government Authority auditors, who operate from

the office of the Auditor-General for Local Governments. These are supposed to audit the accounts of schools, and embody their findings and comments in the reports they are expected to submit to the Public Accounts Committee of the Enugu State House of Assembly annually.

This formal machinery for ensuring transparency and accountability in the primary education sub-sector is, however, ineffective. It addresses minor issues such as granting imprests, instead of extending loans to public officials who are not in the primary education sub-system. The more serious issues, such as under what budget head could the loan or imprest given to, say a newly appointed Secretary of the Local Government be accommodated, are ignored. This was the experience when SPEB auditors visited Oji River towards the end of April 2004.

The third factor that makes for lack of transparency and public accountability in primary schools in Oji River is what the participants in the Focus Group Discussions described as "lack of voice". As instruments for the maintenance of integrity in primary schools in Oji River Local Government Area, the PTAs are ineffective. The members of the PTAs perceive themselves as "voiceless" given that the formal channel of communication excludes them. It runs from the Headmasters, through the LGEA, to SPEB.

The PTAS are aware of the problems of primary schools; and the parents and staff express their concerns at the P.T.A. meetings. However, even at this micro-level, the teachers do not always adhere to the decisions and policies made. Most parents are disinclined to press the matter further because they do not wish to jeopardize the chances of progress of their children in school. This even when there are clear cases of misapplication, mismanagement or embezzlement of primary school funds, or crass exploitation of pupils, the PTAS do not press the matter beyond merely raising them at meetings.

The imposition of N100 (one hundred naira) levy on parents for the "entertainment" of Enugu government officials who visited the UBE primary school, mile 2, Oji River, was resented by some parents. The occasion was the second phase of the

sensitization campaign in relation to the DFID/UNICEF – sponsored “School Meal Plus” programme back up with a N1. 6m grant. The matter was not pursued by parents beyond mentioning at the Focus Group Discussion. The same applies to the information given at the same meeting that the damaged classroom block in the school, which had not been repaired since 1989, had been included in an earlier contract awarded by SPEB. Similarly, in another school at Oji River (Ogbune-Inyi), the Headmaster had been accused of embezzlement of school funds in his first year in office; no action was taken against him.

The primary schools do not have a formal machinery for promoting transparency and accountability. The PTAs work through special committees which are expected to conduct internal audit of the accounts/finances of the schools, but there is no mechanism for imposing sanctions and enforcing them. Although the federal government of Nigeria has a policy of fighting corruption in public life and has encouraged the creation of anti-corruption units at every level of the public service, the programme has not been implemented in primary schools in Oji River.

2.4. Quality and Effectiveness

The issue of quality in primary schools concerns the problems of literacy, numeracy and life-skills. At the Focus Group Discussions, there was consensus that the pupils in primary schools in Oji River Local Government Area are not adequately exposed to opportunities for acquiring life-skills. The parents and the government officials especially lamented that the practice of demanding for, or accepting, money from pupils in lieu of handcrafts had resulted in the denial to pupils of the chances of acquiring life-skills. The pupils no longer learn the skills of making brooms, baskets, local roofing sheets, handkerchiefs, sweaters, etc. They either buy them or pay money to the school to purchase them. The only skill they are now exposed to is the traditional method of farming.

The parents also complain of the low level of literacy and numeracy which the graduates in primary schools in Oji River exhibit. Some parents, who work in Oji River, prefer to live in Enugu. Part of their consideration is to enable their children

get higher quality primary education in better schools in Enugu, an urban city. Among the factors identified as accounting for the decline in the quality of literacy and innumeracy among the pupils in schools in Oji River Local Government Area are: low morale among the teachers; laxity on the part of the teachers; and the tender-age of children who constitute the bulk of primary school pupils.

Low morale among the teachers is attributed to delays in the payments of their monthly salaries; the non-payment of their allowances or fringe benefits; the withholding of the financial benefits attached to their promotion to higher levels on the ground that the promotion is only notional. Laxity on the part of the teachers is said to manifest in their decreasing capacity and lack of will to discipline the pupils; the irregular attendance of the teachers to the schools; and the lack of initiative, creativity and resourcefulness on the part of the teachers. Some of these problems are attributed by a male government official to the predominance of women as teachers in the schools. It is estimated that, in Oji River Local Government Area, for instance, 98% of the teachers are women. Others attribute the laxity to the unattractive condition of service of the teachers. In the UBE primary school, Oji River, there are (as at June, 2004), 20 teachers (including the Headmaster. The annual wage bill is N5, 090,364. The average income, per annum, of each teacher is, therefore N254, 518.2 (equivalent of U.S. \$ 1,899). The average monthly salary for each teacher is N21, 210 (equivalent of U.S \$158.3). It is also held that the children who attend primary school are too tender to benefit fully from the lessons in literacy, numeracy and life-skills.

