



The Lagos Eko Secondary Education Sector Project: Tailoring International Best Practices to Improve Educational Outcomes at the State Level

Overview

This case study explores how the Eko Project tailored international best practices to leverage impact in Lagos State’s public secondary education system and assesses how the project resolutely responded to the challenges posed by the drop in test scores. Using a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the case study concludes that a proactive approach in a moment of committed political leadership from top to bottom—together with targeted program design, thoughtful adaptation of international experience, and efforts to foster a culture of performance—created the conditions for meaningful and sustainable reform, despite the challenges posed by demographic pressures and funding constraints.

Key Contextual Conditions:

- As the economic center of Nigeria and a financial powerhouse in West Africa, Lagos State has benefited from significant education sector reforms initiated by reform-minded state officials. Demand for education has always been high in the state, but for many years the quality of secondary schools lagged behind. Infrastructure deficiencies, shortages in learning materials, and scarce opportunities for teachers’ professional development compounded these problems. In this context, a new governor took office in 2007, on a platform that placed education sector reforms at the top of the agenda. The governor recruited a topnotch program coordinator and sought the World Bank’s support to design and launch the Lagos Eko Secondary Education Project in 2009.

Key Stakeholders:

- The State Project Advisory Committee (SPAC); the school-based management committees (SBMCs); the Project Management Unit (PMU); the District Project Advisory Committee (DPAC); the Zonal Project administrators (ZoPAs); the project implementation committees (PICs).

Lessons Learned

- Many of the Eko Project’s achievements are a direct result of its participatory design process, which adapted best practices to the Nigerian context.
- By using a highly skilled, albeit small, PMU at its center and strong collective leadership down the delivery chain in the state bureaucracy, innovative interventions were introduced and followed through, resulting in positive outcomes.
- In terms of project sustainability, it is important to identify the sustainers early on and use capacity building as a performance incentive, sequence interventions carefully to ensure that reforms are not derailed at the outset, and gain exposure to other contexts where sector interventions have worked and apply them locally, in a strategic and nuanced manner.



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PROJECT DATA

PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

World Bank

ORGANIZATION TYPE:

Multilateral

DELIVERY CHALLENGES:

Commitment and leadership; human resources and organizational capacity; project design

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE:

Educational outcomes

SECTOR:

Education

COUNTRY:

Nigeria

REGION:

Africa

PROJECT DURATION:

July 2009–July 2016

PROJECT TOTAL COST:

XDR 91.2 million

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PROJECT EXPERTS:

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- It is possible to bounce back from a setback in outcomes by strengthening data collection and analysis of results.
- It is possible to achieve macro-level impact by reaching down to individual learning achievements.

Development Challenge

- Demand for education has always been high in Lagos State, Nigeria, but for many years the quality of secondary schools lagged behind demand. Infrastructure deficiencies, shortages in learning materials, and scarce opportunities for teachers' professional development compounded this problem.

Delivery Challenges

- **Commitment and leadership:** Take advantage of political buy-in to ensure that leadership percolates down to the frontline delivery level; Ensure multilevel stakeholder involvement.
- **Human resources and organizational capacity:** Carefully articulate the respective roles of ad hoc implementing agencies (PMU) and established institutions (line ministry) to foster close interaction and ensure sustainability and ownership.
- **Project design:** Establish a robust M&E framework from the outset that takes into account constraints in the availability of relevant data.



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