Strengthening Community Participation in School Development

School Based Management Committees (SBMCs)

Contents

Introduction

Community participation is critical for the sustainability of school development projects, and this is prioritized under Oando Foundation's Adopt-A-School Initiative (AASI). AASI seeks to make quality basic education accessible to all children irrespective of socio-economic status, gender or location and to improve learning outcomes in public primary schools in Nigeria.

The Foundation aids the establishment and functioning of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) to propel community participation in basic education delivery across its adopted schools. SBMCs are a statutory and nonpolitical committee of members who are ready to serve and actively support the schools and host communities in the improvement of quality and effectiveness of schools. SBMCs serve as a bridge between the government, community, and school They comprise 14 representatives from the school and host community including pupils, teachers, parents, community leaders as well as other community-based groups for stronger participation. This is largely considered an upgrade of the Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), giving community members with interest in education an opportunity to contribute to the system.

> **SBMCs link the government (supplier) and education users and are a channel for amplifying community 'voice'**

There is growing evidence to support the role of communities in education delivery and improved learning outcomes. Communities thrive when members become key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients of development initiatives. Our SBMC approach strengthens the capacity of school communities to understand their roles and responsibilities in education planning and delivery, and empowers them to actively participate in the process for improved basic education access and quality.

School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) Capacity Building Workshop

SBMCs Statutory Roles and Responsobilities

Effective participation in the overall learning outcomes of pupils and students

Effective participation in school development planning process

Networking with other stakeholders, promoting partnerships and inclusion of women and children towards improved quality and inclusive education.

Resource mobilization for school improvement

Community sensitization towards ensuring improved enrolment of pupils/students, retention, completion, and transition.

Providing support and motivation for teachers and learners

Collaboration with local communities to provide safety for teachers, learners, and school property.

Oversight functions on funds allocation and utilization for school improvement.

This document articulates Oando Foundation's experiences implementing the SBMC component of its AASI programme across 88 adopted schools in Nigeria; providing evidence of early outcomes, challenges, and lessons learnt.

The Issues

The global education reform of the 1990s and 2000s provided impetus for the Nigerian Government to institutionalize the School Based Management (SBM) system. The National Council on Education (NCE) in 2005 directed all schools to establish Management Committees to ensure local community participation in school development processes; with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), issuing guidelines on modalities for domestication of the SBMC policy at state and local levels. Although most schools complied with the directive for establishment, very few had functional SBMCs, who either understood their roles and responsibilities or could effectively support school governance and advocate for improved learning conditions and resources. Oando Foundation therefore collaborates with relevant government education agencies and community structures to support the establishment and capacity strengthening of SBMCs in adopted schools.

The Foundation conducted an assessment in 2014 to determine SBMC effectiveness in target schools, understand existing capacity gaps, and design intervention to address identified needs. Result of the assessment revealed.

- 64% of schools sampled had no SBMC.
- 90% of those with established SBMCs had poor understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- At the time, State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) were still in the process of policy domestication at local levels, hence newly formed SBMCs had limited understanding of their new role and could neither mobilize resources nor contribute effectively to school improvement.
- Selection of SBMC members was done unilaterally by the head teachers in most instances, and the Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) saw SBMCs as a threat to their existence.
- Female representation in already inaugurated SBMCs was less than 7%, and children participation as stipulated in the guideline was not encouraged.

- FME guideline made no provision for mandatory training to be provided for stakeholders in the SBM system.

- Other findings were the non-availability of a funding mechanism for the operations of SBMCs. Members were willing to support school improvement efforts but lacked the financial capacity, particularly in rural areas.