Effectiveness of the primary education delivery in Enugu State in general and Oji River Local Government Area in particular may be measured simply in terms of the proportion of school age children in school. The precise population of school age children in Oji River Local Government Area could not be obtained. The total enrolment in the 65 primary schools, as at June, 2003, was put at 8,387. The consensual estimate by the participants at the Focus Group Discussion on 3rd June 2004 was that less than 10 percent of primary school age children in Oji River are out of school.

A more dependable way of making the estimate is to rely on figures provided by the National Population Commission (N.P.C), and the Federal Ministry of Education. In 1991, the total population of Oji River, as published by the N.P.C. was 86,361. Projected to 2003, at the population growth rate of 2.8 percent, it could be estimated at 120,291. According to a former federal Minister of Education, as at 1993, children of primary school age in Nigeria constituted about 19.7 percent of the total population. Going by these figures, the total number of school age children in Oji River in 2003 was 23,697. Thus, the proportion of primary school-age children who were out of school, in Oji River, in 2003, was $(23,697 - 8,387 \text{ divided by } 23,697 \times 100)$ 64.6%. These children may be out of school in Oji River; but they are not necessarily out of school in Nigeria. As indicated in section 2.2.2 above, parents in Oji River who cannot afford to maintain their children in school send them to other persons, usually in other towns to serve as maids or servants. In some cases, such children are sent to school by the new guardians.

Existing Modes of Communication

There is a direct link between efficiency in communication or lack of it and the level of transparency and accountability of public education service delivery in Enugu State. A basic reason why the Parents Teachers Associations “lack voice” is, of course, the lack of resources – financial, physical informational. Top-bottom communication in Enugu State is made through various channels: news broadcasts; official circulars; official news bulletin; internet (the Enugu State Governor has a web-site). These media of communication are ineffective; they may reach a small percentage of the urban middle class; but the illiterate, semi-illiterate, poor citizens in semi-urban centres and rural areas hardly receive them.

Bottom-up communication is bedeviled by bureaucratic bottlenecks of hierarchy and the requirement of following the normal “official” line of communication. The reports of Headmasters about the conditions of their schools are processed selectively. The statistics that accompany the reports are acknowledged, but the problems specifically raised about the deterioration in the physical conditions of the schools and inadequate functions are ignored and not responded to. The reports of the management meetings involving all Headmasters of schools in the Local Government Area and the LGEA are similarly treated.

The stakeholders discuss the problems among themselves in a wide variety of fora. These include the general PTA at the local government level, the Conference of Primary School Headmasters of Nigeria (COPSHON) and the Local Government/State Government Level National Union of Teachers. These non-official bodies, however, do not have the will to push through their demands and extract responses from government. This is mainly due to the fact that, their members being direct employees of Local and State Governments, are bound by the civil service rules of not discussing official matters in the press, not by-passing official channels and not disobeying or even challenging constituted authority.

To fill the communication gap, the participants at the Focus Group Discussion suggested the setting up of Anti-Corruption Units in primary schools in Oji River, linked to a Public Complaints Centre, run by Transparency in Nigeria (National Chapter of Transparency International) in collaboration with the Public Complaints Commission (PPC). This structure will serve as an intermediary between government and the parents/teachers. Its tasks will be wide-ranging: oversee school activities to ensure that teachers prepare and deliver their lessons; curb corrupt practices in schools; address the issue of child abuse in homes and at school; secure improved funding for schools from government at all levels; improve school enrolment; and generally make government more responsive, in a positive sense, to the needs and demands of schools.

Model objective

The ICT model proposed will, as illustrated in Fig. 4.1, add an ICT-based feedback subsystem to the existing system for primary education service delivery in Enugu State of Nigeria. This is achieved by establishing electronic communication between all stakeholders in Enugu State primary education service.

