

TEACHER EDUCATION, TEACHER PRACTICE, APPROACHES TO GENDER AND GIRLS' SCHOOLING OUTCOMES:

A STUDY IN FIVE NIGERIAN STATES

BRIEFING NOTE: FINDINGS FROM ANALYSIS OF PHASE 1 DATA

STUDENT VIEWS ON THEIR TEACHER EDUCATION COURSES

1) Aim of study and methods for data collection

This project, funded by the Macarthur Foundation through the British Council, Nigeria is investigating the relationship between what teachers learn about gender and girls' education in pre-service (PRESET) and in-service teacher training (INSET) or CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and secondary school education outcomes. It is particularly concerned with what teachers learn about gender and inclusion in PRESET and in a second phase of investigation will look at whether teachers are able to put insights regarding gender equality into practice in their work in schools.

The analysis presented in this briefing is concerned with the first phase of the investigation, which is what final year students of education have learned in their initial training that relates to gender equality and girls' education. It reports on data collected by research teams working in Lagos, Rivers, Sokoto, Kano and Jigawa from June - September 2014. 4524 students in 16 education institutions across the 5 states completed a survey on how they viewed their training, the extent to which they and the staff who teach them consider gender equality, and how ideas about inclusion are being taught. In addition, interviews were conducted with key informants at a majority of the institutions where data was collected from students. We are grateful to the institutions where data was collected and have prepared this briefing note to alert them to some of the key findings from Phase 1.

State	University	College	Polytechnic¹	Total	Incomplete data
Lagos	228	765		993	4
Rivers	502	441		943	10
Sokoto	208	819		1027	5
Kano		629	30	659 ²	16
Jigawa		902		902	90
Total	938 (20.7%)	3556 (78.6%)	30 (0.6%)	4524	125

Table 1. Number of Students surveyed by state, and type of institution (university/polytechnic/College of Education)

¹ We were not able to collect data from more students registered at polytechnics because of the strikes in 2014.

² Our aim to survey 1000 students in Kano could not be realised because of the security situation.

2) Students' views on careers as teachers: Some demographic differences

Students surveyed were asked about their reasons for wanting to become teachers. While, overall 69% of male students, and 61% of female students said that they chose their course because they wanted to become a teacher, there are some interesting variations between states. In Lagos and Rivers there is a substantial group who say they do not want to be teachers and were interested in studying something else, but were not successful in gaining admission to another course. In Lagos only 44% of students claimed that they wanted to become teachers, while in Rivers this figure was 59%. This trend was evident both among university and College of Education students. However, in Jigawa, where a larger proportion in the sample compared to other states came from very small villages or rural areas, and where the students' families' mean household socio-economic score (SES) was amongst the lowest in the sample, a substantial majority – 82% - of students say that teaching is their profession of choice.

When the socio-economic backgrounds of students are compared it appears that students who have a very clear view that they want to become a teacher come from families with a lower mean SES score than those who do not want to work as a teacher. Students who say they are studying on a course that is not of their choice, have higher mean SES scores than those who say they are on the 'correct' course for their ambitions. A larger proportion of university students, compared to College of Education students, had wished to study a different course, but at the same institution. One third of women students, and one quarter of men did not intend to study the course in which they are currently enrolled.

3) Teaching on inclusion

Students and key staff informants were asked about the amount of attention given in the education courses to a range of different topics such as lesson planning, assessment, organising lessons so that children with different learning needs can all participate, issues relating to poverty or gender inequality, and global education frameworks. This led to an inclusion score being constructed, which reflects what was said about the depth of coverage of topics associated with gender, girls' education and forms of exclusion.

The initial data analysis shows that there is not much difference between types of institution and how much student teachers report inclusion issues are being taught. Across universities and Colleges of Education the view of students is that institutions do not teach much on this theme. Some difference in the inclusion score of staff and students are evident, with university staff considering that more is taught on these themes than their students. However, it is important to note that the data from staff still needs further analysis and contextualisation as thus far it is based only on the views of one key informant per institution. It can also be seen that the mean inclusion score is higher for women students, compared to men, suggesting that women may be more receptive to these issues being raised, although for neither group is it very high. In the eleven institutions where key informants provided information on the courses offered most said there was either a lot or at least some attention in the courses offered given to lesson planning, assessment methods, and making lessons interesting for children. While girls' access to school and school related gender based violence were only given a lot of attention in two institutions, five reported giving girls' access to school some emphasis, and six reported giving some attention to school related gender based violence. Four reported giving a lot of emphasis to gender equality in education and four giving this some emphasis.

4) What students find interesting and engaging about their course

Students were asked a number of questions about the elements of the course they were studying that they found most and least interesting. In both universities and Colleges of Education larger proportions of both male and female students found the elements of the course that dealt with the concrete practice of teaching (e.g. planning lessons) or appreciating aspects of teaching as a profession the most enjoyable and interesting. Aspects of the course that dealt with gender and learning needs, puberty and issues around sexual and reproductive health, were mentioned only by a minority as being particularly interesting. This suggests that the content of courses in this area may be particularly difficult or distancing for a substantial majority of students. While the general patterns regarding which areas of the course students most enjoyed are similar across the five states, a much smaller proportion of education students in Jigawa, where higher proportions of students said they wanted a career as a teacher, report on finding any aspects of the course very interesting and enjoyable.

Where students did teaching practice seems to affect their responses to the course. Students who did teaching practice in communities where there was either no primary school or only one primary school were less likely to be positive about features of their course, compared to those who did teaching practice in a medium or large town. However, doing teaching practice in a large town did not seem to have a bearing on the proportion of students who said they were very interested in learning about special needs, gender or poverty, although it did seem to increase interest and engagement with learning about puberty and sexual maturation.

5) Conclusion

This first phase of research identified significant differences in participants' views on careers as teachers and motivations for undertaking a teacher training course, with poorer students from Jigawa more likely to have chosen the course because they wanted to become teachers than wealthier students from Lagos or Rivers. It has also pointed to the relatively low engagement of students with issues relating to gender, girls' education and forms of exclusion, as students' responses suggest that they receive limited teaching on these issues and are less likely to identify them as aspects of their training that they particularly enjoyed.

The next phase of the study, which is currently being completed, involves conducting telephone follow-up interviews with participants, to explore what the newly qualified teachers who participated in Phase 1 went on to do after they completed their training. This telephone survey will also enable us to identify schools in which we will conduct further research examining whether teachers are able to put insights regarding gender equality into practice in their work.

If you would like further information about the study and its findings please contact Elaine Unterhalter (Elaine.Unterhalter@ioe.ac.uk), Emma Shercliff (emma.shercliff@britishcouncil.org) or Chidi Ezegwu (chidi.ezegwu@yahoo.com).