- In addition, there was no established process for SBMC monitoring and mentoring. The initiative was new, and members required in-depth support to sustainably carry out their duties.
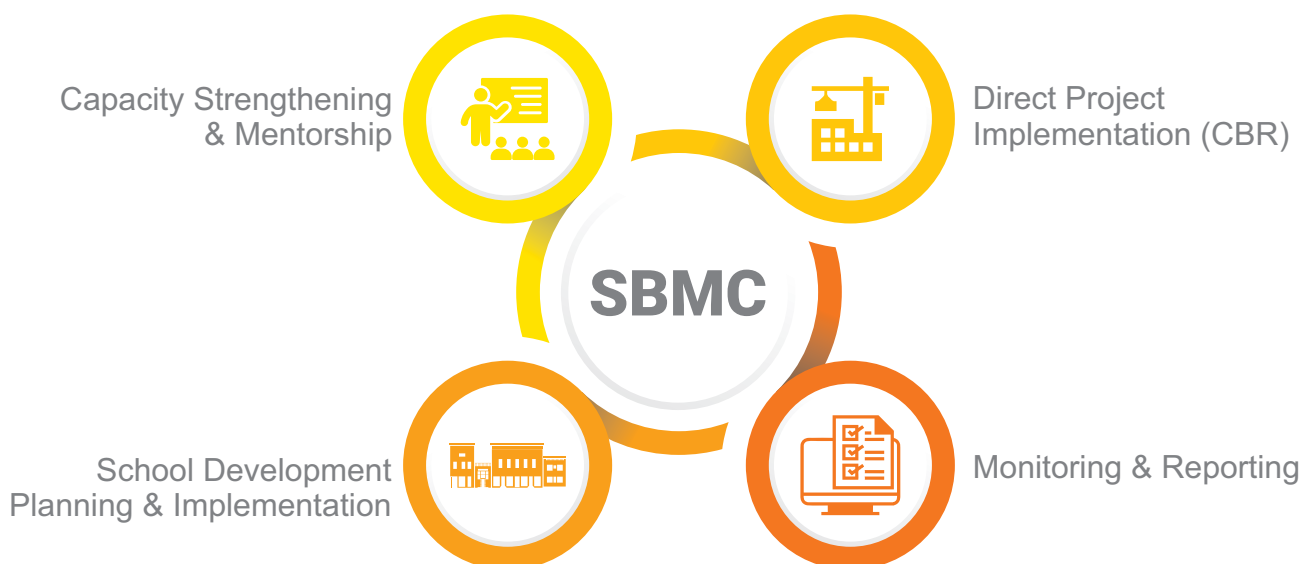

"We have never received training on what we should do as SBMC. We started 2 years ago"

SBMC member at Maitunbi Primary School, Niger State

Our Intervention Model

The School Based Management Committee component of the AASI is aimed at supporting the establishment and effective functioning of SBMCs, to promote community participation, and increase AASI programme sustainability. OF recognizes the pivotal role communities play in the successful execution of programmes, increasing sustainability, and maximizing resources. Parents, teachers, school administrators and policymakers agree on the positive impact of community participation on students' attendance and attitude towards learning, achievements and aspirations, and reduced cases of indiscipline among students. Hence, we build the capacity of SBMC members on issues of access, equity, and quality in basic education delivery.

In bridging the gaps identified during the baseline assessment, the AASI SBMC Model adapted best practices and leveraged lessons from similar programmes such as Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN).

Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship

Direct Project Implementation (CBR)

SBMC

School Development Planning & Implementation

Monitoring & Reporting

Capacity Strengthening & Mentorship

SBMC members in adopted schools, implementing partners, and SUBEB social mobilization officers participated in a series of capacity strengthening sessions, based on earlier identified gaps. Utilizing standardized training manuals developed, the sessions emphasized the importance of SBMC as a platform for community participation in school improvement. Other areas of focus included effectiveness on roles and responsibilities, school improvement plannning, resource mobilization, strengthening voice and accountability in basic education for improved quality and access. SUBEB Social Mobilization Officers were further trained on approaches necessary to drive the SBMC process and sustain it through active mentorship.

Post training; mentoring support visits were conducted over a 12-month period at school level, adrressing specific challenges and monitoring implementation of the school development plans. 1,731 SBMC members were trained across, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, FCT, Kaduna, Katsina, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, and Taraba states. Institutionalising the mentoring aspect of the SBMC process, working in closely with the Social Mobilization Departments at the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) has contributed to the programme's success and will support sustainability of other school-level interventions.

School Development Planning and Implementation

A key product of the SBMCs intervention is working with the SBMCs in the development of the School Development Plan (SDP). SDP is a working document based on the school's analysis of current levels of performance, assessment of current trends, future factors that may impact on the school, and school improvement priorities for a specified period ahead. The plan became a roadmap for achieving measurable results within the OF school communities post training.