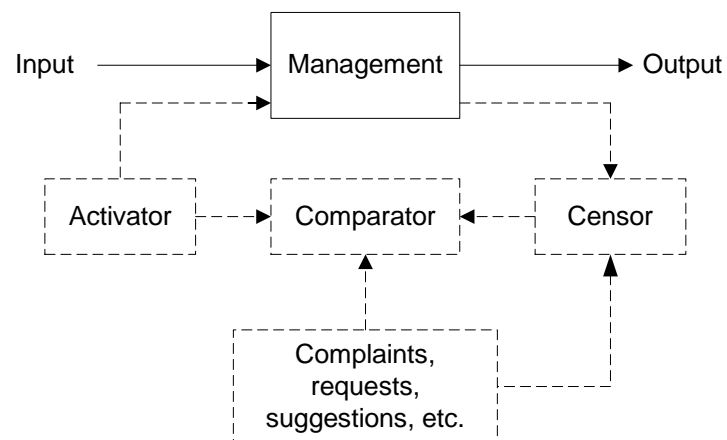


Fig. 4.1 Conceptual model of feedback subsystem (shown in dotted lines)

The components of the subsystem are

- (a) A sensor mechanism that captures, from within the system data on the operation of the service. From sources external to the system, it captures requests, complaints, suggestions, etc. from the beneficiaries of the service. The level of transparency to be found in the primary education service delivery will be determined by the proportion of operational data (financial, infrastructure and facilities) that is captured by the sensor.
- (b) A comparator that compares the captured internal data with a standard or reference. The quality of the primary education service delivery will be determined by the how closely it matches the standard and, finally,

(c) Activation mechanism, in which the results of the comparison along with external input from (b) are presented to the service functionaries. The functionaries are then expected to assess the effectiveness of their delivery by comparing their achievement with targets set in the national policy on education.

4.1 The existing feedback model

The existing structure of government administration and channels of communication between the stakeholders in the Enugu state primary education service are as illustrated in Fig. 4.2. Two facts worth noting are: (a) the parents do not feature as a separate entity as their voice is only heard at the PTA meetings and (b) the Local Government (LG), which used to own the primary schools, now operates only as an interested bystander that makes casual donations to individual schools in accordance with the political wisdom of the prevailing local government chairman, who is a politician. The only channel of communication between the different arms of government involved in primary education service provision is the traditional paper-based movement of minutes, memos, letters, etc.

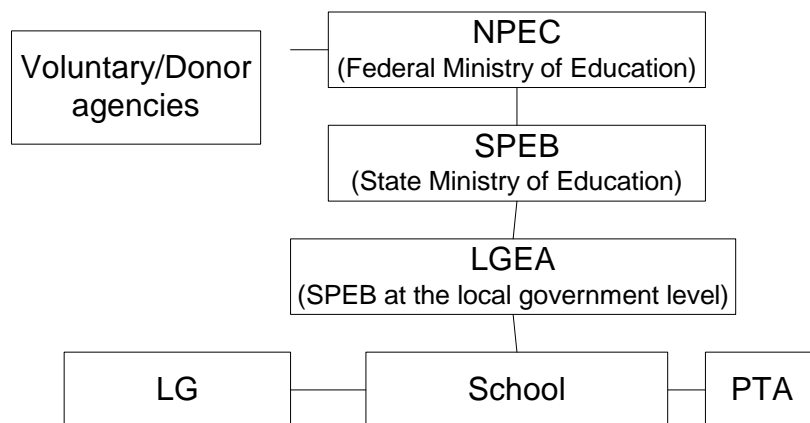


Fig. 4.2 Existing model (NPEC - National Primary Education Commission; SPEB - State Primary Education Board; LGEA - Local Government Education Authority; LG - Local Government (Education office); and the school; voluntary and donor agencies (e.g., UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank); PTA – parent/teacher association).

ICT facilities available in Oji River include (a) a private radio and two state-owned radios, (b) a small number of lines of a wired telephone service that is cheap to use, unreliable and expensive to subscribe to, (c) wireless mobile telephone services (GSM) that are expensive, fairly reliable but whose weak signals do not cover the larger part of the town. The poor in Oji River cannot subscribe to the wired telephone service as it costs more than the annual salary of a Headteacher to acquire the equipment. A good proportion of the poor in Oji River can afford to own or have free access to a mobile telephone set (handset).

Supply of electricity by the national utility authority is unreliable. There is no telephone exchange to provide local-loop connections to a subscriber in Oji River. The only alternative is to purchase a telephone mast with antenna to connect by radio to Enugu, the State capital.

