



**TEACHERS' VOICE**  
A POLICY RESEARCH REPORT  
ON TEACHERS' MOTIVATION  
AND PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR  
PROFESSION IN NIGERIA





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The views expressed in this report are representative of individuals who participated in the research and may not necessarily reflect the views of VSO Nigeria or VSO International.

## ACRONYMS

CoE	College of education
CSACEFA	Civil Society Action Coalition for Education for All
EFA	Education for All
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
JCCE	Joint Consultative Committee on Education
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
NAPTAN	National Parent Teacher Association of Nigeria
NCE	National Certificate of Education
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
NPC	National Planning Commission
NUT	Nigeria Union of Teachers
MDG	UN Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal mortality rate
MoH	Ministry of Health
SSC	Senior Secondary Certificate
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
TRCN	Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria
TFD	Theatre for Development
TLMs	Teaching and learning materials
TSS	Teacher salary structure
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teachers are the bedrock of the education system. They teach the children who go on to fulfil all other professions therefore they affect the fate of a nation. However, in some countries VSO has recognised that teachers' efforts are sometimes unsustainable, due to factors influencing motivation. Looking closely, it is apparent that teachers' pivotal role is not always valued or prized.

In response, VSO embarked upon an advocacy-based research project in 2001, which resulted in the publication of *Valuing Teachers* in 2002. The initiative aims to investigate teachers' roles and needs in their profession, determining what influences their levels of motivation and how this corresponds with their performance levels in the classroom. Valuing Teachers investigates how these factors of motivation and demotivation, therefore, affect the quality of education delivered to generations of children. VSO aims to bring these findings to governments, donors and international agencies at policy level in the hope that decision makers consider the silenced teachers' voice in the development of new strategies and policies that directly affect them. Achieving this will improve the implementation of educational reforms.

Valuing Teachers represents the opinions and perspectives of teachers, head teachers, government education agencies and other education stakeholders by using participatory techniques such as focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. VSO carried out the research in 13 different countries: Guyana; Malawi; the Maldives; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Rwanda; Zambia and more recently The Gambia; Mozambique; Ethiopia; Cambodia and Nigeria. This report will focus on the research undertaken in Nigeria.

The purpose of the research was to:

- identify factors affecting Nigerian teachers' motivation
- provide insights into these issues to policy makers and other stakeholders in Nigeria
- explore VSO Nigeria's future direction for its education programme
- give teachers and education staff a voice on issues that affect them
- provide practical recommendations for valuing teachers and improving their morale.

In 2008 VSO Nigeria celebrates 50 years of development work across the country. Education has played a fundamental role in its activities as VSO Nigeria's education programmes have strived to complement the existing efforts by the Nigerian government to deliver quality education.

The Valuing Teachers research in Nigeria reveals that teachers' level of motivation and morale is very low, due to various demotivating factors. The teachers of Nigeria are working in challenging conditions that are aggravated by poor remuneration; delays in the administration of salaries; allowances and promotions; scarce learning and teaching resources; and disrespect from government, parents and the community at large. Teachers admit their decreasing level of motivation affects their performance in the classroom and reduces their ability to achieve learning outcomes, therefore, reducing their capability of delivering quality education.

Teachers feel ignored in the decision-making process and powerless in their efforts to improve the learning experience of their students, despite their desire and eagerness. Policy makers are putting demands and expectations on teachers to carry out new initiatives without their involvement. This not only creates the feeling of ignorance from above, but also presents many obstacles in the implementation of new plans.

These insights highlight the importance of teachers in education reform and the need for policy makers on all levels to listen to teachers' voices. By listening to teachers, policy makers would receive first-hand information and experience from the grassroots that could help them tackle core issues in the education system – sustaining new education reformations and therefore improving the quality of education long term.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The factors that affect teachers' motivation are grouped into six different themes on the basis of findings from focus group discussions, interviews and policy document analysis. The themes are: terms and conditions; human resource management; policy processes; school environment; students and equity; and teachers' voice and status. Teachers explained how factors relating to these issues have impacted on their roles. The following recommendations are in response to the findings of the research and outline the actions needed to enhance teachers' motivation and morale.

### Terms and conditions

- Federal Ministry of Education could implement the Teacher Salary Scale (TSS)
- Within the necessary budget constraints, FME could evaluate pay and other possible benefits in terms of adequacy, costs of living in different locations and incentives, to make a living wage. Include long-term security for long-term teachers.

### Human resource management

- Employ enough teachers to comply with the government's recommended pupil-teacher ratio of 35:1, ensuring an adequate number of teachers per school.
- Special needs schools should only employ teachers trained in special needs and the government needs to provide these teachers.
- Implement and monitor the execution of the TRCN's law to employ only qualified teachers and make the employment of unqualified teachers prosecutable by law.

### Policy processes

- Federal and state governments, in conjunction with UBEC and SUBEBs, should ensure there are sufficient funds allocated for regular supervisions of all schools and ensure transparency and accountability.
- The NCCE should ensure CoEs do not enrol more students than acceptable in proportion to their capacity.
- Head teachers must get management training as soon as they are appointed – in both staff and school management skills.
- Stakeholders, including teachers, must be involved in education policymaking, implementation and evaluation as a responsibility as well as a right.

### School environment

- The delivery system of school materials needs to be improved and streamlined by SUBEBs, through the setting up of regional networks for storage and distribution.
- SUBEBs should insure that teachers are confident about the subjects they teach and must be assisted by the provision of ample TLMs for themselves as well as for their students
- SUBEBs should provide basic facilities – including drinking water and toilets (separate toilets for women/girls and men/boys) – and adequate electricity; telephones; computers; the internet; and libraries must be made available to all schools at the shortest possible notice so that teachers are retained in the profession.

### Students and equity

- The NCCE should increase the number of CoEs delivering inclusive education training.
- The FME should begin to take steps to reduce the use of corporate punishment over a period of time until it is abolished, upholding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The NCCE and SUBEB should begin training on positive forms of discipline in the classroom.

### Teachers' voice and status

- The NUT should develop well-informed positions on debates about quality and relevance of education as well as fighting for the betterment of teachers.

- The NUT should be proactive in proposing policy changes that will result in better quality education and a better situation for teachers.
- All policy makers should consult the NUT on any reform in the education system.
- Community boards should ensure teachers contribute to community development and are invited to participate in the design of community development programmes.

The present education reform taking place in Nigeria is a very positive step forward in improving the quality of education. Investment in long-term improvements, as well as commitment from all governments, is essential. Serious considerations by the government to the recommendations laid out in this report would be an affirmative move towards a skilled labour force and flourishing nation, something that VSO Nigeria intends to advocate.

VSO Nigeria, through the Valuing Teachers research report Teachers' Voice, wishes to herald the voice of teachers – their opinions; their perspectives; their experiences; and their needs and desires. Teachers are at the front line of the education system – with precious information and knowledge from the grassroots; they are the foundation of this structure. They act the words of policies, they operate new initiatives, and they decide if reforms are accomplished. Their essential role can no longer be disregarded. The unification of all stakeholders in education, in partnership with teachers, could make a dramatic contribution to improvement in the planning, implementation, and success of new education strategies and reforms. Teachers would not only feel more esteemed if involved in the decision-making process, they would feel more valued and respected, increasing their motivation to undertake their central role, that is, delivering quality education.

VSO Nigeria aims to play a leading role in raising and promoting these issues, working together with other key education stakeholders to implement the recommendations of this research. As an international organisation itself, VSO is in a strong position to support international donor organisations to ensure regular active participation of teachers in the decision-making process is taken seriously.

The birth of new generations is constant and with Nigeria's population being the fastest growing in the world, it means the demand for quality education is becoming ever greater.

## REFLECTION

*"It is clear that becoming a teacher is fraught with obstacles and problems from the time of deciding to become a teacher, through the selection and recruitment process, training and being retained in the education system. The prospective teacher may not be of high academic status; he may not come from a high socio-economic background; he may have taken the decision as a last resort, having failed in his attempts to enter other 'high profile' professions. He is coming into teaching, which is caricatured and ridiculed, lending credence to Bernard Shaw's view '**He who can, does. He who can not, teaches**'; where the work environment is crisis-ridden, frustrating and humiliating; where teacher educators are ill-prepared, of low morale and motivation and of low self-esteem; where the programmes are disjointed; where the public and society see teaching as an occupation or all comers variously '**cheaters**', '**matinee idols**', '**teacher tyrants**', '**tell tale teachers**' or '**part-time teachers**'..."*

[Afe, O., John, 2002: 12]

# 1 INTRODUCTION

VSO has over 45 years of experience of working in education, and supports a broad range of education placements. VSO is keen to build on this experience by adapting the policy context in which its education programmes operate.

To this end, VSO is now working on a three-year advocacy initiative that aims to improve the situation of teachers by working at policy level, both nationally and internationally, and to reduce obstacles to their motivation. VSO will achieve this by improving and strengthening management and administration of education systems.

VSO has already published research reports in conjunction with seven VSO country programmes (Zambia, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Nepal, Guyana, the Maldives and Malawi), that identify priority issues affecting teacher motivation at country level, and that propose recommendations for changes in policy or practice.

The Valuing Teachers research findings and recommendations are used to influence policy makers at national and international level, and were the basis for the 2002 publication of the VSO education position paper report on teachers: 'What makes teachers tick?' Each report is based on the experiences of VSO volunteers, their colleagues and employers, and the views of teachers, other education stakeholders and civil society organisations.

The Valuing Teachers research project provides a loudspeaker through which teachers can express their views and opinions of their profession openly and honestly. VSO has used previous research projects to make presentations to donors and international institutions with considerable success. An example of this is VSO Zambia's successful lobbying with the International Monetary Fund in 2004 about the unfavourable effect of its policies on the Zambian education sector. This led to concrete changes in policies on teacher recruitment and salaries in Zambia and, in addition, VSO Rwanda lobbying the government to achieve the doubling of teachers' salaries in Rwanda in 2007.

All VSO country programmes that have conducted Valuing Teachers research are now working with their respective governments and partners in civil society to find ways of implementing their own specific recommendations. This report – Teachers' Voice – communicates the views, opinions, perceptions and experiences of teachers from selected states of Nigeria. It also presents perceptions of teachers' motivation from representatives of a wide range of key educational stakeholders, such as SUBEBs, LGEAs, the Nigeria Union for Teachers (NUT), the National Parent Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), UBEC, Teachers' Registration Council (TRCN), communities and many other stakeholders.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH INTO TEACHERS' MOTIVATION IN NIGERIA

The motivation level of teachers is a significant factor in influencing the delivery of quality education. It significantly affects attainment of learning outcomes in classrooms internationally. It determines the school environment; the quantity and quality of knowledge children receive; the level of skills to enhance the development of young minds; and the sense of security children feel. The purpose of this research project is to:

- discover Nigerian teachers' perception of their profession – what motivates them, what factors affect their esteem and what would contribute to a boost in their spirits
- uncover how other key educational stakeholders view education in Nigeria today and what they perceive motivates teachers
- support the dual efforts of government and other agencies in Nigeria to improve the quality and participation in education.

## 1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Valuing Teachers research project is a qualitative exploration to assemble teachers' feelings and views about their profession. The research process, therefore, involved a number of different qualitative methods of gathering data to obtain the findings of this report. These include focus group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, desk research and Theatre for Development (TFD) techniques (Theatre for Development is a method using drama as a tool to look deeper at the causes and solutions of a problem in a community or organisation). The desk research was carried out before and after the field research. A number of key education stakeholders were involved in the development of the terms and reference of the research and they supported the launch of the research.

VSO selected VSO volunteers across Nigeria for the Valuing Teachers research project on the basis of where they, and VSO resources, were situated. Participants were then invited for interviews with the local and state education boards, prior to the arrival of the research team. VSO Volunteers aided the facilitation of interviews and focus group discussions, and wrote up their findings.

The research team, including VSO volunteers, representatives of CSACEFA and members of the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD), conducted 36 focus group discussions in 10 states of Nigeria – Nassarawa, Federal Capital Territory, Kaduna, Enugu, Gombe, Kebbi, Niger, Osun, Plateau and Kano – and held two community TFD workshops in Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom states, representing the six geopolitical zones (below). The participants in the focus group discussions were primary and lower secondary school teachers of public, private, nomadic and special needs schools. They provided a base of quantitative data for research. The research teams grouped participants according to gender and held the discussions separately with each group.

The research teams held numerous interviews with key stakeholders in the Nigerian education sector: head teachers; LGEA and SUBEB representatives; confederates of the NUT, parent-teacher associations, Teachers Registration Council Nigeria, the NCCE, education officials, and education specialists. These stakeholders divulged crucial insights into Nigerian educational policies.

As part of the research VSO Nigeria examined and evaluated the current views and opinions expressed by individuals, aid agencies and the FME on Nigerian education (EFA (Nigeria), 2006: 5). It has enriched our perspective and enforced our awareness of the recognition of all parties concerned that change is vital for Nigeria's education system to benefit the children and youth.

Teachers and head teachers validated the information used in this report during the focus group discussions and interviews, while key stakeholders partook in a one day validation process, where they examined the key issues raised by the teachers in this report. The stakeholders were invited to read the report and give feedback on its validity. Through this process this report was corroborated.

## 1.3 SCOPE

This research report represents a variety of schools and communities – rural and urban; government and private; nomadic and special needs in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, i.e. North Central, North East, North West, South East, South West, South South and FCT.

### 1.3.1 NORTH CENTRAL

Focus group discussions were held in Nassarawa, Kaduna, Plateau and Niger with participants of six schools – two urban and four rural in Nassarawa; one nomadic and one rural in Kaduna; four private schools, both rural and urban, in Plateau; and one private school in Niger state. The research teams interviewed the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) and SUBEB representatives, school inspectors and VSO volunteers each working in a college of education (CoE) in Plateau and Nassarawa state.

### 1.3.2 NORTH EAST

Focus group discussions (Appendix 2) were undertaken by a research team in one urban and one rural school in Gombe State. Interviews were held with LGEA and SUBEB representatives.

### 1.3.3 NORTH WEST

Focus group discussions were carried out in a public school for children with disabilities and special needs and in a rural school in Kebbi State. SUBEB and LGEA representatives were interviewed.

### 1.3.4 SOUTH EAST

Focus group discussions were carried out in Enugu State in one rural and one urban school. Several one-to-one interviews with a variety of stakeholders were conducted here, including LGEA and SUBEB representatives.

### 1.3.5 SOUTH WEST

Focus group discussions were conducted in Osun State in one rural and one urban school, and interviews were held with representatives of the SUBEB and LGEA.

### 1.3.6 SOUTH SOUTH

Community focus group discussions in Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom States, using TFD techniques, to represent the South South's viewpoint.

### 1.3.7 FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY

Focus group discussions in two private schools for children with disabilities and special needs were conducted. A variety of schools, both private and government, were visited; head teachers were interviewed and teachers participated in written questionnaires. Numerous stakeholder interviews were conducted in this region, as this is the nucleus of Nigeria where many groups are represented nationally.

### 1.3.8 TEACHERS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

The 182 teachers who participated in the focus group discussions were randomly but exclusively selected from primary and junior secondary schools. Early childhood education, senior secondary and adult education institutions are not part of this research. Age group and education backgrounds differ greatly among the teachers, ranging from early twenties to late fifties. Some teachers have only just started their careers, while others are concluding it. The majority, however, has more than 10 years of experience and represented various personalities.

## 1.4 PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

Strikes in some states meant teachers in these public schools could not participate.

## 1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE FINDINGS

There were many steps in the qualitative analysis of the findings of the research project to categorise factors and link them to possible solutions. The voices of the participants are represented in the report in the form of quotes and through generalisations drawn from the research process. Where possible, solutions suggested by stakeholders at all levels are presented.