Stages of School Development Planning

STAGE 1:	STAGE 2:	STAGE 3:	STAGE 4:
Analysis of current realities	**Audit of Current Provision and Possible sources**	**Determining Priorities for Action**	**Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

Direct Project Implementation

OF worked with SBMCs to directly deliver 67 blocks of 249 classrooms (renovation and new build) through our Community Based Renovation (CBR) approach. The CBR is an innovative way of ensuring value for money in school infrastructure projects without compromising quality. As part of the process, a project implementation committee is set up within adopted schools, made up of the SBMC Chairman, Secretary, OF's implementing partner, technical partners from LGEA/ SUBEB, and local artisans within the community. The committee is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project and ensures project execution is based on agreed perimeters including approved bill of quantities, project milestones, and quality benchmarks.

Implementation of CBR projects created the most exciting opportunities for SBMC members to practice team work, planning, resource management, vendor selection, project monitoring, quality control, and maintenance, among others.

Monitoring & Reporting

OF SBMC approach deployed participatory processes, working through existing structures and all education stakeholders in a consultative and collaborative way that promotes sustainability and replication. Records of SBMC meetings and periodic reports on activities conducted are properly kept for reference. Implementation of the school development plan and SBMC performance are monitored primarily by the SMOs of respective SUBEBs.

Riding on these four pillars, we have witnessed the steady transformation of SBMCs in most adopted schools from docile, ill-equipped school groups unable to champion effective change in their schools communities; to becoming key agents of change, springing hope for sustained community involvement in school improvement processes.

Early Outcomes

Oando Foundation has adopted 88 public primary schools across 23 states in Nigeria under its Adopt-A-School Initiative: empowering 1,731 community members as partners in progress under the SBMC component.

Through the SBMCs, community members are becoming more aware of the needs of their schools and strategizing ways to address the needs including mobilizing resources, championing out-of-school children mobilization and enrolment, holding government accountable for basic education delivery in their schools, among others. Early outcomes of our intervention include:

Increased Community Engagement and Participation

Across our schools, SBMCs are mobilizing community members to support initiatives that range from direct project funding to advocacy with government stakeholders and resource mobilization from diverse groups within and outside the community.

Higher Female Representation in SBMCs

In some parts of the country, women and men can barely sit together to discuss issues. Whilst female representation in SBMCs earlier assessed by the Foundation was less than 7%, this number has increased to 21% over a six-year period, following extensive intervention including reconstitution of existing SBMCs, inauguration of new ones where non existed, and provision of requisite training and mentoring support. SBMCs have increased opportunities for women's voices to be heard.

"What made the difference for us is that Oando Foundation could trust us with such amount of money to manage the school renovation project". It made us know that we can do more. Oando Foundation thank you for believing in us."
SBMC member, Daurama Primary School, Katsina

Implementation of Community Based Renovation (CBR) Approach across 67 schools:

Working with SBMCs through the CBR approach, the Foundation completed 67 blocks of 249 classrooms (renovation and new build), in addition to other sanitation and hygiene projects across 47 adopted schools. More remarkable is the increased sense of project ownership and responsibility that this has triggered among members.

Over 60,000 Out-of-school Children (OOSC) Mobilized and Enrolled

SBMCs now champion OOSC mobilization and enrolment efforts in adopted school communities, working with relevant community coalition groups to sensitize parents and guardians on the need to send their children to school, and deploying innovative solutions to reduce cost. They are acting at community level to support marginalized groups, particularly girls.

Beyond enrolment, they also monitor students' and teachers' attendance and engagement, ensuring teaching occurs so children can learn.

Monthly financial contribution by the Community to augment salaries of school security guards, school electrification supported by the Rotary Club, ancillary support for 10 indigent pupils supported by a Community Philanthropist, Construction of 2 blocks of 5 classrooms, supported by the Constituency Representative and a private organization situated in the community.

Also, the SBMC successfully secured a reduction on pupils' registration fees from the LGEA, having observed that most OOSC enrolled where unable to pay the registration fee.

Successes recorded at LGEA Primary School, Itori-Ewekoro

Adamawa State

"We had no electricity in some parts of the school before. But with the help of SBMC, we were able to complete the electrification of the school."

Asmau Umaru
Head Teacher,
Gwadabawa Primary School, Jimeta, Yola

"Many of the communities are providing security for the facilities that Oando Foundation provided the schools – borehole, computers, toilets, public address systems, etc. It is the communities through the SBMCs that employed and are paying the security guards."