4.2 Proposed ICT Model

4.2.0 Choice of model

The choice of an ICT model took the following factors into account: (a) level of (electronic) literacy of the beneficiaries, (b) cost to the beneficiaries of using the facilities, (c) the extent to which beneficiaries are willing to be identified as critics of the government, (d) estimation of the availability of ICT facilities at the service provider end and the electronic literacy and skills of the service providers, (e) sustainability of the effort, etc.

A combination of computer and telecommunication technologies is considered appropriate. Public communication facilities (access points) will be set up to provide communication devices usable by beneficiaries of varying levels of literacy. A toll-free land line, if feasible, will be obtained for use in communication both between beneficiaries and service providers and between remoter beneficiaries and the access points. Beneficiaries who dwell in areas not covered by any telephone service will be provided with local, fixed access to GSM services available in their area. Computers will be used to (a) collect and store complaints, requests, suggestions, etc., (b) send these to service functionaries at appropriate levels in the government administrative structure, and (c) receive and monitor responses made in respect of individual complaints.

Public opinion boxes will be provided at strategic locations to enable persons who may wish to submit written complaints, requests, suggestions, etc. to do so. Such inputs will then be collated, merged and converted to electronic form for local storage and transmission to the appropriate levels of government administration.

Leaflets summarising information items such as approved fees, budget allocations, fund releases and payments, etc. will be circulated periodically or whenever significant changes occur in those items.

Television and ordinary radio were not considered suitable channels because beneficiaries who are public servants may not afford the cost of participation or risk of public appearance as a critic of the government.

Community radio was also rejected because of (a) the cost of setting up the radio service (b) government's reluctance and/or bureaucratic foot-dragging in the issue of a broadcasting license.

4.2.1 Components of the model

As illustrated in Fig. 4.3, the model consists of two major components: the stakeholders in primary education service provision and an information and communication network linking these into a community. The stakeholders include (a) the various arms in the structure of government: National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) representing the Federal government through the Federal Ministry of Education, State Primary Education Board (SPEB) representing the State government through the state Ministry of Education, Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) representing the SPEB at the local government level, the Local Government Education office (representing the local government administration) and the school; (b) the voluntary and donor agencies (e.g., UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank); (c) civil society organizations (NGOs); (d) parents; (e) teachers; (f) parent/teachers associations (PTAs) and the (g) the Conference of Primary School Headteachers of Nigeria (COPSHON).

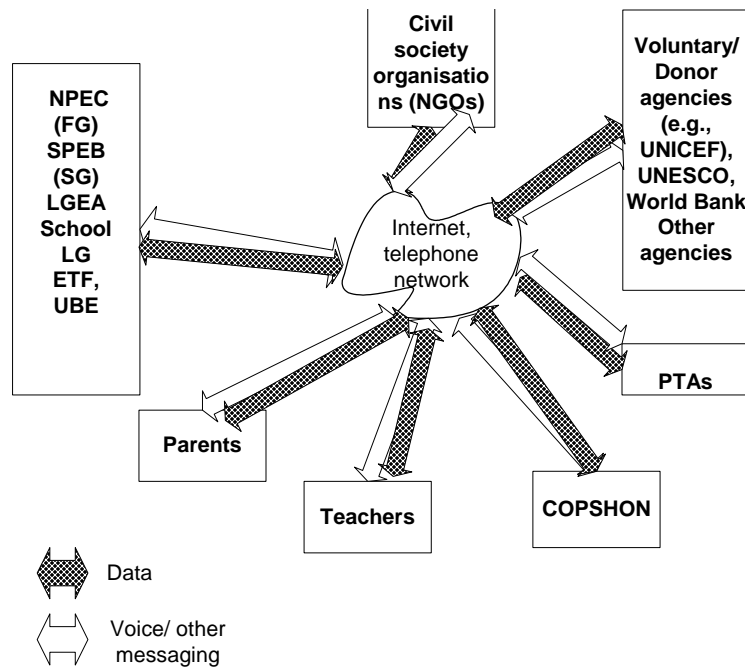


Fig. 4.3 Proposed ICT model – abstract view

The information and communication network consists of computing and communication hardware, software and personnel resources required to maintain electronic communication between the stakeholders. Electronic documents will be the primary medium of communication. Voice conversations or messaging will play a supporting role.

4.2.2 System architecture

The proposed system architecture is shown in Fig. 4.4.