The findings are grouped into six main themes, divided into sub-themes. Each theme is outlined in a separate chapter in the report:

1. Terms and conditions: covers the financial benefits that teachers receive, facilities they have and the conditions under which they are hired. This section also highlights the various conditions of teachers at different levels.
2. Human resource management: discusses the different issues related to human resources – appointments, promotions and appraisal systems.
3. Policy processes: investigates different education policies on supervision, support and guidance; teacher training; head teachers; teacher numbers; participation, transparency and accountability; and policy coherence and communication.
4. School environment: examines how teaching and learning materials and school facilities affect teachers' motivation.
5. Students and equity: looks at special needs teaching and highlights the interaction between students and teachers with motivation. It also looks at the discipline of students.
6. Teachers' voice and status: explores the role of the unions in education development and how teachers' status affects their motivation. It also looks at the relationship between teachers and communities.

For each theme's components, the policy framework; teachers' and other stakeholders' views were examined; and recommendations presented to address the issues raised.

## 2 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF NIGERIA

At over 924,768 square kilometres and with an estimated 140 million inhabitants, Nigeria accounts for nearly one-quarter of the population of sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria's culture is abundantly rich, with over more than 200 ethnic groups who speak more than 500 languages and dialects.

Nigeria has enormous natural potential, with arable land; natural gas; petroleum; tin; columbite; iron ore; coal; limestone; lead; zinc; kaolin; gold; gemstones and many more. It produces two million barrels of oil per day, and is the sixth largest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Nigeria's reserves of oil amount to 32 million barrels, enough for almost 40 years at the current rate of production.

Despite this great natural wealth, 70 per cent of Nigeria's citizens live on below one dollar a day and the country ranks 151 out of 175 countries in the UN Human Development Index. Lack of basic services such as clean water, education, and health care – exacerbated by lack of assets such as land, credit and supportive networks and further aggravated by lack of income including food, shelter and empowerment – keep the majority of Nigerians in a state of poverty.

However, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo professes education is the way forward. This political commitment of the government backed with actions is what the teachers of Nigeria require.

### 2.2 NIGERIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

This section will look at the current views of Nigeria's education system, which has received an abundance of attention and interest from researchers. Various interested individuals, aid agencies and the FME itself have invested resources and time into investigating various aspects of the education system's structure and organisation, dating from the early 60s to the present time. With all this awareness and insight over a lengthy period, one has to question how much of this knowledge and information is being considered and acted upon.

The National Planning Commission's (NPC) National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is a recent attempt to address the issues of Nigeria, announcing it as **"Nigeria's plan for prosperity"** (NPC, 2004). It identifies education as a transformative tool to develop, empower and progress the Nigerian nation. In recognising that the future of Nigeria is presently in their education system, NEEDS aims to:

- reduce the number of unqualified primary school teachers by 80%
- mobilise community and private sector involvement in education
- ensure completion of the FME initiative, Universal Basic Education programme, which oversees the management of primary education in Nigeria,
- ensure and sustain unfettered access to education for the total development and the provision of quality education at all levels
- use education as a tool for improving the quality of life through skills acquisition and job creation and for poverty reduction
- periodically review and effectively implement curriculum at all levels
- promote information and communication technology capacities at all levels.

(EFA (Nigeria), 2006: 5)

NEEDS promotes the development of quality education in Nigeria through enhancing the standard of teachers, curricula, teacher support, teaching materials and all other elements that contribute to a high quality education system. Thus it aims to accomplish the Education for All (EFA) and the education UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for Nigeria by 2015. **"Without a proper educational sector, there is no possibility of attaining our MDG and EFA goals or fast tracking NEEDS."**

President Olusegun Obasanjo (Vision 2020, 2006: 1)

This enlightenment and enthusiasm is reinforced by the FME. It recognises that the present quality of education is inadequate and that **“the education sector in Nigeria is in a state of crisis”**. It has launched a reform agenda, insisting **“nothing less than major renewal of all systems and institutions is required”**.

(Vision 2020, 2006: 3)

The preliminary structure of the reform is based on the motto **“We can – We can educate for character and our NEEDS.”** This transformation is based on a new vision – Vision 2020: to **“become an emerging economy model, delivering sound education policy and management for public good”**.

(Vision 2020, 2006:3)

Vision 2020 envisages an:

**“expanded role for education as an investment for economic, social and political development; as a tool of empowerment for the poor and the socially marginalized groups; as an effective means of developing the full capacities and potentials of the human resources; and as a veritable means of developing sound intelligent learning societies”**.

(Vision 2020, 2006: 2)

The Vision 2020 literature is powerfully motivating, with targets, visions and articulation. Its achievements would certainly benefit the teachers.

### 2.2.1 PRIMARY EDUCATION

The fact that children under 15 constitute approximately 45% of the population in Nigeria makes basic education a priority area. However, of the 42.1 million Nigerians of eligible school age, only 22.3 million are in primary schools, as of December 2005. In other words 19.8 million (47%) are not receiving an education. Moreover, even though 33.9 million Nigerians are qualified for secondary school, only 6.4 million children are attending at the end of 2005.

(FME Presentation, 2006: 6)

A school census, carried out in March 2005 by EDB:

**“shows an increase in number of students attending public primary schools to a total of 20.6 million children attending 50,700 public primary schools, with about 494,000 teachers, of whom 297,000 are qualified teachers. Overall it gives a pupil-teacher ratio of approximately 41:1, but this figure hides gross disparities between North and South and urban and rural areas”**.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 13)

The FME, in its situation analysis report, has recognised three main areas affecting enrolment figures in primary school:

1. Provision: Inadequate number and poorly equipped schools with large class sizes – if there were to be an increase in quantity of schools a **“major expansion of teacher training capacity”** is required.
2. Costs of education:

**“In rural areas direct and indirect costs to attend school are high and the timing of demand for payments is out of line with household income patterns. Even where schooling is providing free tuition there are still considerable direct costs (books, materials, uniform etc) and opportunity (loss of labour in the household), which**

**parents incur in order to send their children to school. The poorest households are unable to meet these costs and are reluctant to make sacrifices when the perceived quality of education is poor.”**

3. Quality: The quality of education is low and this deters parents from compensating sacrifices required to afford education, which may not have an effect on the child’s future prospects. Or the poor quality of education does not yield the economic returns that parents anticipate and therefore parents do not find it worthwhile to send children to school.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 14 )

With this knowledge and insight from the government’s research, it is surely ammunition to tackle core issues, especially if the former president has acknowledged the significance of education.

### 2.2.2 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

The data is scarce on the number of children with special needs and how their requirements are met by the educational system. Even though the FME admits that there is no coherent strategy for dealing with special needs, policy in Nigeria proclaims an inclusive educational system. Research has revealed that, **“very few schools are equipped to handle those children with serious disabilities”**. ESA studies state that 90% of schools make no specific provision for children with special needs. And teachers do not receive sufficient specialised training to adequately manage the diverse needs of these children.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 18 )

## 2.3 THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 2.3.1 LITERACY AND NUMERACY SKILLS

MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archive Council) surveys (1996 and 2003) find outcomes in primary schools well below expected national levels, while the National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) Ed Data survey (2004) notes that only 30% of boys and 26% of girls could read part of a simple sentence and just 50% could add two digits totalling less than 10.

Teachers regularly complain that their attempts to teach any subject are hampered by the pupils’ inability to understand and speak English and their poor understanding of numeracy. And the fact that they have hardly any learning material at all makes it impossible for them to help these children. These assessments conclude that the learning outcomes of the children attending school are low and this is partially due to **“the chronic inadequacy of basic facilities to support teaching and learning”**, according to the FME.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 20 )

### 2.3.2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The FME notes that schools **“are ineffective at their primary purpose, which is to deliver a quality education to their pupils”**. Although the mean pupil–teacher ratio in 2005 was 38:1, in reality the pupil–class ratio was 109:1 and the total number of textbooks per pupil in 2005 was 0.07.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 21).

Out of 362,242 rooms in 60,189 primary schools nationwide, only 184,857 are in sufficiently good condition. Yet they accommodate 24,127,687 pupils, only 29.65% of which have access to electricity and water. Underlying this structural defectiveness is the poor management of schools, as indicated by the FME.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 21)

The consequences of this neglect are grave all over the country, as implied in the following quotes – one about the situation in the north and one about the situation in central Nigeria, respectively.

An overcrowded classroom with little or no teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and in dilapidated surroundings hampers the teachers' ability to deliver quality education enormously. These circumstances and this environment are not conducive for learning and put the teachers and the children under huge amounts of stress. This FME Situation Analysis confirms and verifies the need for rehabilitation in the education sector.

## 2.4 TEACHERS' EDUCATION

Cahander and George affirm that recruiting candidates of high aptitude would harvest more effective teachers; however, this is not the case in Nigeria. Candidates who cannot receive entrance into other courses, due to their poor grades, are the people accepted onto teacher training courses. Teaching is the last option and this is reflected in the calibre of candidates it attracts and admits.

Afe, John O., 2002 : 9

Afe, in the article, 'Reflections on becoming a teacher and the challenges of teacher education', identifies the training of competent teachers as a key element in education reform in Nigeria, **"as poor teachers tend to reproduce their own kind"**.

[Afe, O., John, 2002:12]

In response to these facts, in 2005 the FME initiated an upgrade of 77,963 unqualified grade two certificate teachers, to National Certificate for Education (NCE) which is the minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria. An additional 91,259 unqualified teachers upgraded in 2006. However, it is estimated that some 282,000 (57%) primary school teachers are underqualified and, of these, 88,000 have insufficient academic qualifications to be considered for upgrading.

[FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 26 ]

According to Professor Jilbril Aminu, teachers are the **"kingpin of quality education"**. He insists that teacher education **"has to occupy a position of pre-eminence in the planning and organization of the modern society"**. He urges the Nigerian people and government to transform the teaching profession into a more attractive and appealing profession.

[Afe, John O., 2002:13]

Presently, there is an **"uninspiring perception"** of the teaching profession in Nigeria, according to Dr. Kabiru Isyaku, due to the **"unfortunate ways the practitioners of the profession are treated with regard to conditions of service, career prospects, unattractive emoluments etc"**. This sad state of affairs deters potential contenders to enter the teaching vocation.

[Afe, John O., 2002: 14]

The lack of interest has led CoEs to reduce the minimum requirements for entrance, from NCE course requirements to the Pre-NCE (Pre-National Certificate of Education) course, which is a one-year programme aimed to promote candidates to the requirement level of the NCE module.

The NCE, which increases a teacher's salary by 50%, aims to **"produce teachers with high personal and professional discipline and integrity"**. It is said to be subject-based, with **"no real differentiation between those students that might eventually teach in primary school and those who might teach in secondary school"**.

[FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 27]

The course requires a Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) with passes in five subjects, (including English language). Candidates who are successful in the Pre-NCE are accepted on the NCE course. The requirements for the Pre-NCE are SSC with one or two credits and four passes in no more than two sittings or SSC with five passes in no more than two sittings, including a pass in English.

(NCCE, Pre-NCE, 2002: 10)

This supports the conception that CoEs **“take on students from the “bottom of the list”, ie those who cannot find placement in any other institution”**.

(FME, Situation Analysis, 2006: 27)

Fafunwa has identified five main categories of teachers in Nigeria:

1. Those who are convinced that teaching is their calling and that they can best serve their country in that capacity.
2. Those who choose teaching and find satisfaction in it as compared with other professions.
3. Those who join the teaching profession from necessity rather than from choice.
4. Those with inadequate and poor academic records, but who have had some secondary school education.
5. Those who have not been to the secondary school because of their inability to pass the required entrance examination or because of lack of opportunity to do so in the past.

(Afe, John O., 2002: 10)

This heterogeneity of applicants to the teaching profession, combined with their low status in society, is the basis of the teaching profession. Afe, in his article “Reflections on becoming a teacher”, has documented that the status of teachers is so low in the eyes of the public that teachers hesitate to introduce or identify themselves as teachers.

This literature validates the importance of addressing the calibre of students accepted into CoEs, absorbing qualified teachers into the classrooms and retaining good quality teachers in the education system by making the teaching profession more attractive and lucrative. The key stakeholders involved in confronting these issues are the federal and state government and education boards.

## 2.5 NIGERIA'S POTENTIAL

Looking at the literature on different views of the education system in Nigeria, it is clear that Nigeria's potential is huge. With the concentration of capital and resources earned by its enormous natural wealth and a commitment from the government, Nigeria's education system could be turned around. If concerns that have arisen from the abundance of research undertaken are considered and acted upon with a long-term view, this present reform could give hope for Nigeria's future.

It is optimistic that current research by individuals, aid organisations, departments and the FME itself are attempting to review, analyse, address, recommend and implement the changes required to deliver effective quality education to the Nigerian nation. However, it is amazing how much has been undertaken without any input by the teachers themselves. With the Valuing Teachers research project and this report, VSO aims to bring teachers' views to the forefront and enhance policy makers' views of the education system in Nigeria. Improving it from the bottom up, as well as the top down would mean that everyone in the education system can reap the benefits of this reform.

## 3 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

**“Why teachers are demotivated? Lack of status, lack of income, late payments. State agencies do have the money to pay, but sit on it endlessly and the teachers have to wait for their salaries, and often their pensions are not in order when they retire. As a result teachers are always looking for possibilities to earn a little money, and if they can find another job, they leave the profession altogether.”**

[SUBEB representative]

This section will explore the terms and conditions under which Nigerian teachers are working, specifically the financial aspects and other services from which teachers should benefit.

This report has found poor salary the number one demotivating element in teaching, but also the factor that, if improved, will lift levels of enthusiasm, resulting in improved standards of education.

Low teacher remuneration, and the way in which it is paid, has been the contentious issue among Nigerian teachers for years. It has led to local, state and national level strikes in the past and at present because it is not sufficient for a good standard of living. The delays in the administration of its payment can sometimes be delayed up to as long as three months. Teachers starting on their first job may have to wait up to a year to receive their first payment.

As a result teachers have lost trust in the administration of the education system and experience a common feeling of being neglected, undervalued and disrespected by their government. This is at the basis of the drop in motivation levels among Nigerian teachers and has amplified levels of desperation, despair and discontentment, resulting in Nigeria’s incredibly poor quality of education.

### 3.1 TEACHERS’ SALARIES

#### 3.1.1 TEACHERS’ SALARIES: POLICY PROCESS

Teachers’ salaries are not uniform throughout the country and vary from state to state, as each has its own policy. Education administrations, including the FME and NUT are pursuing the implementation of the TSS, which would improve teachers’ salaries and terms and conditions.

#### 3.1.2 TEACHERS’ SALARIES: TEACHERS’ VIEWS

**“Nobody has respect for poverty and most teachers are even poorer than the parents.”**

[Teacher]

The main issues according to teachers are:

- low salaries
- delays in payments
- unstandardised salary structure.

#### LOW SALARIES

**“Sickness, no money to pay for food for family, pay for school fees, mates in other sectors progress while we regress. Our salaries are too low to live on. Something has to be done. We’re suffering silently.”**

[Teacher]

Teaching in Nigeria is well known to be one of the lowest paid professions. Therefore, teachers find it hard to get loans; rent houses (advertisement boards say: ‘teachers need not apply’); and cover basic needs, such as shelter, food and water. For a man, this issue goes as far as to affect

his chances of finding a wife. It is, therefore, no surprise that teachers prioritise pay as the chief demotivating factor, and the root cause of the low levels of enthusiasm for their profession.

#### DELAYS IN PAYMENT

**“The state does not pay teachers as and when due...federal government should compel the state to pay teachers as and when due.”**

(Teacher)

Teachers’ remuneration is further complicated by the delays in payment. This grievance is widespread among Nigerian teachers. In one state, teachers were forced to go on strike when their salaries were delayed for over three months.

When a state government releases funds for salary payment, wages are first paid out to civil servants, subsequently to lecturers, then secondary school teachers and then, finally, to primary school teachers. As they are the last to get paid, their payments come out of whatever is left. Additionally, the Nigerian banking system adds yet another hurdle to cross, as banks routinely delay payment by a week to process the cheques.

All these factors contribute to making Nigeria’s teachers’ salaries so insufficient that teachers are forced to get a second job, and the time and energy spent on a second occupation affect the quality of their teaching. It is also one of the causes of frequent absenteeism among teachers.