Ibrahim Isa
Desk Officer, Oando Foundation, Adamawa SUBEB

Katsina State

"I joined SBMC in 2017. As a former teacher, I was motivated by the opportunity the SBMC offered its members to continue to support the school, even though their children are not there. In [2018], we worked with Oando Foundation to mobilize and enrol about 400 out-of-school children into the school, because we wanted them to benefit from the good projects Oando was doing in the school. Many of them are still in the school today."

Badiya Suleiman, 53,
SBMC member at General Mohammed Buhari Primary School, Daura

"We had a solar-powered borehole before which wasn't adequate for us but with the electricity-powered borehole and generator provided by Oando Foundation, we are able to pump water when needed. The SBMC provides money to fuel the generator whenever there is power cut. The community and students are happy."

Aliyu Abdullahi, 45
Head Teacher, Model Primary School, Batagarawa

Plateau State

"We were trained to look for philanthropists to support the school. For instance, we took pictures of dilapidated parts of the school and showed them to philanthropists in and around the community. One person responded: he gave us N2.5million."

Litty Salisu Omar
SBMC Chairman, St Paul Primary School, Jos

"Whenever there is a project in the school, we SBMC members will come to work, to see that the work is done properly, and at a lower rate because we volunteer or bring people from the community to do the work."

Segun Adefemi
SBMC, Baptist Science School, Shendam

Sokoto State

"SBMC members come once a week to see if there is any challenge in the school and how they can help us solve the problems. For instance, while SUBEB employed two guards to secure the ICT Centre donated by Oando Foundation, SBMC are now planning to fence the entire school to make it even more secure."

Suleiman Muazu, 40
Head Teacher, Mabera Magaji Primary School,
Sokoto

"We had SMBC before, but it was not fully involved in the school until the members were trained by Oando Foundation. Now they have helped to provide drinking water bowls in the classrooms, first aid box, chalks and school uniforms for indigent students."

Sanusi Mubarak, 54
Head Teacher, Ibrahim Gusau Islamiya Primary School, Sokoto

"We made a reservoir to store water from the borehole provided by Oando Foundation. We also furnished some classrooms with tables and chairs. We opened a bank account and levied every member N500 every month to sustain our activities and interventions in the school.
I joined the SBMC four years ago. I know that my supporting the school, one is indirectly supporting the pupils, and one day they will grow and become responsible children that can contribute to the growth of our communities."

Engr Abubakar Yahaya, 53,
SBMC Chairman of Tafida Aminu Primary School, Sokoto

"The SBMC have helped to bring back many drop-out students – about 250 drop-out students who are orphans or whose parents are poor have been brought back to the school."

Abdullahi Mohammed
Head Teacher, Shehu Mallami Model Primary School, Kware

Story of Change

**How community support is making a difference
at Randawa Primary School, Mani, Katsina**

The story of the Management Committee (SBMC) at Randawa Primary School, Mani is more than the story of just one SBMC in a local government area of Katsina State. It represents the story of how local communities in the state and across Nigeria are increasingly supporting public primary schools and contributing to improved teaching and learning.

Randawa is like many public primary schools in Nigeria. It has a huge student population but with insufficient facilities and materials like classrooms, perimeter fence, toilets, potable water and teaching aids to meet the needs of pupils and teachers.

> Having over **3,800** pupils **11** teachers **20** classrooms the school was grossly understaffed and its classes overpopulated.

In 2015 the school however got some respite when it was adopted by Oando Foundation along with six other primary schools in Katsina State, under the Foundation's Adopt-A-School Initiative. Oando Foundation renovated a block of three classrooms, furnished with desks and chairs, and sunk a borehole to address the perennial problem of lack of drinking water.

While these interventions brought some relief, the Foundation noted the huge challenges still to be addressed in the school. Recognizing the limitation of the government to solely resolve these problems, Oando Foundation, therefore, sensitized Mani communities to contribute to the school's development.

Although there was an SBMC on the ground, it was not performing optimally as a link between the school and the host communities. So Oando Foundation helped to revive the committee through training and mentoring. Before long, with increased capability, the committee began to make inputs in the school.

"We constructed a slab to reinforce a collapsing corridor of a block of the classroom. We also renovated the toilets, and built a playground for pre-schoolers which motivated them to come to school along with their older siblings," recalls Mamuda Musa, 58, the chairman of Randawa SBMC.