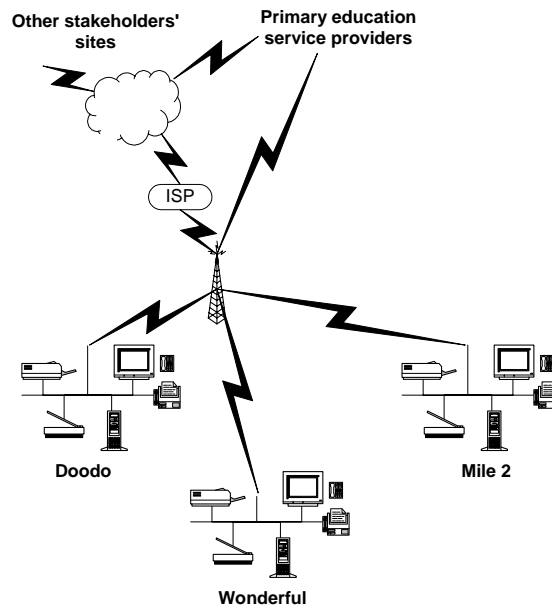


Fig. 4.4 System architecture

Three access points are proposed for the feedback system. One access point will be located at each of Mile 2, Wonderful and Doodo sections of Oji River. At each access point, a complete PC system, with specifications shown later in section 4.3.1, will be installed and set up to run the same feedback management application. Each system will be independently connected by fixed telephone line to the Internet through the same ISP. Access to the Internet from an access point will be by dial-up using this line. Permanent online access to the Internet is neither desirable nor can its cost be borne by the budget on this project.

The system will be driven by a Web-based application, named, e.g., Feedback Manager, that presents a friendly, menu-driven user interface while maintaining, in the background, data on two key areas in primary education service provision: (a) financial management and (b) service resources. The data will be maintained according to a model similar to the following:

Financial data

Receipt of fund

- Paying body
- Receiving body
- Amount

- Item(s) of expenditure (tabulated against amounts per item)
- Account into which the fund is paid
- Name of officer receiving fund
- Date

Disbursement of fund

- Paying body
- Receiving body
- Item(s) of expenditure (tabulated against amounts per item)
- Amount
- Name of officer authorizing release
- Designation of officer authorizing release
- Date
- Name of officer approving payment
- Designation of officer approving payment
- Date

Retirement of fund

- Receiving body
- Paying body
- Item(s) of expenditure (tabulated against amounts per item)
- Amount
- Name of officer certifying correct usage of fund
- Designation of officer certifying correct usage of fund
- Date
- Name of officer retiring the fund
- Designation of officer retiring the fund
- Date

Service resources

This shall be a complete description of each resource with indication of provider. This forms the reference for assessment of performance of service provision.

- human
 - teachers (number by qualification)
 - non-teaching staff
- material

- classroom space
- classroom furniture
- library space
- library furniture
- laboratory space
- laboratory furniture
- overhead (chalk, duster, dustbin, office stationeries, etc.)
- Head teacher office space
- Head teacher office equipment
- Head teacher office furniture
- staff office space
- staff office furniture
- staff toilet facility
- house
- (number of WCs, urinals, water supply)
- cleaners
- pupils' toilet facility
- house
- (number of WCs, urinals, water supply)
- cleaners
- measures, e.g., pupil/teacher, gender ratios for urban or rural schools

Communication

Internet presence of the access points is maintained as follows. Each access point shall have its own email address hosted by a reputable non-commercial organization, All the three access points shall share one Web site address hosted by an ISP that allows dial-up connection at local call rates.. Dial-in will be allowed from users at remote locations. Text messaging allowed.

4.2.3 Functionality

At the access point, the user (perhaps assisted by a human facilitator) runs the Feedback application that enables them to:

- (a) Submit suggestions, complaints, requests, etc. by completing e-forms.
- (b) view/print content from any stakeholder. For example, from the Web site of a service provider, the following may be obtained:

- Budgetary allocations for personnel, capital, overhead costs, maintenance, etc. by FG, SG, LGEA, School, LG
- Grants for personnel, capital, overhead costs, maintenance, etc. by Voluntary/donor agencies, ETF, UBE, others, etc.
- Disbursements for personnel, capital, overhead costs, maintenance, etc. to FG, SPEB, LGEA, School, LG – each to/fro near-neighbour levels.
- Payments for personnel, capital, overhead costs, maintenance, etc. by Voluntary/donor agencies, ETF, UBE, others, etc.
- Government policy documents, budgets, gazettes, schemes, approved fee structures and tariffs, etc.
- A paying level shall report a payment; the receiving level shall must receipt of same. The feedback system will marry the two sources, enabling the beneficiary to compare.
- Retrieve acknowledgments and responses to earlier requests.