Teachers describe a motivated teacher as a person who dresses well, is healthy, is proud to be a teacher, takes care of his/her family and is respected by the community. Yet poor, irregular and insecure salaries hamper teachers’ ability to achieve all these attributes.

#### UNSTANDARDISED SALARY STRUCTURE

**“Teachers have no uniform salary.”**

(Teacher)

**“The gap between teachers’ salary and other workers’ salaries is staggering and we are trading in the same market. For example, a level 09 officer in the Federal schools earns more than a level 13 officer in the state”.**

(Teacher)

Teachers’ salaries vary from state to state, which contributes further to the general feeling of unfair treatment, since teachers generally presume that their colleagues in other states enjoy better payment. Unqualified teachers are paid least with a maximum salary of N6,500 (US\$50) gross per month.

Teachers in this category are still regularly employed by many state governments since they are far less expensive than NCE qualified teachers, who begin teaching on a salary of N15,000 (US\$192) gross per month and who find it difficult to acquire employment due to this factor.

Teachers’ salaries do not only vary from state to state but also from teacher to teacher within a school, as it is not only dependent on qualifications and level of promotion but also on whom you know. Knowing someone with the influence to manipulate salary level or teacher status is a great help in the adjustment of remuneration.

This infuriates teachers who aren’t well connected, especially long-serving ones, who see younger teachers with fewer qualifications and/or less experience earning a higher salary.

The Valuing Teachers research reveals more variations: teachers in private primary schools are paid less than those in government-managed primary schools, whereas teachers working in private special needs schools are sometimes remunerated better than their colleagues in public schools. It also uncovers the lack of variation between rural and urban salaries.

On top of the standard reductions for tax, pension fund and compulsory membership of the governing body, Nigeria Union of teachers (NUT), teachers' salaries diminish further by reductions varying from month to month for water and electricity, housing schemes, teacher registration, school refurbishment scheme (teachers have to contribute to a scheme that renovates one school in the state per year) and workshops for the LGEA staff.

### 3.1.3 TEACHERS' SALARIES: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEW

**"There is a stigma attached to teaching; teachers are poor, not connected with society, they have no influence, and no status. Teachers do not get promoted or paid better and, therefore, they have no stimulant to make things better."**

(SUBEB representative)

**"What you need in a school like this, even more than elsewhere, is committed, dedicated teachers. Teachers base their commitment on money. The headmistress regularly has to motivate them with little gifts or they won't stay. Teachers earn very, very little money. And as soon as they find a better paying job, they leave."**

(A project coordinator of a special needs centre)

**"Empowerment in itself will not lead to change. Absence of decent remuneration is far more harmful. Eighty per cent of teachers are not interested in teaching at all. They are just there because there is no other job for them to do. And you cannot have a productive teacher if that teacher does not love what he is doing. The remedial programmes in teacher training colleges attract the inferior students to begin with. This would stop if teaching is professionalised, diplomas are demanded and decent salaries are paid. Then you get the good teachers. Enhance education, so that you get brains rather than drop outs!"**

(SUBEB representative)

Stakeholders acknowledge that teacher remuneration is way below the mark and recognise that a decent salary will motivate teachers. They also realise that remuneration reflecting respected professional status will lead to a motivated teacher workforce.

However, according to a stakeholder **"every new regime that comes into place sees the number of teachers and they are worried about how they can pay them. Where will the money come from?"** But where one group of stakeholders wonders where the government will find the money, others insist the country earns more than enough to cover the costs.

Since 1992 the NUT has been advocating for a separate TSS, such as other professionals like doctors and nurses have. This request was taken to the FME in 2003 and has gained the approval of the federal minister of education, who continues to advise the government on this matter.

Community members, too, support the belief that teachers' salaries are far too low. They accept that inadequate income results in teachers having to hold second jobs. This diminishes support from the community. They feel teachers who have two jobs take the other job more seriously because it pays better than teaching.

**"The problem with decisions on education is that state and government are both responsible for 50 per cent. Government can intervene when decisions are taken at all. The solution is to give responsibility to the local governments, as they are the closest to grassroots. However payments of salaries should come straight from federal government, without intervention, so that the payments go straight to teachers without delaying and without deductions."**

(UBEC representative)

### 3.1.4 TEACHERS' SALARIES: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- Federal Ministry of Education could implement the Teacher Salary Scale (TSS)
- Within the necessary budget constraints, FME could evaluate pay and other possible benefits in terms of adequacy, costs of living in different locations and incentives, making it a living wage. Include long-term security for long-term teachers.
- The FME should ensure that where salaries are inflexible, other benefits can be put in place to bridge local differences in cost patterns.
- The FME should ensure that teachers' salaries in urban areas reflect the higher standard of living.
- The FME needs to develop salary and non-salary incentives specifically for rural teachers, learning from experience in other countries, from listening to the views and ideas of teachers' representatives and teachers themselves, and in recognition of the special efforts demanded of these teachers.
- LGEAs and school management should ensure teachers be paid on the basis of their academic qualifications, experience and performance.
- The FME, SUBEBs, LGEAs and private schools must take immediate steps to end late payment of salaries by strengthening salary administration systems in all schools.
- Federal and state governments, through the UBEC, SUBEBs and LGEAs should ensure that teachers be paid on a fixed date, or that being a holiday, a day previously.
- Federal and state governments, through the UBEC, SUBEBs and LGEAs should ensure deductions are fair, mutually agreed and accounted for.
- Federal, state and local governments must recognise the importance of education, especially basic education, hence, instigating and exercising political will to make this their priority.
- The FME must investigate appropriate ways of monitoring money transfers for salary payments, decrease the number of bodies handling and distributing the money and put regular auditing in place.

## 3.2 NON-SALARY INCENTIVES

**“It was in these ‘good old days’ that teachers were given allowances to subsidise their salaries. These incentives signified government concern for their teachers and the withdrawal of these grants has indicated a diminished interest in the needs of the teachers.”**

**(NUT representative)**

Teachers indicate that the reintroduction of incentives could play a role in raising their motivation levels. The following benefits were high on their wish list.

### 3.2.1 HEALTH CARE

At present, teachers have no health care support. Yet their environment is a health peril: large groups of people huddled closely together in small, dank and dark, smelly, airless rooms with leaking roofs and caving walls that are completely lacking proper hygienic facilities. Moreover, teachers complain about the stress involved in their profession and this makes them even more susceptible to diseases. The anxiety produced in their job is further amplified by their living conditions.

Undoubtedly, if the government would set up and contribute to a health care system for teachers this, too, would be an investment in the quality of education. Health care is an incentive that the government can offer immediately. Certain quotas at different regional and central hospitals could further help improve their access to health care.

### 3.2.2 ACCOMMODATION

Formerly, teachers were accommodated in staff quarters adjacent to the school at which they were teaching. This benefit was lost long ago. Community members agree that this is a serious drawback.

These days, teachers often find it hard to rent a place anywhere near their work, due to their low and instable wages and the rents, especially in urban areas, are too high in relation to their income. Therefore, teachers often live far away and have to travel or even walk long distances to get to school.

If the government provided lodgings close to schools or made loans for housing available to teachers, this would make teachers' lives a lot easier as they could live within close proximity to their school. This in turn would boost their motivation level and faith in the government.

The FME has introduced a housing mortgage scheme for teachers, to which teachers can voluntarily contribute a percentage of their wages to increase their chances of obtaining government housing. Some teachers do contribute to this programme, but the majority argue that government housing is only available for those related to or acquainted with people in seats of authority.

### 3.2.3 PENSIONS

From 1994 teachers and other stakeholders believed that the National Primary Education Commission (now UBEC/LGEA) was investing 15 per cent of teachers' wages into a pension fund, as opposed to seven per cent at present. However, when these funds were to be reimbursed through a retirement fund, the finances were not available – either misused or embezzled. The federal government has attempted to repay this money, though it has been in an arbitrary fashion. The NUT is incessantly addressing this issue with the government.

Because of this incident, the government is now encouraging private investment into this area. The government wants to pass the responsibility for teachers' pensions into the hands of a number of private companies. Teachers will subsequently have to choose the private pension company they want to transact with and how much they prefer to contribute to their pension fund. Pension settlement will then depend on the amount contributed.

However, stakeholders have expressed their concerns with this transference of responsibility to the private sector. In Nigeria there is the possibility of banks going bankrupt, which would leave teachers duped once again. As a stakeholder affirmed, it would be more secure to leave pension funds in the hands of the government as they are obliged to refund teachers on their retirement.

### 3.2.4 TRANSPORTATION

**“Some days I have to decide whether to spend my money on transport to school or food for myself and family.”**

(Teacher)

**“I was transferred here against my will. The school where I worked first was only a five-minute walk from my home. Now I have to travel for over an hour and with three different means of transport to get to my work. Half of my income is spent on travelling.”**

(Teacher)

Transportation is yet another financial burden on teachers who live far from school. The costs are often unbearable. Most teachers believe that if they were to receive a transport allowance, a means of transport (for example a motorbike) or soft loans to buy vehicles or bicycles, the level of enthusiasm for their occupation would rise and it would encourage punctuality.

### 3.2.5 APPOINTING TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS NEAR THEIR HOMES

Teachers want to work close to their homes and within their homeland. However, quite a few teachers have been transferred and now work far away from their homes. This does not only force them to incur high transport costs, it also leaves them open to tribal and religious discrimination. This issue is a serious cause of teachers' demotivation.

VSO recommends appointing teachers to the school of their own choice and within acceptable distance from their home. This would solve both the accommodation and the transport concern.

### 3.2.6 TRAINING

**“Teachers do not retrain. Their teaching method and course content are often completely obsolete. They have no idea of what goes on in the world and in teaching. This is a very big problem. And it might at least be addressed by bringing in teacher students with new ideas and teaching methods.”**

(UBEC representative)

There is also the frustrating tendency to be overly concerned with certificates without adequate concern for relevance to schools and the extent to which trained teachers are actually competent and effective. Quite often, however, teachers have earned the NCE or B.Ed and they teach subjects for which they had little or no pre-service background input. The tendency to regard teacher education curricula as good enough and to assume that they are very suitable and appropriate for producing effective teachers for schools is clearly baseless. Rather, there are strong indications to suggest that teachers lack sufficient content knowledge and up-to-date pedagogical and language skills to teach effectively.

**“Headmasters do not always allow teachers to go to workshops. Instead of using this tool to improve their teachers, they use it as a political instrument. They favour the teachers who support their power base, or they send members of their family to the workshops instead of the teachers. It is the issue of corruption again.”**

(School inspector)

Teachers and stakeholders point out time and again how badly prepared teachers often are for their work in the classroom and the need for them to get regular training. Yet, there are no policies in place requiring and enabling teachers to improve themselves. If workshops are organised at all, the costs are deducted from the teachers' salaries, although they are often not even allowed to attend.

When teachers do attend training workshops, the situation in classrooms changes immediately and quite perceptibly – resulting in eager and interested students and a markedly rising learning curve. Teachers participating in these workshops express that for the first time they felt “heard and seen” and no longer left to struggle alone. The workshops always prove a motivation booster for teachers.

Teachers themselves feel that they would benefit most from training in the classrooms, where they can immediately practise what they have learnt. (For more information on training see section five on teacher training, page 28).

### 3.2.7 NON-SALARY INCENTIVES: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The FME should offer free health care to teachers and their dependants.
- The FME should provide subsidised housing close to schools and/or offer accommodation grants or low interest loans, to help teachers find suitable housing.
- The FME should provide grants or pay fees for children of teachers who wish to attend upper secondary school, college or university.
- The FME should offer free bikes, or grants to allow teachers to purchase bikes, enabling them to save money on transportation costs.
- The FME should take immediate steps to implement a policy of posting teachers near their homes.
- SUBEBs should ensure that teachers be allowed to attend workshops on a regular basis; they should be made and paid to take regular refresher courses.

- The NCCE should ensure that every licensed teacher must participate in monitoring and assessing teacher students. This would provide practical training for the student teachers and provide the teachers with first-hand information on new ideas, methodologies etc.
- SUBEBs should ensure that in-house training be provided regularly at every school to enable teachers to upgrade their qualifications on a regular basis.
- School, district, state and national level education consultation forums where they exist, should ensure that there is adequate representation of teachers' voices and views, by inviting NUT representatives or teachers themselves to attend. Where such forums do not exist efforts should be made to establish them.

## 4 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND PROMOTION

#### 4.1.1 RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND PROMOTION: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The LGEA and/or school management selects teachers through interviews, in response to job vacancy advertisements. Successful applicants are then recruited and registered by the LGEA.

#### 4.1.2 RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND PROMOTION: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“The state does not recruit enough teachers... there are secondary schools at local level that have two teachers with a principal that writes the examination.”**

(Teacher)

State and local governments recruit the number of teachers based on the funds made available for teachers' salaries, as opposed to the actual number of teachers needed to deliver quality education.

The lack of funding leads state governments to employ large numbers of unqualified teachers, as they are less of a drain on the states' finances than NCE-qualified teachers. These unqualified teachers may at best only have received a grade two teaching qualification. Others have no education background at all, but have entered the system by means of 'whom they know'. Apart from the tremendous harm this does to education, it is the cause of a surplus of unemployed NCE-qualified teachers nationwide.

Furthermore, teachers trained in special needs rarely enter special needs schools. These schools, both public and private, are forced to employ mainstream teachers – private special needs schools attempt to train these teachers in special needs teaching but public schools are left to cope. This issue both hampers the potential of the children with special needs and increases the stress and demands of a teacher.

The state of affairs is further aggravated by the lack of commitment on the part of state and local governments to recruit the actual number of teachers required.

In order to remedy the teacher shortages, state governments proceed to move teachers from their schools of choice to other, often rural, schools (usually far away) at no more than a day's notice and without a choice. This causes teacher shortages in urban schools and huge distress to the teachers and schools concerned.

**“I was usually accompanied by a representative of the LGEA in the jurisdiction. During a visit to one of the bigger urban schools in the area the head teacher broke into tears when she realised who we were and the nature of our visit. ‘Could we help?’ She pleaded. Last month, five of her teachers were transferred with a week's notice. She had been begging time and again for replacements and her letters were not answered, her phone calls not returned. The present teachers flatly refused to take on yet more than the 100+ children they were already responsible for and she couldn't blame them.**

**Besides, there wasn't a classroom big enough to hold that many kids. 'And where are the kids to go? Their parents work during the day. So most of them are running wild.' The LGEA representative shuffled uneasy in his chair and tried to comfort her. It wasn't his policy, he wasn't responsible for these transfers. He gave her new names and phone numbers to call and advised her to complain to the SUBEB. But to me he said afterwards that it was all hopeless. There are no replacements. She will have to make do with what she has!"**

(VSO education researcher)

When civil servants are transferred they receive a 28-day resettling grant to help them set up in their new location. Teachers receive no such benefit. They are relocated to unfamiliar territories without the means to do so. Their lives become more difficult and complicated from one day to the next. They are deprived of the support of family and friends, and they become subject to discrimination in new and often hostile surroundings. And still they are expected to be a motivated teacher delivering quality education.

**"I was sent far from my job...into a rural area with no money. I had no friends, no family, I was so depressed."**

(Teacher)

The teachers express deep dissatisfaction with the transfer procedure, feeling used, disregarded and disrespected. On graphs drawn up by teachers, there is an obvious correlation between motivation and performance levels in the classroom. On analysing these graphs, dips in motivation levels turn out to coincide with the transfers.

Law decrees that teachers are promoted every three years, stepping up an increment. But this policy is poorly implemented and withheld promotions are major factors in decreasing levels of motivation in teachers. In some cases, teachers have not been promoted for over seven years.

The teachers explain how this lack of proper human resource management is subsequently masked and manipulated. When federal or state governments inspect schools, they give prior notice to the local authorities concerned. These use this timely warning to put pressure on teachers, by threatening their jobs and livelihoods, to state in writing they are regularly promoted. This blackmail has led to huge distrust and lack of faith in local and state governments, the very people teachers are meant to rely on.

Promotions can also be modified and tailored by knowing the 'right' people.