"We currently have about 280 out-of-school children that were brought into the school, thanks to the efforts of the SBMC," says Ibrahim Alika, 48, the Head Teacher of Randawa Primary School.

Mamuda Musa corroborated the efforts of the SBMC on out-of-school children: "We just provided school uniforms to 47 of the out-of-school children.

The SBMC played a critical role in securing s the World Bank's Community Social Development Programme (CSDP) support to build the school fence, among other projects in the community. Committee members as well as the entire school community were elated when the Governor of Katsina State commissioned the project. Besides the missed ICT Centre, they understand the benefits that a fenced school provides for their children, teachers, and facilities.

"I like my school, it is fenced, so it is safe for us to play," says 10-year old Shukura Haruna who is among the newest set of out-of-school children recently reached, mobilized and enrolled into Randawa by the SBMC.

Across Nigeria,
Oando Foundation has trained

over **1,731** SBMC members

to drive community support for public primary schools.

As the SBMCs continue to mobilize out-of-school children, mobilize resources for schools, and provide other needed support, there is no doubt that these efforts will contribute to the goal of increasing access to basic education for Nigerian children.

Implementation Challenges

Disparate Education Attainment Levels: A majority of SBMC members in target school communities typically have little or no formal education. This impedes their contribution to discourse and optimum efficiency in supporting school development processes. For increased efficiency, sustainable investment must be made in building the SBMC capacity to understand their roles and responsibilities

Gender norms and Exclusion: Because SBMCs are representatives of diverse groups within a community, when not properly constituted, it could promote the exclusion of minority groups. In dealing with this, the Foundation worked with key stakeholders to facilitate reviews of SBMC membership and in some instances constitution of new committees, ensuring full representation as detailed in the state SBMC guideline. Working with the communities, we explored innovative ways of encouraging female participation in decision making, deepening our understanding of specific socio-cultural factors that interplay gender relations within each community.

Inadequate Financial Resources: SBMCs lack funding to carry out the array of projects in their school development plans, particularly in rural areas. We bridged this barrier through our direct implementation approaches, ensuring communities take ownership for an initial project, and thereafter seek other opportunities to mobilize resources for continued improvement. Any project that aims to sustainably support SBMCs must ensure adequate provision is made for seed funding to support communities' initiatives on additional funding mechanisms.

Conflicting Stakeholder Priorities and interest: State Education agencies have oversight of schools and SBMCs, and this role sometimes leads to conflict in the management of resources. These expectations and interests must be managed to ensure SBMCs' autonomy and effectiveness.

What We are Learning

Oando Foundation's journey with the SBMC's has been both an uphill task and a rewarding experience. There were initial challenges, but we built on them to mobilize community members to participate and take ownership. We are elated to see SBMCs empowered to play a pivotal role in driving the course of education in their communities.

Key among our lessons include –
- **Community involvement in education** is indeed an essential component of pupils'/students' academic success. It is a catalyst to students' attendance and attitude towards learning, increases teacher performance and student's achievements; and decreases indiscipline within the school community.

- **The Role of Multilevel Partnerships:** Combined efforts of stakeholders at federal, state and community levels are increasing community involvement in the effective governance of schools and promoting a shared responsibility for the provision and management of basic education.

- **Defined Accountability Measures:** Direct project implementation with SBMCs require well-defined procedures and control measures to prevent any form of mismanagement or compromise on the quality of the projects.

- **Promotes Participation and Sustainability:** SBMC members are a broad representation of the local community. Working with them increases trust and motivates community members to participate and take ownership of projects within their community.•

- **Effective Project Implementation:** Working with SBMCs increase acceptance and endorsement of projects within the community, which helps ease implementation efforts and cost, as community members take ownership for driving the effectiveness of assigned project activities.

Conclusion

Empowering school communities through the SBMC is a catalyst for improvement in basic education planning and delivery. We have witnessed the transformation of SBMCs in most adopted schools from docile, ill-equipped school groups unable to champion effective change in their schools communities; to key agents of change, springing hope for sustained community involvement in school improvement processes. The untapped opportunities are enormous. Sustaining these gains require strategic collaboration with other education stakeholders, including the Social Mobilization Departments at the state and local levels to ensure continued training, monitoring, mentoring and funding support is provided for SBMCs to thrive.

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