The system will filter away complaints that are deemed to be frivolous, repeated, already treated or otherwise irrelevant.

Log in a database acceptable requests, complaints, suggestions, acknowledgments and responses to earlier requests.

Match responses with requests, suggestions, acknowledgments, etc.

Carry out a statistical analysis of requests, responses, etc., to determine frequencies and simple measures of central tendency, types of complaint or request, sex of requester/complaint, identity of school in question, class in which the complainant has a ward, etc.

Compare, for each school, the current resource status with the recommended reference or standard and calculates a quality of service index.

Perform auditing of accounts of all levels of government involved in primary education service provision (NPEC, SPEB, LGEA, LG, and School) to determine how each naira released at the apex is finally spent.

Produce reports on items of service provision, deviations, e.g., fees paid by parents against fees approved by government, history of payment of teacher's salaries.

4.3 Hardware and software requirements

4.3.1 Hardware

For each of 3 sites,

1. one Pentium 4 class processor
2. one 80 GB hard disk
3. one CD Rom drive
4. one CD Writer
5. one USB flash drive
6. one UPS 5.0 Kva (up to 10 hour backup time)
7. one Laser printer (Black/white)
8. one Scanner
9. one Fax machine
10. one pair of speakers

Telephone mast/subscription to a national carrier

1. a Telephone set
2. Mobile telephone antenna

4.3.2 Software requirements

1. Operating system
2. Office suite of applications including
3. a dbms
4. a word processor
5. an email client
6. a spreadsheet
7. an HTML (or XML) editor
8. a browser
9. An antivirus utility
10. The Feedback Manager application

4.4 Capacity building and Training

Those to be selected for training must be persons that are likely to benefit from the training exercise. Two training programmes are recommended: a Train-the-Trainer workshop and continuing in-school training.

A – Train-the-Trainer workshop (2 weeks)

Two (2) teachers (including the Head teacher and at least one female) will be given practical training on

- Computer appreciation

- Use of the computer to perform basic tasks, e.g., word processing, data entry, information management, Web browsing, e-mail working, etc.

B – In-school training

Graduates from the workshop (A) will train 5 other staff at a time, including office staff.

4.5 Cost components of the proposed model (NN '000)

4.5.1 Fixed Cost

Hardware

3 PCs	870
3 Telephone subscriptions	650
6 GSM antennas	180
3 Printers	195
3 Scanners	45
3 UPSes	300
3 internal Modems	9
3 Fax machine	150
3 Furniture, furnishing	300

Software

Operating system (3-site license)	100
Office suite (3-site license)	100
Feedback application (3-site license)	370

Capacity Building and Training

Train-the-Trainer workshop	
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2 pers x 65 schls x 10 days	650
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4.5.2 Variable Cost

Staff (Operational, supervisory, security)	270
Rent	100
Overhead (Telephone, Electricity, water, etc.)	180

4.5.3 Total Cost

(Cost in NN '000)

Component	Global level fixed cost	Global level recurring cost per annum	State/District/Regional level recurring cost per annum	Area/Project Site level fixed cost	Area/Project Site level recurring cost per annum
Hardware - PC	2,049	50	50	200	-
Hardware - Telephone	650				
Software	300	50	50	100	-
Development of IT based System (if any)	370	-	-	370	370
Hosting of application & database by ISP	-	100	100	-	-
Implementation & Training (include trouble shooting of hardware)	650+250	-	-	-	-

Operational Cost	50	690	690		230
Total Cost					

4.6 ICT model implementation

4.6.1 Implementation Partners

4.6.1.1 Available community resources: None Is expected to appear.

4.6.1.2 Required Institutions

Potential allies/stakeholders/ Institutional mechanisms: UNESCO, Local, State, Federal governments and their institutions, e.g., NPEC, SPEB.

4.6.2 Anticipated/Foreseen Challenges

4.6.2.1 Physical Infrastructure: centrally located, secure, safe housing

4.6.2.2 Social and Institutional Dimensions: None

4.6.2.3 The question of sustainability

The project will quickly decay unless

- (a) A foreign or religious organizations maintains the momentum,
- (b) Trainees are financially motivated to participate and transfer their knowledge,
- (c) There occurs a high rate of positive response to requests, complaints, etc.

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