**"Once you know them at the Ministry a level 10 mainstream teacher can be on level 12 wage bracket. This discourages us. Teachers on level 9/10 wage increment are already head teacher. I am presently reporting to my junior."**

(Teacher)

#### 4.1.3 RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND PROMOTION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

These concerns are also an issue with education stakeholders.

**"Ensuring quality is connected with the concern about recruitment, relationships and payment. Recruitment is officially done by the LGEA. But since they do not always recruit the most appropriate teachers, a member of SUBEB has to sit in on every job interview to make sure proper procedures are followed and the right people are selected."**

(SUBEB representative)

#### 4.1.4 RECRUITMENT, POSTING AND PROMOTION: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- Employ enough teachers to comply with the government recommended pupil–teacher ratio of 35:1, ensuring an adequate number of teachers per school.
- Special needs schools should only employ teachers trained in special needs and the government needs to provide these teachers.
- Implement and monitor the execution of the TRCN’s law to employ only qualified teachers and make the employment of unqualified teachers prosecutable by law.
- Upgrade all grade two level teachers.
- Implement promotions without delay or manipulation, every three years.
- Promotions within school are to be on the basis of experience and qualifications, thus employing the best person for the job.
- State and local government should monitor and inspect all promotions to ensure transparency and accountability.

## 5 POLICY PROCESSES

### 5.1 SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

#### 5.1.1 SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: POLICY FRAMEWORK

There are three levels of inspectorates – federal, state and local – working separately to examine and assess head teacher and teacher performance in schools. Each inspectorate has its own programmes and policies for carrying out the same job, without collaboration. The FME intends to address this in its reform.

#### 5.1.2 SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: TEACHERS’ VIEWS

**“The lack of interest for education, honestly speaking, tends to make us a bit lazy because there are no regular supervisors to visit and see how you are teaching the pupils to assess whether the way you teach is right or wrong.”**

(Teacher)

Teachers desire regular inspections and believe it will motivate them to perform better in the classroom. They expect frequent visitations to make them feel visible and noticed, rather than neglected and ignored, as they do at present. Some have not been inspected for years, particularly in the rural areas, resulting in their workforce feeling alone, unsupported and unguided.

The teachers explain how they need feedback on their performance and advice on how to improve their teaching skills. They believe that regular inspections will also build a relationship between teachers and the government, providing a way to express concerns and building mutual faith and trust.

#### 5.1.3 SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: STAKEHOLDERS’ VIEWS

**“The LGEA is responsible for auditing schools. However, it does not look at the capacity of the schools and the number of pupils. Most schools are overcrowded, but the LGEA does not mark this as a problem. The LGEA should send supervisors into schools on a daily basis. But even if they have mobility, which they don’t, there are no resources to fuel the car. So, in reality, supervision does not take place.”**

(SUBEB representative)

Numerous stakeholders support the view that supervision occurs rarely, or not at all, due to lack of interest and lack of funds. Several LGEAs and SUBEBs blame lack of sufficient funds for

the inability to do their job. But inspectors often see education funds mismanaged or redirected, resulting in a diminished capacity to inspect, monitor and evaluate schools.

#### 5.1.4 SUPERVISION, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- Federal, state and local government inspectorates must collaborate and work together to prevent overlap and to improve the provision of effective inspections and support and guidance to all teachers and head teachers – including those in inaccessible rural areas.
- Federal and state governments, in conjunction with UBEC and SUBEBs, should ensure there are sufficient funds allocated for regular supervisions of all schools and ensure transparency and accountability.
- Supervisors must carry out spontaneous inspections, without prior notice to schools and local authorities, to prevent manipulation of data.
- Federal, state and local inspectorates should collaborate together to ensure teachers are observed while teaching at least once a year.
- Head teachers and teachers must receive training in supervision and peer support.
- Inspectors must be trained on effective assessing of the adequacy of school premises, teachers and head teachers, at all levels.

## 5.2 TEACHER TRAINING

### 5.2.1 TEACHER TRAINING: POLICY FRAMEWORK

**“The quality of the average teacher is relatively low. This is the result of the present education system. Teachers have been trained by teachers who were trained poorly themselves.”**

(National Teachers’ Institute (NTI) representative)

Almost every state in Nigeria has a CoE that provides a three-year course to qualify for the minimum teacher qualification, NCE. This course requires five credits to enter directly.

However, due to the high entrance requirement and the unattractive working conditions for teachers, CoEs found it hard to entice students of five-credit calibre to enrol. Therefore, the NCCE introduced the pre-NCE course in 2002.

This one-year programme allows students with two credits to upgrade to five-credit standard. Students who complete and successfully pass this course are accepted into the NCE programme.

As a result, lecture halls in all CoEs around the country are now bursting at the seams, with thousands of students attending classes with the capacity for less than a third of their numbers.

Lecture halls frequently hold up to 1,000 students and more, with people sitting on windowsills and many standing outside, straining their ears to hear the lecturer’s words.

**“Courses may enrol as many as 600 to 2000 students in lecture halls built for 100. Most rooms don’t have sound equipment, and if you are unlucky enough to be pressed against a wall you run the risk of being electrocuted by naked live wires.”**

(VSO teacher trainer)

**“The situation has become untenable with up to 15 students sleeping in rooms built for three. The toilets are filthy beyond belief and usually malfunctioning anyway, so students and teachers relieve themselves anywhere, making the place smell. Usually there are more students outside the lecture halls than inside as the halls cannot contain more than 300 students max, while as a rule, over a thousand have enrolled for any course.”**

(COE lecturer)

**“Lecturers do very little lecturing and have to do too many odd jobs, which reduces lecturer capacity even further.”**

(VSO teacher trainer)

Once away from their superiors, teachers often frankly admit how they felt obliged to bribe their way through college. They accuse the lecturers of demanding money from the boys and “favours” from the girls in exchange for pass grades.

Most stakeholders admit that the curriculum delivered has **“too many small and irrelevant subjects”**, which are **“not interrelated and context related”** and that it contains very little teaching and practising of teaching methodologies. Students get only 12 weeks’ teaching practice during the entire course, which they undertake in their final year.

This mixture of the learning environment, two-credit standard entrants and commonplace malpractice results in the bitter reality of poorly educated and trained teachers, who in a lot of cases do not know how to read or write fluently or correctly before entering the teaching profession.

### 5.2.2 TEACHER TRAINING: TEACHERS’ VIEWS

Teachers generally are confident they have been educated well and sufficiently trained to do their job. Unfortunately, this doesn’t mean very much as they themselves are often not aware of the gaps in knowledge and skills.

Teachers do, however, bitterly complain about being deprived of opportunities for further professional development, such as workshops, seminars, and refresher courses to update their current subject knowledge and teaching methodologies. Nor do they get any encouragement to enhance and improve their teaching qualifications by returning to university to upgrade their credentials. They passionately express dissatisfaction with their SUBEBs, as they are responsible for the supply of such programmes.

**“We need workshops to better our teaching. Teachers need to be on those courses, not anyone else. SUBEBs and LGEAs are meant to give us them, but no, they never happen.”**

(Teacher)

Teachers have few means to update their current subject knowledge and skills independently. They suggest a research grant would enable them to enhance their motivational level and improve their skills to deliver a good standard of education.

There are only two colleges in the whole of Nigeria that train teachers in special needs and very few of the students enter this area of teaching. This has led to the employment of standard mainstream teachers in schools for children with special needs, learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

Teachers in the private special needs schools have proven to be more motivated than those in public special needs schools, as they receive more training and their working environment is more conducive. The government needs to increase special needs training in CoEs and improve the existing curriculum to encourage student teachers to specialise and enter this rewarding area of teaching.

### 5.2.3 TEACHER TRAINING: STAKEHOLDERS’ VIEWS

**“The level of students is way below the mark, some can hardly read and write themselves; their numerical skills are non-existent and because of this, the students can’t cope with primary education studies, although the course is not demanding.”**

(VSO teacher trainer)

Stakeholders readily admit that the entrance requirements of two credits into CoEs, does not attract the quality of entrants needed to educate the coming generations of Nigeria. A UBEC representative suggests:

**“The remedial programmes in teacher training colleges attract the inferior students to begin with; this would stop if teaching is professionalised, diplomas are demanded and decent salaries are paid. Enhance education – so that you can get brains rather than drop outs.”**

(SUBEB representative)

Stakeholders warn that unless the government makes the teaching profession more attractive, it will not entice the calibre of teachers needed to provide a high standard of education.

At present, many student teachers choose this career path, when they have been rejected admission from other more 'prominent' university and college courses. In Nigeria people apply for the most attractive profession with regard to remuneration and working conditions, as opposed to what they may have an interest or talent in. Therefore, teaching is at the bottom of the pile, when it comes to professional appeal. Community members explain:

**“Before now, people used to choose teaching as a career – they were dedicated and taught very well. Today most teachers are unqualified and cannot teach well; they teach to earn a living. Teachers are posted to schools and they do not report for their duty.”**

(Community members)

Stakeholders agree that:

- Teacher training needs to be more teaching based.
- Training should be taken into the classroom.
- Placements should take at least a year and be carefully monitored so that schools benefit more.
- Teaching should be made compulsory at least during the first year after completion of the course.

**“People with a certificate in teaching should be encouraged to take and hold down a teaching job. Right now colleges produce enough teachers, but they are not given jobs. In each state one college of education is now assigned to place and monitor new teachers.”**

(A variety of voices from different official bodies)

**“Among the major recommendations was the need to bridge the gap between colleges of education and schools and between teachers, educators and student teachers. This would help produce teachers who can cope with the adverse situation in schools creatively and who are not only up to date in their teaching techniques but are also committed to high quality performance. The armchair and theory-oriented teacher education that currently goes on in colleges of education only produce NCE teachers who are very weak, even in lesson preparation and who lack any insight into enlivening their lessons with innovative ideas.”**

(Teacher)

The NCCE is presently in the process of reviewing the CoE curriculum.

**“We visited a large number of CoEs, federal, state and private ones. At the federal ones, where we could only go by introduction, we got to see what the provost was willing to show us, no more, no less. And often that was bad enough. We did not get much chance to talk to the lecturers though. However, once private CoEs got wind of our research, they started to invite us of their own accord and there we went without**

introductions, so we got to see what we wanted to see and we could talk to the lecturers freely. Generally, the private colleges look more pleasant, better maintained and less overcrowded. But that didn't make the bitterness of the lecturers we talked to any the lesser: 'The current curriculum is unworkable. Was nobody at NCCE aware of the level of education of the average student enrolling in the CoEs? They force us to teach Shakespeare and mathematics to students who can barely read and write, don't understand a word of English, and cannot add up to 10. And they are the future teachers of our children? We have asked time and again to adjust that curriculum and nothing, nothing happens!' "

(VSO education researcher)

Stakeholders, asked what help teachers most need, agree that teachers should regularly receive professional development courses.

**"Refresher courses! Help with classroom management! Teachers do not retrain. Their teaching methods and course content are often completely obsolete. They have no idea of what goes on in the world or in teaching. This is a very big problem. And it might at least be addressed by bringing in teacher students with new ideas and teaching methods."**

(UBEC representative)

Stakeholders affirm teachers need regular refresher workshops and seminars to inform them of new teaching methodologies, subject knowledge enhancement and information on new policies implemented by the government on a frequent basis.

**"These refresher courses should be offered quarterly to prevent overcrowding of the courses."**

(SUBEB representatives)

However, the reality is the SUBEBs, responsible for providing these courses, lack funds to undertake this responsibility, claiming they would like to organise more but "their hands are tied".

Stakeholders and teachers alike complain, however, that attendants are chosen on the basis of favouritism.

Teachers are discriminated because of tribe, relationship or fee paid to the workshop agent. One teacher remarked **"Workshops should be attended by teachers not market people"**. It is a significant factor in the demoralisation and demotivation of teachers, who seek to improve themselves.

#### 5.2.4 TEACHER TRAINING: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The NCCE should ensure CoEs do not enrol more students than acceptable in proportion to their capacity.
- The NCCE should introduce special needs training in more CoEs.
- The NCCE should reform the teacher training curriculum, putting more emphasis on teaching methodology and teaching practice in both mainstream and special needs teaching.
- The NCCE should ensure school placements be an integral part of the teacher training curriculum, spread over the three-year period of the NCE programme.
- The NCCE should organise an ongoing assessment system with peer review and control by deans, lecturers, placement teachers and peers.
- The NCCE and SUBEB should organise frequent courses, workshops and seminars to update teachers on new methodologies, subject knowledge and new education policies.
- All education stakeholders should ensure transparency and accountability in this area through close inspections.

## 5.3 THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS

### 5.3.1 THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS: POLICY FRAMEWORK

There is no policy on head teachers.

### 5.3.2 THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“Lack of cooperation by some principals or over demanding by the principal demotivates me”**

(Teacher)

There is a huge variety in opinions about the role of the head teacher.

On the one hand, a number of teachers compliment the organised manner in which their head teacher manages the school. They are involved in the decision-making process, by means of regular staff meetings and good rapport and they feel this motivates them.

On the other hand, large numbers of teachers are unhappy about the way the head teacher runs the school. They feel controlled and restrained, sometimes to the point of threats of violence and verbal abuse.

And then there are teachers who experience both extremes: too much dependence on teachers to run the school or none at all.

Many teachers express dissatisfaction with the appointment of their head teacher. They suspect recruitment gets manipulated on the grounds of preferential treatment, tribal discrimination or personal choice rather than on ability, experience and qualifications.

Teachers feel strongly about promotions on the basis of capabilities, talents, and abilities. Some teachers question their head teacher's credentials and therefore frankly admit they distrust, are disloyal and have disrespect for the head teacher's authority.

Teachers often feel unsupported and disregarded by their head teachers. Parents dissatisfied with a teacher's advice simply go to the head teacher, who then 'remedies' the advice. Some teachers even accuse their head teachers of giving and taking bribes from authorities, teachers and parents. It all adds to the distrust, animosity and demotivation they feel.

The conclusion to be drawn here is that involving the teachers in the day-to-day management of the school and giving them the feeling they are working as a team motivates them, while being leant on too much or too little contributes to the demotivation of teachers. Regular staff meetings are considered very important. It gives teachers a forum, creates team spirit and gives them an opportunity to voice and hear about each other's issues and achievements.

### 5.3.3 THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders recognise the important position of head teachers, and their effect on the staff. They recognise the qualities of a good head teacher as a person who manages their school and staff effectively; holds regular staff meeting to promote teamwork and teacher participation; and cares about the welfare of their teachers and students.

Head teachers who have received management training prove more happy and comfortable in their job. This is supported by their teachers' opinion about their management style. Alternatively, head teachers who have received little or no management training feel uneasy in their position. This again is reflected in the opinion of their teachers about their management style. They talk about being restrained and getting verbal abuse, and they attribute this to lack of control.

The head teachers themselves are often aware of their deficiencies and underline the importance of receiving training. They acknowledge this would give them more confidence and job satisfaction.

#### 5.3.4 THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- Head teachers must get management training as soon as they are appointed – to both staff and school management skills
- The LGEA should ensure the position of head teacher is part of the teacher career development path.
- SUBEBs should therefore offer management training to all teachers interested in a management career.
- SUBEBs should insist that only experienced teachers with the required qualifications and skills should qualify for promotion to head teacher. Newly appointed head teachers should be given a probation period of at least one year. Once they have proved themselves as head teacher, their position should be made permanent.
- Head teachers must have enough admin support staff for the required paperwork to free them to provide professional support to their teachers.
- Clear guidelines on head teachers' roles and responsibilities must be put in place by the SUBEBs and LGEAs.
- In accordance with these guidelines, head teachers must call regular staff meetings, and teacher–parent meetings to address current issues and to develop school plans and budgets.
- Head teachers are answerable to their staff about the actions they take on behalf of the school and individual teachers, and must not allow personal affiliations and political interest to influence their performance or decisions.
- Head teachers must support the advice of teachers and should never question their decisions in public.

### 5.4 TEACHER NUMBERS

#### 5.4.1 TEACHER NUMBERS: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The official policy is that teachers are recruited on the basis of student numbers. Student numbers are collected from head teachers by the Planning, Research and Statistic Department of SUBEB, with the aid of LGEAs, and teachers are allocated to schools according to those enrolment numbers.

#### 5.4.2 TEACHER NUMBERS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“We used to have at least one teacher in every classroom, often we had two. But the last few years we have had to combine classes. So you will find all grades 1 up to 6 are in one room, but it also happens that we have to combine grades 1 and 2 or 3 and 4 because some of us have stayed at home, or have been transferred.”**

(Teacher)

The reality is a shortage of teachers, particularly in rural areas, where teachers are reluctant to work due to lack of amenities and incentives. In addition, teachers observe a lack of qualified teachers.

The shortage of teachers is leading to multi-grade teaching in addition to teacher fatigue, as they are teaching large numbers. The pupil–teacher ratio has been 100 to 1; this is frustrating on its own and leads to low morale.

#### 5.4.3 TEACHER NUMBERS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Numerous stakeholders identify the shortage of teachers as a major hindrance to the delivery of quality education. They see it as the cause of overcrowded classrooms, increased use of corporal punishment, poor pupil teacher relationships and, therefore, as a major source of stress for teachers and children.

In an effort to mitigate the effects of teacher shortages the states recruit unqualified teachers. Stakeholders are concerned by the fact that states are still employing so many unqualified teachers. They commend the efforts of the FME to employ and dispatch 40,000 NCE-qualified

teachers on two-year contracts, in the hope that the states will absorb them. Yet they worry that the states will not retain the teachers when their contracts run out and that teachers posted to unfamiliar locations will be unhappy and isolated from their family and friends and will thus be discontented in their job from the start.

The fact that the states can easily recruit unqualified teachers also has an impact on how the society views teaching as a profession and can explain why the status of teachers is regarded as very low in the society.

#### 5.4.4 TEACHER NUMBERS: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- SUBEBs should consider target pupil–teacher ratios the absolute maximum.
- Training should be provided to a sufficient number of teachers to satisfy the needs of the schools based on pupil–teacher ratios.
- Authorities concerned at all levels must commit themselves to recruit qualified teachers only, phasing out the employment of unqualified teachers, by giving them the opportunity to be trained and upgraded.
- A plan for how many teachers are required and how much this will cost the government should be drawn and can be part of the long-term planning being championed by the Nigerian government with other African states.

### 5.5 PARTICIPATION, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### 5.5.1 PARTICIPATION

Education is not the responsibility of any government alone. Education goals can be achieved only when all stakeholders in education join hands and share responsibilities.

However, in every education system teachers play a major role in implementing education reforms. Teachers are both recipients and deliverers of change. If teachers are not clear about education policies, it is almost impossible to get them implemented and to achieve the goals that the government sets, no matter how good the policies may be.

#### **PARTICIPATION: POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The National Council on Education is the government body in the formulation, monitoring and appropriate implementation of policies. A Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) is made up of stakeholders in education, including federal, state and international aid agencies. This board meets at the preliminary and plenary stages of policy making to effectively address and make appropriate recommendations on relevant national education development and emerging issues.

Head teachers and school management committees, as well as other education stakeholders are then invited at the final stage of policy formation to be acquainted with new policies and to give feedback on them. This process takes place annually.

#### **PARTICIPATION: TEACHERS' VIEWS**

Teachers feel ignored by the authorities at all levels. They are not involved in any decision-making, and are often the last to be informed of new legislation put in place. They have to find out from the media that laws have been implemented. They are never informed of changes officially and in a timely way by the proper authorities, let alone being consulted beforehand.

They are convinced that their knowledge, skills, experience, and understanding of the grassroots will be a valid contribution to the design and formulation of education reforms. They realise they are the implementers of new models. And they support the idea that if they are included in the development process they will be empowered to put the reforms in place and hand them down to future generations of teachers, rendering the improvements more productive and constructive.

## PARTICIPATION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders are of the opinion that if the present government fails, yet again, to include all the stakeholders in education – particularly the teachers – all efforts to improve the education system will be in vain from the start.

Head teachers express their dismay that the government did not consult them on decisions. Therefore they are struggling to implement the system effectively without sufficient information or time to adjust.

## PARTICIPATION: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- All education stakeholders should ensure that all education policies; rules and regulations; curricula; teaching methods; course books, etc are developed with participation from all stakeholders including teachers. This will ensure more realistic policies and will also contribute to improving teachers' motivation. When teachers are consulted and their views have been taken on board, they will take ownership of the reforms and be willing to implement them.
- Stakeholders, including teachers, must be involved in education policymaking, implementation and evaluation as a responsibility as well as a right.

### 5.5.2 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The FME has developed a new policy on transparency and accountability – Community Accountability and Transparency Initiatives – as part of the new education reform agenda.

Previously the FME, as well as the NCCE, UBEC, TRCN and other government education bodies, published the expenditure figures on a federal and state level, which proved too general.

Figures have been published since March 2007 from the federal to the local school level in national newspapers. All education government bodies intend to record all the capital and materials given to every school, making them accountable from the grassroots. Schools can check if what it says is true and if not they can contact the public private partnership branch of the FME.

This new strategy has been launched in the North West Zone and is intended to be launched in the remaining five geopolitical zones and Federal Capital Territory. This is a commendable effort by the FME to address issues of accountability.

Still, for this new initiative to be successful there needs to be a good record of expenditure; training of all people involved in the noting of figures and statistics; freedom of schools to respond to published figures; and a published, open and available line of communication with the FME to dispute figures if need be. Constant monitoring and evaluation, by the FME of its implementation is imperative and central to its success.

Adherence to this policy by all education parties should result in a marked improvement in the motivation of teachers and the quality of education delivered in the coming years.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“Salaries are delayed, chopped and low. Promotion comes seven years after our promotion date. Schools have no welfare for the teachers in case they're sick. There is corruption among the people in higher authorities. Appointment of principals is based on who offers money or who knows whom...”**

(Teacher)

**“There is corruption; ministers and others at national level give preference to their area.”**

(Teacher)

Transparency and accountability are critical subjects in the discussions with teachers. They express the need for transparency and accountability all across the board, from the grassroots to the policy making level of education – from teachers to governments. Teachers call for transparency and accountability in training, recruitment, professional development and promotions.

It is essential for all parties involved in education to commit to a more transparent system. Teachers are frustrated with the ambiguous nature of the education system; the poor, delayed payments due to withheld or misdirected finances; and nepotism in areas of recruitment, resource management and promotions.

This research reveals the importance of clear, transparent policies in education. The policies need to be implemented honestly and fairly for reforms to be successful; an active attitude towards transparency is paramount.

Transparency leads to accountability. Only when policies are transparent can people be held fully accountable for their actions. And people need to be accountable for their actions. Nigerian law has given the president and governors of states immunity, giving them the freedom to do as they please. Sometimes this is at the expense of the nation. Teachers call for the accountability of everyone, requesting that no one be above the law.

Teachers request the government’s commitment to transparency and accountability. They are adamant that change must begin on that level, as they are role models for their citizens. It is only when regard and trust in the government is established and stability restored that government can really make an impact. They request political will to permeate through all reforms made and propose this will shape a prosperous and abundant future for all.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: STAKEHOLDERS’ VIEWS

**“My biggest frustration is the treatment teachers get from government, the community and parents. When money is allocated, if at all, it is for books and buildings; nothing goes to the teachers. They say they earmark money for teachers, but the money never reaches them. If it is spent on education at all, it goes to unnecessary projects. Teaching is a job for the jobless!”**

(UBEC representative)

Stakeholders have expressed the significance of transparency and accountability in all actions undertaken by people involved in education. Honesty and integrity are essential qualities to underlie all policies, people and transactions, as they have the power to ease the path to a high quality education system. Commitment to this approach is the key to education reform and is the step that needs to be taken immediately.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- The FME should commit to monitor and evaluate current transparency and accountability levels annually, from grassroots to government level.
- The FME and all education stakeholders should ensure all teachers are informed about new policies and practices. Publishing a monthly report in the national newspapers can do this.
- School management committees must be trained in school budgeting, be required to publish the school budget locally and hold stakeholder meetings to discuss the budget and how it is spent.
- The FME and all education stakeholders should ensure decisions on education issues are communicated promptly.
- Decisions should be based on written policies.

## 5.6 POLICY COHERENCE AND COMMUNICATION

Inconsistent policy making is a problem in education, especially with a high turnover of education ministers. Policies are put in place without prior notice or consultation, while communication is slow and inconsistent. Teachers and head teachers are often not familiar with all the new policies and reforms.

### 5.6.1 POLICY COHERENCE AND COMMUNICATION: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Council on Education is the government managing body monitoring the compliance with, and coordinating the implementation of, policies.

The Council liaises with relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of policies on education nationwide. It produces and disseminates quarterly reports on the status of the implementation of new policies.

Annual meetings with all education stakeholders, including head teachers and members of school management committees, inform educationalists of new policies and reforms.

### 5.6.2 POLICY COHERENCE AND COMMUNICATION: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“Education policies are hastily done and this affects educational development.”**

{Teacher}

**“Constant change of education ministers leads to constant change in education policy, which in practice is zero.”**

{Teacher}

**“Demotivating factor: not involving teachers in education policy.”**

{Teacher}

Teachers feel ill-informed on the matter of new policies on education, particularly in rural areas. However, they are expected to implement them with no prior notice and without proper information. This has serious impact on teachers' levels of motivation.

### 5.6.3 POLICY COHERENCE AND COMMUNICATION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

**“Ministers are always changing, new policies are always made and they just tell us and expect us to carry them out. They give us no notice and don't tell us how. They need to see for themselves.”**

{Head teacher}

Inconsistent and regular changes to education policies have caused havoc to the education sector and these changes are often not communicated to schools on time. Recently the policy on the school year structure was changed from 6-3-3-4 to 9-3-4. This means the three junior secondary school levels were moved to primary schools, without increase of facilities or resources. This alteration has led to schools becoming even more populated and under resourced than they already were, resulting in further diminishing teacher ability to deliver quality education.

Stakeholders and teachers agree that policies must be introduced in a timely and well-prepared manner and implemented properly. This should include policies on promotions, allocation of TLMs and other areas that would benefit schools and education as a whole.

## 5.6.4 POLICY COHERENCE AND COMMUNICATION: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- Political parties must work together to ensure that education policies are not changed every time the minister of education changes.
- Policies should be complementary not conflicting, and coordination, communication and consultation between the responsible bodies should be strengthened to ensure policy coherence across all sectors.
- A better system of communication should be developed – using all available media (school notice boards, newsletters, newspapers, radio, television and the internet) to ensure that all teachers and other stakeholders have access to information about education policy reforms.
- The communication system should be a two-way system with mechanisms to allow teachers, students and parents to give feedback on policy proposals and on implementation successes and problems.

## **6 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

### **6.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS**

**“The director of schools services is responsible for ensuring quality instructions from the production of textbooks to the management of schools. The allocation of money to schools is done by the executive government – if he is interested, then money will be allocated. If not, schools get nothing.”**

(UBEC representative)

All the schools and all the stakeholders who participated in this research project criticised the deficiency and often non-existence of TLMs. One SUBEB representative told us that one day travelling out to a rural school for inspection he found the classrooms empty and the children working on a farm to earn money to buy chalk.

#### **6.1.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS: POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The FME is aware of the importance of TLMs in the delivery of quality education and trust UBEC to manage their allocation and distribution.

UBEC allocates TLMs based on the number of pupils in the each school.

#### **6.1.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS: TEACHERS' VIEWS**

**“School heads are left to run their schools without money for buying chalk.”**

(Teacher)

**“There are no teaching or learning materials, no copybooks, no library, no books. How can we teach right? The state is meant to provide us with them.”**

(Teacher)

Teachers nominate the lack of TLMs made available to schools and teachers as the second most demotivating factor, especially those in rural primary schools. They complain bitterly about the insufficient availability of textbooks; teachers' guides; and the lack of teaching equipment such as decent blackboards, rulers, science equipment, computers, books for individual reading, supplementary reading materials, etc.

Most schools do not have a library. And in those schools where libraries are present, and children are allowed to visit them, there are never enough books to go round. Usually those schools lack the necessary staff and facilities to supervise them effectively. The books are often considered too precious to be handled by children so the schools lock them in a cabinet, to be seen but not used.

The teachers highlight that due to the scarcity of resources they cannot make or produce teaching aids that would enhance students' uptake of knowledge, reinforce their learning and help to make lessons more interesting. This problem is aggravated when students cannot afford, or their parents are not interested in purchasing, the necessary materials for their education.

Most teachers are critical about the appropriateness of the present primary curriculum. Many see the subjects as irrelevant, overly factual, too much based on rote learning, too moralistic and not suitable for the grades it applies to.

They call for a curriculum review, and adaptation to the level of the children and the Nigerian context. VSO volunteers working in the field, too, recommend a more practical and participatory curriculum to develop the child's natural curiosity, eagerness to investigate, critical thinking and experimentation skills. This should result in a more manageable and effective curriculum for delivery of quality education, stimulating to both teachers and children.

### 6.1.3 TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders and education officials at central and regional levels corroborate the teachers' opinions about TLMs. Officially, the quantity of TLMs is based on the number of pupils per school. In reality, this is hardly ever the case. Materials are inadequate or non-existent.

The SUBEBs are responsible for the supply of sufficient TLMs. But, they claim they lack funds to carry out this mission. One SUBEB revealed that the state government had released only one-quarter of the yearly assigned funds.

The planning, statistics and research departments of SUBEBs hold the crucial statistics to determine how much a school will receive. What schools receive is often determined by what they consider measurable. Sometimes, TLMs are not considered measurable or as weighty in statistical terms as furniture. Hence they are seen as insignificant and therefore not supplied.

### 6.1.4 TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The delivery system of school materials needs to be improved and streamlined by SUBEBs, through the setting up of regional networks for storage and distribution.
- SUBEBs should insure that teachers are confident about the subjects they teach and must be assisted by the provision of ample TLMs for themselves as well as for their students.
- SUBEBs should use low cost and locally available and produced materials. Teachers must be encouraged to develop TLMs themselves.
- The national curriculum needs to be overhauled by the FME, ensuring its relevance to the Nigerian cultures and to children's needs and development. It must put the emphasis on building children's investigative, experimental and critical thinking abilities and be appropriate to their age.
- Stakeholders at all levels must be invited to take part in the development of the new curriculum.
- The FME should ensure all changes in the national curriculum are effectively and timely communicated to all parties concerned.

## 6.2 SCHOOL FACILITIES

**"The staff room looks like where pigs are reared."**

(Teacher)

### 6.2.1 SCHOOL FACILITIES: POLICY FRAMEWORK

Construction and maintenance of schools and their environment – including toilets, water and electricity – are the responsibility of the SUBEBs. The planning, statistics and research departments compile the data on which the needs for buildings, extensions and maintenance are decided.

## 6.2.2 SCHOOL FACILITIES: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“We have to buy water to give to the children every day as we are not connected to the water main. We have no power here and so we cannot even use fans; it gets terribly hot with a hundred children in the classroom and the sun on the roof all day. We have five toilets for the entire school, but they don't work. We relieve ourselves in the bushes behind the main building. The children relieve themselves everywhere in the school yard.”**

(Teacher)

Teachers are passionate about this subject. They describe the health and safety concerns of their environment, rendering it unsafe and unhygienic for staff and students to endure. They complain about the non-existence of water and electricity; lack of toilet facilities; open, unfenced yards inches from bustling urban roads; and dilapidating buildings with poorly maintained roofs. They talk about insufficient and dangerous furniture and pot-holed classroom floors. Teachers recognise that this setting is not conducive for quality learning to take place.

The introduction of the 9-3-4 (six years' primary combined with three years' junior secondary, three years' senior secondary and four years' university) education system means children, who were once accommodated in secondary schools, are now seated in already overpopulated classrooms. This latest arrangement has put primary schools under astonishing stress, burdened with extremely overcrowded and congested classrooms, with classes of over 100 children cramped into confined spaces, without proper or sufficient seating.

Furthermore, due to inadequate numbers of classrooms, grades are combined in classrooms, resulting in two teachers teaching different subjects in parallel without partition or divider. The outcome of this is teachers having to raise and strain their voices, over the accompanying teacher; the children; the adjacent classroom and the noise from outside. Additionally, this leads to a discipline crisis. Teachers fail to maintain order without the regular use of corporal punishment.

Teachers assert that using the 'rod' or 'stick' is the only way they can preserve order and control in the classroom and ensure learning, due to their working conditions.

**“I am already tired when I come to school. And then I have to teach a group of 80 or more hungry and unruly children. Sometimes, when one of my colleagues does not come to school, it is double that number. And I simply don't have the energy to keep them under control by any other means than the cane...”**

(Teacher)

Teachers insist that their present environment is not conducive for learning nor is it motivating or stimulating for teachers and children alike. They further assert that an improvement in this situation would not only ensure health and safety but would be a more encouraging and advantageous learning environment, leading to better quality education and a more motivated workforce.

## 6.2.3 SCHOOL FACILITIES: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders highlight that the introduction of a nine-year primary programme and Nigeria's population being the fastest growing in the world, has put tremendous pressure on the already scarce resources and facilities in primary schools across Nigeria. Stakeholders insist that adequate school facilities are required immediately. One of them explains how it could have got out of hand to this extent:

**“Local government is responsible for the creation of schools for basic education. If that had not included secondary junior, the present student explosion in primary schools would not have taken place. Unless this is properly taken care of, it will continue to provide problems.”**

(SUBEB representative)

Nigeria is the fastest growing country in the world with a population doubling rate of 15 years. Primary schools never stood a chance to overcome this first onslaught, to begin with, and the merging of the three junior levels of secondary education with their already hugely overcrowded buildings proved the last straw for many of them.

**“All the schools I have seen are hugely overcrowded. In one record case, in a rural school, I saw a class of over 200 pupils of ages ranging from 11 to 21 with only one teacher to attend to them.”**

(VSO education researcher)

This population upsurge in primary schools has further strained teachers' resources. The pupil-teacher ratio is a great deal bigger in reality than the national quota of 35:1 leads us to believe. A head teacher of a model primary school told us that in her school **“there are 35 teachers to teach more than 1,300 children”**.

This overpopulation of classrooms and the insufficiency of school facilities lead to daily realities of atrocious conditions children and teachers have to endure. The impossibility to keep even a semblance of order in these conditions has led to a huge increase in the use of corporal punishment (please see section on students and equity).

#### 6.2.4 SCHOOL FACILITIES: **RECOMMENDATIONS**

VSO recommends the following:

- SUBEBs should provide basic facilities – including drinking water, toilets (separate toilets for women/girls and men/boys) – and adequate electricity; telephones; computers; the internet; and libraries must be made available to all schools at the shortest possible notice so that teachers are retained in the profession.
- The FME and SUBEBs should reduce class sizes and improve on the multi-grade teaching system so that teachers are trained for this work environment.
- SUBEBs should factor population growth in any education planning where school constructions are concerned. Budgets for furniture and the construction of new buildings must be based on the number of students.
- The community must be encouraged to lobby for allocation of local funding towards cost of building schools and classrooms, where appropriate.
- SUBEBs should ensure schools are built in appropriate places; in accordance with the needs of the community they serve, not based on political influence.
- SUBEBs should ensure teachers are trained to handle new equipment and to teach their students to use them.
- SUBEBs should ensure that in rural areas sufficient funding is made available to enable them to provide quality education even though their school population may be small.

## 7 STUDENTS AND EQUITY

### 7.1 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Special needs is a very underdeveloped area of the Nigerian education system, with government investing only two per cent of their budget allocated to primary education into it. It is incredible that only two CoEs provide training in special needs education, and that many teachers trained do not even enter this area, as special needs education is seen as more demanding.

Special needs education is essentially reliant on private and voluntary/charity-based schools, that receive no funding or aid from the government. The scarce public special needs schools, under government administration, are as overwhelmed by the conditions of teachers as ordinary primary schools are, with the added pressure of their students' special requirements.

Although policy at international level is moving towards an inclusive education system that would include all children regardless of their class, physical or mentally ability, sex and caste etc . Special schools are still common in Nigeria and it is anticipated that inclusive education will be adopted in the new framework the government is working on.

#### 7.1.1 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The FME is currently researching this area and intends to implement a new special needs framework.

#### 7.1.2 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“There is still a huge stigma attached to having a child with special needs. Very often the parents want to give their child to the centre, but the centre forces the parents to remain responsible for their child. The teachers have to teach the children everything like washing themselves and washing their uniform as the parents are often not around and too poor to care for them properly. Some children are very difficult – often lying, stealing and disruptive.**

**“The stigma is difficult for the teachers too. It rubs off on them. Parents often say that they are wasting their time, which is discouraging for the teachers. There is also the problem that nobody has ever written books for disabled children so teachers have to break down the material in very small pieces and adapt it to the needs of every child separately. Teachers themselves often have to learn how to involve the children in their teaching. And yet we get no money from the state. And very often I don't know where the money is to come from to pay the teachers...”**

[Head teacher of a special needs centre]

Teachers of special needs schools face greater demands from their students in comparison to their mainstream counterparts. They need to use more specialised methods of teaching and require more specific resources and materials to harness the potential of these children. These teachers deserve praise and credit for their commitment in this area, but this is not reflected in the treatment they receive from community and authorities.

Teachers in private and voluntary/charity-based special needs schools are more motivated than those in public schools. Their working conditions and salaries reflect an appreciation for their work and regular training courses update their teaching methodology, knowledge and practical skills. This reveals how good remuneration and working conditions, with regular training and small class sizes can motivate teachers. Some teachers from these schools were highly satisfied and rewarded by their job.

Children with special needs are still stigmatised by their parents and society due to lack of awareness. Some teachers claim that parents do not understand the importance of education for their children and use the school as a minding service, rather than a place where their child can learn. These children are often ostracised by their family and feel isolated and secluded.

Teachers assert that this is not only done by parents and society, but also by the government. Misconceptions, misunderstanding and ignorance call for an awareness campaign to educate public and professionals on this subject immediately.

### 7.1.3 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders in this sector believe the government has not devoted much effort to this field and so it relies on the private sector. They maintain this is due to lack of interest, knowledge and awareness, aggravated by the lack of statistics on special needs. Insufficient data means that the government keeps overlooking and disregarding its importance.

Stakeholders recognise the need for more and better training in CoEs across Nigeria in this area. They recommend an increase in the number of colleges delivering inclusive education training and advise a more practical training curriculum compared to the present fact-based approach. This will improve the delivery of education for children in this specialised area.

The classroom curriculum is said to be too fact and theory based and needs to be more practical and relevant. Special needs schools confess they follow their own curriculum, which they have adapted to be more suitable and relevant to the needs of their pupils.

All the stakeholders agree that it is essential for government to invest more into developing this part of education.

### 7.1.4 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The FME should amend special needs school curricula to make them more practical, relevant and up to date. This means involving all stakeholders in special needs education, including teachers.
- The NCCE should increase the number of CoEs delivering inclusive education training.
- The FME should commence a nationwide campaign to raise awareness on the inclusion of children with special needs; the importance, value and access of education; and information for parents, schools and communities on supporting children with special needs, in conjunction with the MoH.
- The FME should provide support services for families and children with special needs, including information centres and the availability and provision of learning resources and equipment grants.

## 7.2 STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION

Teachers participating in this research project state they are affected by their daily interactions with their pupils and recognise good pupil performance as a motivating aspect of their job.

Seeing motivated pupils encourages teachers to improve their techniques; however the motivated pupils realise that overpopulated classrooms, discipline issues and the delivery of unplanned lessons hampers them. Pupils with low motivation towards learning frustrate teachers and this results in the increased use of corporal punishment and teacher demotivation.

It is, therefore, clear that student-teacher interaction can be motivating and demotivating depending on the circumstances.

### 7.2.1 STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION: POLICY FRAMEWORK

National education policies do not explicitly outline anything about interaction between teachers and students.

### 7.2.2 STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION: TEACHERS' VIEWS

Teachers describe how happy it makes them when a child learns something they have taught – for instance when a child comes to school punctually and well-dressed; when children are hard working and well-behaved; and when they can help children to learn and grow.

Teachers recognise the importance of a good student–teacher relationship and wish they experienced this stimulus more often. However, unplanned lessons; insufficient TLMs; absent teachers; and overcrowded classrooms result in demotivated, uninterested and indifferent pupils, who are frequently excluded from the lesson when teacher-centred teaching methodologies cause problems in the classroom.

These factors, aggravated by persistent corporal punishment, build a wall between teachers and students.

### 7.2.3 STUDENT–TEACHER INTERACTION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders agree that a good student–teacher relationship is very important and can affect the motivation levels of both teachers and students.

They observe that the way parents treat teachers affects student–teacher relationships significantly. Students witnessing parental disregard and disrespect for teachers will imitate this attitude in the classroom.

Stakeholders also agree that teachers exercising excessive corporal punishment project lack of control to the children, evoking contempt for the teacher. Children reproduce the behaviour of their role models.

Therefore, stakeholders, too, are of the opinion that upholding pupil–teacher ratios in spacious, well-equipped and single-grade classrooms, would greatly improve student–teacher relationships, which would ultimately lead to academic results.

### 7.2.4 STUDENT–TEACHER INTERACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- SUBEBs should ensure teachers are provided with the necessary resources (education, infrastructure, TLMs and support) to meet the needs of their students.
- The FME, UBEC and SUBEBs should ensure class size is limited to below the standard ratio (35 pupils per teacher) or to classroom capacity. This ratio should be viewed as a maximum.
- The NCCE should ensure that teacher training should include classes on counselling students so that teachers can deal effectively with student misbehaviour and with students' needs.
- Teachers must be provided with the necessary resources and trained in new technologies so that they can stimulate their students in their learning.
- The government must validate extracurricular activities, eg sport, by including them in the timetable.

## 7.3 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS

As mentioned above in the section on school facilities, overpopulation of classrooms and the insufficiency of school facilities have led to a huge increase in the use of corporal punishment.

### 7.3.1 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS: POLICY CONTEXT

There is no specific policy on the discipline of children.

### 7.3.2 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“Beating is usually an expression of lack of control. Teachers cannot handle the large heterogenic groups and this is the only way they can keep them quiet. The government should abandon it otherwise it will never change. The government signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It should implement it.”**

(Head teacher)

#### 7.3.4 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

**“In one of the rural schools we visited for workshops, beating is so endemic to the system that it has two ‘discipline teachers’ in the school yard whose job consists solely and all day of thrashing a never-ending stream of children sent out of their classrooms for ‘punishment’ for one reason or another. We witnessed that any child found in the school yard during teaching hours gets beaten automatically, even if the child is sent to the headmaster with a sick note!”**

(VSO education researcher)

In some schools, older children substitute for the teacher on break, instilling discipline on their classmates.

**“In every overcrowded classroom, even in those where the smallest are taught (four years and over) selected children have sticks to help the teacher. They are equipped with a stick, a length of rubber tubing or a whip to keep ‘order’ among their classmates. And they use them too!”**

(VSO education researcher)

This passing of discipline enforcement from the teacher to the student enforces and replicates this process of violence. Most stakeholders, including teachers, broached the subject themselves during interviews.

**“No thought goes into proper disciplining. Beating is still widely accepted and nobody thinks of what this does to a child.”**

(SUBEB representative)

**“There is still widespread support for beating as a means of control. Parents actually ask for it and teachers are proud of their ‘control by cane’.”**

(School inspector)

**“Children are often beaten black and blue, and yet parents never complain!”**

(Community member)

**“This mindless cruelty will only change if Nigeria implements the Convention on the Rights of the Child and makes beating an offence by law.”**

(Head teacher)

The Nigerian government encourages schools to relax corporal punishment and insists that all beatings be recorded in a book kept by the head teacher of the school. However, school inspectors assure us that checking on this is not part of their duties.

Some stakeholder and community members are adamant that relaxation of corporal punishment would deprive teachers of the only means they have to maintain discipline and control, while other community members assert **“teachers abuse students excessively and are not committed to their work”**.

#### 7.3.5 DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The FME should begin to take steps to reduce the use of corporate punishment over a period of time until it is abolished, upholding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The NCCE and SUBEB should begin training on positive forms of discipline in the classroom.

## 8 TEACHERS' VOICE AND STATUS

### 8.1 TEACHERS' UNIONS

The NUT is the guiding body defending teachers' issues in Nigeria, yet the FME has only recently considered its importance in the education system. The NUT thinks that changes have been slow to materialise, but now it is more confident in representing and supporting teachers and tackling teachers' concerns.

#### 8.1.1 TEACHERS' UNIONS: POLICY FRAMEWORK

The FME permits the formation of teachers' unions in the country.

#### 8.1.2 TEACHERS' UNIONS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**"We pay our dues...what do they do?"**

[Teacher]

Teachers are dissatisfied with their local unions, feeling they are ineffective in the representation of their needs and desires and disconnected from the teachers whose voices they are supposed to represent. Many teachers don't know what concerns the NUT is advocating and to whom. They deem their unions useless and fruitless.

This could be largely due to the lack of communication between teachers and their unions. As a result, teachers are ignorant of the work, achievements and accomplishments of the unions. Teachers would like their union to be more interactive, consulting them on teachers' issues and communicating valuable knowledge and information on a first-hand basis. Teachers want their union to be approachable and supportive with an open door.

#### 8.1.3 TEACHERS' UNIONS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

**"I used to have regular fights with the NUT...all it did was collect dues...it didn't do anything to help their teachers...why doesn't it provide workshops...why doesn't it do what it is meant to?"**

[UBEC representative]

Many stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the NUT at all levels. They feel the unions have not achieved a lot and need to be more operational on realising their aims, putting teachers' contribution to good use in addressing teacher issues and improving their conditions.

#### 8.1.4 TEACHERS' UNIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The NUT should develop well-informed positions on debates about quality and relevance of education as well as fighting for the betterment of teachers.
- The NUT should be proactive in proposing policy changes that will result in better quality education and a better situation for teachers.
- All policy makers should consult the NUT on any reform in the education system.

### 8.2 TEACHERS' STATUS

#### 8.2.1 TEACHERS' STATUS: POLICY FRAMEWORK

There is no clear policy on the status of teachers.

## 8.2.2 TEACHERS' STATUS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

Teachers are aware that their status in society and their community is low, compared to previous years when teachers were highly regarded in society. These days they feel isolated and secluded from the public arena. People disregard their opinions, ignore their views and damage their dignity and self-respect at every turn. This poor image of teachers and the teaching profession deters people with a true talent and commitment to join the forces of education.

Teachers rarely admit or associate themselves with their profession as it is rendered insignificant in comparison to most other professions. There is a reminder of this at every door they approach. It even affects their marital chances; male teachers often cannot find a wife.

## 8.2.3 TEACHERS' STATUS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Education stakeholders and community members support the view that teachers hold a low position in society.

Parents and community members regard teachers as poor, lazy, ill-advised individuals, who **"are mindful of their personal business more than government work...turning schools into market places"**. They maintain malpractice is rampant and children are not disciplined enough to imbibe learning. Teacher absenteeism further enforces this opinion.

Stakeholders maintain that a mixture of improved salary; higher calibre of entrants; better working conditions; faith in the government; a healthier image; and belief in education would enhance the status, value and reputation of the teachers of Nigeria. They could then stand proud of their profession and their contribution to the prosperity of Nigeria and its future generations.

## 8.2.4 TEACHERS' STATUS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- Community boards should ensure teachers contribute to community development and are invited to participate in the design of community development programmes.
- The FME should introduce a media campaign to improve and enhance the image of teachers and establish teaching as an attractive profession that plays an extremely important role in the development of the nation. The media should also recognise teachers' contribution to the development of communities, by publishing stories about successful and motivated teachers and students who are succeeding because of their teachers' efforts.
- The public's regard for teachers is essential. This should be a shared responsibility of government, community and union.
- Nigeria Union of Teachers need to be professional and be accountable. They need to recognise and exercise their important role in the education system, therefore valuing and supporting teachers.
- All education stakeholders should value the role of the teacher and take steps to ensure that wider society develops a more positive and supportive attitude towards teachers.

## 8.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### 8.3.1 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: POLICY FRAMEWORK

Schools are managed on a community level by a school management committee. This committee is typically comprised of 17 members of the community, representing teachers, pupils, men and women, people from different religions, be it Christian or Muslim, professional people, for example carpenter or tradesperson, and participants of the local parent teachers association.

UBEC recommend all schools to have a school management committee made up of the following:

- One member of traditional council
- Two representatives of a community development organisation (male and female)
- One school head teacher (secretary)

- Two teachers (male and female)
- Two representatives of a student body (male and female)
- One representative of a women's association
- Two representatives of faith-based organisations (male and female)
- Two representatives of old/past pupils association (male and female)
- Two representatives of an artisan/professional body (male and female)
- Two representatives from parent-teacher associations (male and female)

The FME and UBEC recognise the importance of the community in the sustainability of their reform and intend to address this in future policies.

The World Bank in association with UBEC have set up a self-help programme whereby N600,000/\$5,000 is given to community management committees to address an area of education, that needs to be improved in their schools, when they open a bank account and raise N200,000/\$1,500 contribution.

This is a commendable step forward in this area. Awareness of this programme is essential and transparency and accountability paramount at all stages on all levels for its success and impact.

### 8.3.2 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: TEACHERS' VIEWS

**“Nobody has respect for poverty and some of us are even poorer than the poorest parents!”**

(Teacher)

**“My children get bullied in their school because the other children found out their mother is a teacher.”**

(Teacher)

Community members admit to their lack of faith in the Nigerian education system. **“The standard of education has declined”**, they say. **“If it continues in this trend, in 15–20 years’ time, graduates will be of no use in their field of study”**. This perception causes an abyss between teachers and community members.

Teachers maintain that community members have little respect for teachers, so much so that the community disregard their opinions and do not recognise their position in society. They perceive teachers as a poor, pitiful and uncommitted group, who are not valued or esteemed. This insolence has led to a drop in esteem and confidence in teachers leading to demotivation and depression. Teachers are reluctant to admit they are teachers, knowing they will be looked down upon, even to the point where people would spit and verbally abuse them, in school and publicly.

Communities’ disregard for teachers enters the classroom, where parents feel free to charge in and physically or verbally abuse teachers in front of their children for reasons such as that their child failed or has to repeat an exam.

Teachers also regularly complain about parents’ lack of interest in their children’s education, particularly in relation to children with special needs, disregarding the needs of their children.

Parents frequently fail to provide their children with learning materials and pay their school fees. They refuse to keep an eye on their children’s homework. They keep their children out of school to work at home. And they refuse to listen to a teacher’s opinion on a child’s capabilities in school.

Parents do not consider the view of the teacher when they give feedback on their children’s performance in the classroom. When dissatisfied with the teacher’s judgements, they go to the head teacher, who remedies the situation. So, when a child fails an exam or is advised to stay back, parents often insist that the results are changed and the child is upgraded, and the head teacher often complies.

Teachers argue that these factors diminish their motivation levels and advise parents and community to work with them as opposed to against them. They propose a partnership in mutual respect for the sake of their children's future.

### 8.3.3 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

**"We know, as parents, we are not getting the best. Teachers and children are not performing their best – they have lost interest. Years ago, teachers and children worked hard to perform their best but now people become rich but they cannot tell you the source. The government says things, but only for the sake of saying something. They have neglected teachers and children alike."**

(NAPTAN Representative)

Community members and stakeholders admit that teachers are treated with disrespect and distaste, due to their low status in society and their lack of faith in the Nigerian education system. Community members confess: **"when teachers discipline the students, parents come to fight them"**. This lack of faith in teachers is extended into lack of confidence and trust in authorities at all levels and a general unhappiness with those functioning as role models in Nigerian society today.

**"The general public has lost interest in any promise made by the government and that's why they are against reforms, they are not sure: is it a way of protecting an interest, or the interest of the general public."**

(NAPTAN Representative)

The discrediting of teachers and the educational system is expressed in the lack of commitment from parent teacher associations attached to many schools. Head teachers have become very demotivated as parents regularly fail to show up at parent teacher meetings and are irritated by the lackadaisical attitude of the parent-teacher associations. They insist that parents need to start taking their roles seriously.

On a positive note, realising the need for change some communities are already taking responsibility for the education of their children in an attempt to remedy the situation. They realise how powerful they are when they stand united and therefore work actively to bridge the relationship with teachers. They encourage their children to go to school and they take teachers' judgements seriously. They create an environment that ensures children progress through education without pressure or hindrance – thus preventing them from leaping classes (from primary 4 to 6 and/or junior secondary school 1), which some parents demand. This stance guarantees the opportunity to repeat classes for students who fail exams, thus giving them the chance to develop and progress in accordance with their abilities, as opposed to what their parents favour.

Numerous stakeholders have suggested ways to achieve these goals. Especially the Fulani Commission is very active:

**"To improve community and teacher relations we go round the community with the head teacher to sensitise community leaders about the importance of education. We have introduced adult classes to show parents the importance of education. That should be done everywhere."**

(Representative of the Nomadic Commission, who oversee all nomadic schools)

Nomadic schools have the added problem that parents who don't see the need for education regularly keep their children home to work.

In nomadic schools that cater for children of traditional and isolated communities, especially in the north, families regularly remove both boys and girls from education by the age of 12 to be married. It is common to find parents, still children themselves, without even the most basic

knowledge of mother and child care through lack of education. Mother and child mortality rates are therefore considerably higher in these communities than the already high national averages.<sup>1</sup>

A Head teacher of a rural primary school explains:

**“Parent enlightenment is necessary as children are often kept out of school and sensitisation needs also to be done by the government. They should start a nationwide campaign to convince parents of the need of good education for their children.”**

(Head teacher)

Whereas the head teacher of an urban primary modern school tells us:

**“The community also affirms the need to identify ‘lazy’ and uncommitted teachers to the ‘correct authorities’, which would remedy parents’ frustration with casual, indifferent and disinterested teachers.”**

(Head teacher)

### 8.3.4 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- Federal and state governments should facilitate discussions and workshops with teachers, head teachers and community members to bridge and build mutual respect between all parties concerned.
- The community should ensure teachers be represented on all community boards.
- Public, private, special needs and nomadic schools partnered with communities should activate a committed and active parent–teacher association, holding regular meetings and discussions.
- Community liaison officers attached to each school should consolidate the school–community relationship.
- The federal government should organise a national campaign highlighting achievements in education reform and informing the public of the government’s commitment to education, while communicating the importance of education. These campaigns can be directed to all schools: public; private; special needs and nomadic.

## OVERVIEW OF TEACHERS’ MOTIVATION

### OVERVIEW OF TEACHERS’ MOTIVATION: POLICY FRAMEWORK

There is no policy framework on teachers’ motivation; however, numerous studies and reports have recognised the poor level of motivation in teachers of Nigeria. This burden of demotivation is consistently reducing the quality of education delivered to generations of Nigerian children, despite the aim of the CoEs to produce motivated teachers.

### OVERVIEW OF TEACHERS’ MOTIVATION: TEACHERS’ VIEWS

Set out in this table, it is easy to see, there are many more demotivating factors as opposed to motivating factors to keep teachers in their job. The original language has been kept in this table, as it is the voice of the teachers themselves, speaking.

#### MOTIVATING FACTORS

- Good attendance of pupils
- The pupils coming to school on time
- To see pupils giving the answer
- To see pupils understand
- To have good class arrangement
- Neatness/cleanliness of the pupils

#### DEMOTIVATING FACTORS

##### National

- Problems upgrading teachers
- Lack of teaching materials
- No provision of transport for teachers
- No provision for medical attention
- Overpopulation of classrooms
- No bonus or incentives

1. The national under-five mortality rate for 2004 was 201 per 1000 live births, almost 40 per cent of which is made up by the infant mortality rate (first 28 days of life). Rural infant mortality rate is 121 per 1000, as opposed to 81 per 1000 in urban communities. In the rural areas maternal mortality rate (MMR) is 828 per 100,000 live births, which is more than twice as high as in urban areas at 351 per 100,000 live births. In the north east the zone with the highest MMR is 1,549 per 100,000 live births. There are no figures for 2005/6 but it is well documented that the situation has been deteriorating rapidly since 1999 and this trend has not been turned around yet.

### **MOTIVATING FACTORS** continued

- Correct work from pupils
- Earning a good salary each month
- Promotion on time
- Receiving salary on time and through the bank
- Helping pupils learn
- Performance of children
- Knowing children's names
- Having good teaching aids and materials
- Achieving learning objectives
- Students writing well
- Allowances for medical, house, transport and leave
- Workshops: specialised workshops on subject areas; workshops to enhance teaching; and workshops on using teaching aids and teaching materials.
- Good school structure and environment: good classrooms, buildings; fencing; adequate number of classrooms; one grade per classroom; adequate furniture including seats, tables, teachers' table and chairs.
- Good class size: maximum 35 pupils per class
- Support from society
- Teachers' advice taken seriously
- Well furnished classroom
- Qualified teachers and orientation
- Supervised regularly
- Government concern for welfare of teachers
- In-service training
- Provisions of library and computers
- Constant visits from parent to school
- Availability of soft loans for teachers
- Community recognises teachers
- Children have textbooks
- Capacity building
- Selecting trained teachers
- Good parental involvement
- Advantage of time off for domestic duty
- Job satisfaction
- Certainty of job/widows' pension
- Long service award
- Association with higher class

### **DEMOTIVATING FACTORS** continued

- Salary rise subjected to federal schools and it should be universal to all states
- Lack of allowances – medical, transport, leave and research
- Lack of inspections and monitoring by the federal state to see if policies have come into play
- Curriculum changed every one or two years
- No motivation
- Inter-state transfer
- Lack of organisation
- Teachers need to know where they belong – federal, state or local
- Problems with teacher pension board
- Federal government neglects teachers
- No special salary scale
- Poor working conditions
- Poor implementation of educational policy eg universal basic education
- Unstable education policy
- No special NTI workshop on special needs
- No special syllabus and curriculum determined for the benefit of pupils with special needs
- Teachers are not involved in making of education policy
- Constant change of education ministry
- Too much corruption

#### **State**

- Unfair promotions, lack of promotion and poor implementation of promotions
- Delayed pay of monthly salary
- No teachers' and children's toilets
- Lack of workshops and seminars
- Poor and dilapidated buildings and classrooms
- Unqualified teachers
- Lack of conducive learning environment
- Over-crowded and over-populated classrooms
- Inadequate classroom furniture
- No in-service opportunities
- Unfair selection of people for workshops or seminars: if they know someone
- Discrimination against non-indigenous people in terms of work
- Frequent change of curriculum
- Lack of teachers
- Materials appropriate to curriculum
- Roads to school provided
- Classrooms are congested and lack seats
- Lack of accommodation
- Schools need to have the funds to carry out their function
- Lack of state interest

### **DEMOTIVATING FACTORS** continued

- Illegal deductions from teachers' salaries
- Missing or banging windows
- No opportunity to go abroad
- Promotion of head teachers on basis of who knows whom

#### **Society**

- Lack of interest from parents, which leads to lack of interest from children
- Parents cannot afford to buy learning materials
- Negative attitudes from parents
- Parents do not follow up on children's activities from school
- Community are also responsible for administration
- Lack of maintenance culture
- Insults and disrespect from pupils
- Parents harassing teachers
- Community looks at teachers as being the poorest in society because we are the least salary earners
- Lack of meetings with parents
- Insensitivity of the community towards school problems
- Lack of commitment on their words in the school
- Attack on teachers by community members in matters of disagreement between teacher and students
- No provision of security to the school property after school hours
- Poor upbringing of children by parents
- Parents encourage examination malpractice
- Parents come to school to fight with teachers when collecting their children
- Most communities refuse to support the school financially
- Vandalising property

#### **School**

- Lack of discipline in school
- Pupils not in appropriate class for their age and ability
- Records and lesson plans need to be checked
- Teachers and pupils coming late to school
- Inadequate school field
- Poor teachers' welfare
- Lack of sports facilities
- Inadequate water supply
- Inadequate qualified teachers
- Lack of staff room
- Disrespect from students
- Lack of cooperation from principal
- Over demanding principal

Teachers identify some of the traits of good teachers as punctual, hard working, dressed well and committed.

What they see as motivating factors are:

- good and prompt pay
- full attendance and punctuality of students, who grasp an understanding of lessons
- regular promotions and allowances for extra efforts
- regular opportunities for professional development and enhancement of skills and knowledge.

Demotivating factors consist of:

- poor and irregular pay with no allowances and no regular promotions
- poor working conditions: insufficient teaching and learning materials and overcrowded classrooms
- unsupportive community, students and government.

	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Highly motivated	11%	8%
Slightly motivated	24%	47%
Fairly demotivated	36%	23%
Very demotivated	29%	22%

The figures also expose the notion that teachers in urban areas are more motivated than those in rural schools. Many teachers do not want to teach in rural areas due to remoteness; lack of amenities; distance from homeland; and working conditions.

Rural schools are even worse equipped than urban schools, have even less professional development opportunities and are even more isolated from new policies and government initiatives. The absence of any incentives to work in rural areas means many teachers are supply posted to these areas, with little prior notice or financial aid. This deepens teachers' dissatisfaction even further.

Teachers quote poor salaries as the number one demotivating factor. They express their dissatisfaction with their poor standard of living; delays in salaries; dishonest deductions from salaries; poor implementation of promotions; and the lack of allowances, such as leave, health, transport etc.

This mixture of factors, and the low, inadequate and insufficient wage that cannot sustain them, reflects and reinforces their belief that they are worthless, undervalued and unappreciated. It leads to their taking other employment to the detriment of education in Nigeria.

Inadequate TLMs is second, followed by poor working conditions, which act together to stimulate and drive feelings of demotivation in teachers. Overcrowded, dilapidated and dispiriting classrooms coupled with lack of books, guides and teaching aids – often just chalk and an old blackboard to work with – discourage and depress motivation.

Many schools, particularly rural, lack even the most basic hygiene facilities – like toilets and water – a factor that is complicated by a shortage of electricity. Naturally, the element of hygiene and lack of privacy in working conditions proves especially more significant for the female participants in the research.

Other factors include unpredictable postings to unknown places; insufficient workshops and refresher courses; disrespect and disregard from parents; children and community members; lack of faith in the government; and nepotism and other forms of corruption.

Teachers express their desire to become better teachers, their wish to improve themselves and their situation for the future of Nigeria and their own ambitions. The majority of teachers articulate their aspiration to remain in teaching, in one shape or another, and do not regret choosing teaching as a profession to begin with. This shows that any commitment from the government will boost their levels of purpose. They are a workforce ready for change, ready for reform.

There are more female teachers than male teachers in Nigeria. Women seem more motivated and content in their job. Male teachers are usually bread winners; a job that is unable to maintain a good standard of living is therefore unattractive. Many male teachers that trained in CoEs use their qualification as a stepping stone to a more lucrative job. Male teachers feel more ambitious and eager to do well in their job. They are also more likely to regret entering the profession and will leave it if another opportunity comes along. Female teachers on the other hand feel teaching is more suited to their family role, as working hours give them time and opportunity to attend to their household responsibilities.

#### OVERVIEW OF TEACHERS' MOTIVATION: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS

Stakeholders and many community members maintain and support the findings of this report and have identified some, if not all, of the root causes for teacher demotivation. They believe a more motivated workforce would reap more content, skilled, knowledgeable and prosperous future generations. A wealthy, stable and reputable country is dependent on its education system, since it is the source of all other professions and systems. Therefore, stakeholders are convinced that a large investment of time, effort, money, honesty and commitment will help to build such a country.

#### OVERVIEW OF TEACHERS' MOTIVATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

VSO recommends the following:

- The FME should introduce and properly implement a TSS, accompanied by promotions based on performance and experience.
- All education stakeholders should maintain accountability and transparency in all areas and on all levels of education.
- The FME and SUBEBs should improve the working conditions of teachers.
- SUBEBs should supply adequate teaching and learning materials.
- The NCCE should improve teacher training facilities.
- The FME should improve the curriculum.
- SUBEBs should increase opportunities for professional development through the provision of regular refresher workshops and courses.
- State governments should employ adequate numbers of qualified teachers nationwide.
- All education stakeholders should give teachers the opportunities to get their voices heard, involving them on all levels of policy-making and implementation.
- The FME should sensitise communities to the importance of good education for themselves and their children, involve them in reforms and establish mechanisms to give communities a central role in improving the quality of education.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers are ready for change. They are a workforce keen to learn and improve their situation; all they desire is an opportunity.

The Nigerian education system is currently under reform and many teachers and stakeholders alike are eagerly waiting the implementation of proposals made by the FME. Long-term and stable remedies, aimed at core issues, are required from the government. This means a substantial capital investment. Until the root issues, highlighted in this report, are focused on poor quality education will persist. Many concerns expressed in this study could be responded to immediately with a commitment from the present government. Teachers are ready and willing to help to bring about the change.

From the research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Teachers' motivation is low and their morale is fragile.
- Teachers are working in difficult conditions.
- Teachers' remuneration is poor and promotions are poorly implemented – both contribute to falling motivation levels among teachers.
- Teachers' performance is strongly influenced by motivation.
- Teachers want to deliver their lessons well and participate in the process of curriculum development.
- Qualified teachers deliver better quality education. It is important to upgrade current unqualified teachers and insist on the recruitment of qualified teachers only.
- Teachers in urban schools are more motivated than teachers in rural schools.
- Teachers feel excluded from education reforms made by the government.
- Education stakeholders are acquainted with poor levels of motivation among Nigerian teachers and agree urgent attention to these issues is necessary.
- Effective head teachers, coupled with supportive parent-teacher associations and community, boost teachers' morale and motivation.
- Teachers, head teachers and education stakeholders maintain transparency and accountability are important for any reform to be successful. Political will is paramount.

From reading this report you may think the Nigerian education system is beyond repair and that things have spiralled out of control and are past the point of rescue. However, awareness and action about the issues raised is the key to starting a reform. Reform is what VSO is aiming for.

There are things Nigeria can do to turn this around. Unity, dialogue and collaboration at all levels are crucial to making a difference in the education sector. Nigeria can make a start by opening doors; uniting together; and holding hands as teachers and presidents, head teachers and ministers, governors and civil servants, parents and communities and as representatives of all the hundreds of tribes. We are united in this one goal – **to make life better for the children through quality education.**

Uniting Nigeria is crucial to the reform of the present education system. People should stop condemning the president, the government, the governors, the teachers and so forth. They should begin to take responsibility for their own part in this transformation and empower themselves – not as a tribe, not as a state but as a country.

The first step to improving the quality of education is to establish education's role in the future of Nigeria. If the people of Nigeria came together in faith and hope of a better future, generations to come could have a well-educated, skilled and literate population.

If Nigeria could approach issues with a long-term view the skills and funds will be directed to bear more fruitful and more successful outcomes. Through this unification and long-term planning, resources and capital could be pooled together, strengthened by political commitment and nationwide participation, to shape a high-quality education system. This win-win attitude and perspective must be our way forward. These steps are recommended:

### **Terms and conditions**

- Federal Ministry of Education could implement the Teacher Salary Scale (TSS)
- Within the necessary budget constraints, FME could evaluate pay and other possible benefits in terms of adequacy, costs of living in different locations and incentives, making it a living wage. Include long-term security for long-term teachers.

### **Human resource management**

- Employ enough teachers to comply with the government recommended pupil–teacher ratio of 35:1, ensuring an adequate number of teachers per school.
- Special needs schools should only employ teachers trained in special needs and the government needs to provide these teachers.
- Implement and monitor the execution of the TRCN’s law to employ only qualified teachers and make the employment of unqualified teachers prosecutable by law.

### **Policy processes**

- Federal and state governments, in conjunction with UBEC and SUBEBs, should ensure there are sufficient funds allocated for regular supervisions of all schools and ensure transparency and accountability.
- The NCCE should ensure CoEs do not enrol more students than acceptable in proportion to their capacity.
- Head teachers must get management training as soon as they are appointed – in both staff and school management skills
- Stakeholders, including teachers, must be involved in education policymaking, implementation and evaluation as a responsibility as well as a right

### **School environment**

- The delivery system of school materials needs to be improved and streamlined by SUBEBs, through the setting up of regional networks for storage and distribution.
- SUBEBs should insure that teachers are confident about the subjects they teach and must be assisted by the provision of ample TLMs for themselves as well as for their students
- SUBEBs should provide basic facilities – including drinking water, toilets (separate toilets for women/girls and men/boys) – and adequate electricity; telephones; computers; the internet; and libraries must be made available to all schools at the shortest possible notice so that teachers are retained in the profession.

### **Students and equity**

- The NCCE should increase the number of CoEs delivering inclusive education training.
- The FME should begin to take steps to reduce the use of corporate punishment over a period of time until it is abolished, upholding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The NCCE and SUBEB should begin training on positive forms of discipline in the classroom.

### **Teachers’ voice and status**

- The NUT should develop well-informed positions on debates about quality and relevance of education as well as fighting for the betterment of teachers.
- The NUT should be proactive in proposing policy changes that will result in better quality education and a better situation for teachers.
- All policy makers should consult the NUT on any reform in the education system.
- Community boards should ensure teachers contribute to community development and are invited to participate in the design of community development programmes.

This research demonstrates the need for change in the Nigerian education system, confirmed by the present demotivated, devalued and demoralised workforce. Focusing on core issues revealed in this study for reform, would make teachers feel more motivated and satisfied in their job and would deliver a better quality of education to future generations. This vision can be achieved.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

#### TYPES OF SCHOOLS

##### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Schools fully funded by the government are also known as public schools.

##### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Schools run by private individuals – they do not get any financial support from the government but are funded exclusively by school fees. The founder of the school is usually also the manager.

##### NOMADIC SCHOOLS

Government-funded schools that cater for children who live a nomadic existence travelling around with their cattle.

##### SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

Schools specialising in the care of children with physical disabilities and special needs, either privately or government funded and managed. However, the majority are supervised and supported by private holders.

### APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

#### RESOURCES

- ✓ 10 Refreshments (eight participants and two facilitators)
- ✓ 10 snacks (moi-moi/meat pies)
- ✓ Notebook
- ✓ Two marker pens
- ✓ 50–80 small pieces of card (to allow the participants to record opinions on for activity three and four)
- ✓ One masking tape
- ✓ Flip chart to record answers:
  - Flip chart one will have a teacher in the middle of the page, with heading “Factors that motivate teachers” one side and “Characteristics of a motivated teacher” on other side.
  - The words highly motivated, slightly motivated, fairly demotivated, very demotivated written on it.
  - The second (factors/causes of demotivation) and third (solutions to demotivation) charts have the headings Personal, Classroom School, Community, State and National, and participants cards will be sorted under these headings.
- ✓ Eight slips of paper (answers for activity one A)
- ✓ Eight participants’ profiles (teachers’ questionnaire)
- ✓ Eight pencils
- ✓ One sharpener
- ✓ Head teachers’ interview sheet
- ✓ School profile (features of school)

#### FACILITATOR 1

##### INTRODUCTION

Explain the purpose of the research and why VSO is doing it. Use rationale of project and the following statement:

Presently, VSO and the Centre for Research and Documentation (CRD) are undertaking this research project, Valuing Teachers, to investigate the factors that influence teachers’ motivation level and how these factors can be tackled at national and international levels.

We feel one of the most important voices to be heard is the teachers, as they are the people delivering education to the nation.

So we would like to invite you today to express freely and openly your views on the factors that affect your motivation level as a teacher in Nigeria and consider solutions to any concerns that come up.

Any information that is presented today will be strictly confidential, with no reference to yourself or the school. This project has the full support from the SUBEB, LGEA, NAPTAN and NUT.

This report is allowing your voice to be heard at national and international level so we encourage you to participate fully and joyfully.

## TITLE: TEACHERS' VOICE

### AIM

To explore the issues affecting teachers' motivation and morale and to increase performance in schools to the benefit of the students. The research aims to ascertain the level of teachers' motivation and identify the critical factors influencing it.

Key questions for the research:

- What effect does teacher motivation have on performance?
- What are the critical factors influencing teachers' motivation in Nigeria?
- What changes are required to enhance teachers' motivation?

Give personal background and introduce additional facilitators.

Ask participants to introduce themselves.

Questions to be answered during focus group discussions:

- What makes you feel good/happy/motivated?
- What makes you feel bad/sad/demotivated?
- What are the characteristics of a motivated teacher?
- What motivates teachers?
- What are the causes of teachers' demotivation?
- What are the solutions for addressing teachers' motivation?
- How do motivation levels change over time?

### ACTIVITIES

#### Activity 1: (20 mins)

- **What makes you feel good/happy/motivated? (3mins)**

Ask participants to work in pairs and think about things that make them feel good during their working day, eg when a pupil suddenly understands a new concept. Ask the participants to list them on paper provided.

[Allow participants time. Allow them to work on their own and all answers are correct.]

The facilitator will ask the following question and record answers onto flip chart and accept all answers:

- **What motivates teachers? (6mins)**

Extend personal experience to teachers in general eg good working environment.

The facilitator asks the following question. Record answer on flip chart with smiley person on it.

- **What are the characteristics of a motivated teacher? (10mins)**

Ask participants what characteristics a happy motivated teacher has. How do you know when the teacher is motivated/happy? Eg punctual or good tempered.

### Activity 2: {10 mins}

- **What is your level of motivation at present?**

Facilitator will write on the blackboard “Highly motivated, fairly motivated, slightly demotivated and very demotivated”. The facilitator makes links to the highly motivated teacher on the chart and explains that this teacher on the chart is highly motivated because of all these different factors; say some of the factors that have been written. The facilitator asks each participant to think for themselves, if they are highly motivated, with all these different factors, fairly motivated, they have some of the factors, or if they feel slightly demotivated as many factors are missing or are they feeling very demotivated because nearly all factors are missing.

Give the participants a sheet of paper and ask them to write their own level of motivation using the same headings.

Collect up the pieces of paper and thank the participants.

### Activity 3: {45 mins}

- What are the causes of teachers’ demotivation?
- What are the solutions for addressing teachers’ demotivation?

Give each participant a number of cards to write down the causes of teachers’ demotivation (one per card).

- What makes you sad/demotivates/demoralises you in your work?

Group the issues into specific levels to identify the source of the demotivation onto the chart stating, personal/classroom/school/LGEA/national.

Within each of these categories, ask the participants to rank the issues in order of importance.

Extend this to draw out solutions to each of the main issues mentioned.

### Activity 4: {15 mins}

Motivation and performance timeline:

- How do motivation levels change over time?
- How do motivation levels link to performance level?

Facilitator demonstrates the following activity, by talking through a personal motivation chart and performance level.

Ask teachers to think back over their teaching careers and think about their motivation levels. Ask them to map it on a timeline to show changes in motivation.

On the timeline ask teachers to note in training years, time out etc.

Repeat performance level over time.

### Activity 5: {15 mins}

Summary chart

Ask participants to complete the summary chart (Appendix 3)

Closing: summarise the main points that have arisen from the discussions and ask the teachers whether it is the correct perception.

Thank the participants.

### APPENDIX 3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SUMMARY CHART

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Female/male: \_\_\_\_\_

What makes you happy at school? \_\_\_\_\_

What motivates teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the characteristics of a motivated teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you know when a teacher is happy? \_\_\_\_\_

Levels of motivation:

Highly motivated \_\_\_\_\_ Very motivated \_\_\_\_\_ Slightly motivated \_\_\_\_\_ Fairly motivated \_\_\_\_\_

What demotivates teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

What makes you unhappy in you work? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you**

### APPENDIX 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILE SHEET

What education region do you teach in? \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current teaching status?

Trained/untrained: \_\_\_\_\_ Qualified/unqualified: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent/temporary: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate/non-graduate: \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been teaching for? \_\_\_\_\_

How many schools have you taught in? \_\_\_\_\_

What level do you teach at? (nursery/primary/secondary/other): \_\_\_\_\_

What were your reasons for becoming a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you make the same choice again? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What three things would help you be a better teacher? (Rank one, two, and three, with one being the most important.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do you see yourself in five years' time? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you**

## **APPENDIX 5: HEAD TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How many years were you teaching before you were promoted to head teacher?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were the criteria under which you were promoted?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What training have you received before and during your principalship?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What makes you feel good/happy/motivated? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What makes you feel bad/sad/demotivated? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the characteristics of a motivated head teacher, in your opinion? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What motivates head teachers, in your opinion? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the causes of teachers' demotivation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are the solutions for addressing teachers' motivation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you**

## **APPENDIX 6: VSO VOLUNTEERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

What is your role? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been in country? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider the teachers that you work with to be motivated? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think they consider themselves? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think demotivates them? (Please try to list in order of priority.) \_\_\_\_\_

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What things do you think would help in the motivation of teachers?  
(Please try to list in order of priority.)

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What do you think are the reasons for teacher absenteeism?  
(Please try to list in order of priority.)

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What do you think are the reasons for leaving the profession?  
(Please try to list in order of priority.)

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Do you as a volunteer have an impact on the motivation of teachers? Please explain.

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Is there anyway VSO Nigeria could have an influence on the motivation of teachers? If so, how?

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**Thank you**

# APPENDIX 7: FORMAT FOR WRITING ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Title of School

**Description of school and environment:**

Where is the school located? What is the school building and environment like? How many classrooms are there? What conditions are the classrooms in? What is average class size? Any additional information.

**Makeup of focus group:**

How many were in each group? What gender was each group?

**Results of the different activities:**

What did you find out?

<b>What makes you happy at school? What motivates teachers?</b>		
Group 1 (Gender)	Group 2 (gender)	Group 3 (gender)

<b>What are the characteristics of a motivated teacher? How do you know when a teacher is happy?</b>		
Group 1 (Gender)	Group 2 (gender)	Group 3 (gender)

What were the factors and solutions to issues of demotivation among the participants? Can you rank them in each category and overall?

FACTORS	Who do the research participants feel is most responsible?						
	National	State	Society	School	Classroom	Personal	

SOLUTIONS	Who do the research participants feel is most responsible?						
	National	State	Society	School	Classroom	Personal	

**Factors highlighted by each group in answer to questions for focus group activities:**

Can you quote valuable and interesting statements from participants on the above issues?

Can you use the quotes to tally the information?

FACTORS	Desegregation of the research participants' responses into area and sex?			
	URBAN		RURAL	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Teaching materials				
Working conditions				
Promotional prospects				
Pay				
In-service workshops				
Allowances				
Parents' attitudes				

**Factors ranked according to the importance the affecting areas/reasons and suggested solutions where given – national, state, society, school, class, personal:**

What was the rank in each category and overall?

**Other notes and observations made by researcher while focus group discussions were taking place:**

Did you make any observation from the focus group discussion?

**Notes on own impressions:**

Did you make any additional notes?

**Any extra points made by participants after group discussions:**

Facilitators:

Date:



10 What would motivate teachers?

11 How adequate is the average teacher in your opinion?

12 What do you think of the present teacher training?

13 What is the difference with teacher training, say, 25 years ago?

14 What would you change in teacher training? Omit? Add?

15 How do you perceive the role of state governments?

16 How do you perceive the role of the federal government?

17 How do you perceive the role of teachers within the community?

18 How has this role changed?

19 How do you perceive the environment in which teachers do their work?

20 What do you think of teachers' remuneration?

21 What help do you think teachers need most?

22 If you could change the national curriculum, what would you change? Omit/add?

23 If you could change the teacher trainer curriculum, what would you change? Omit/add?

24 What help do you think teacher trainers need most?

25 If you could influence education policy at any level, what would change? Omit/add?





