

Enhancing Basic Education as a Foundation for Resilience and Sustainability in Low-Income Mega-Cities: the Case of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: The provision of quality basic education is critical for building resilient and prosperous communities. This is particularly needed in low-income settings, where enhancing education can develop human capital and the development of sustainable infrastructures for energy, the built environment, sanitation and more. Nigeria as home to the world's largest population of out-of-school children and the mega-city of Lagos State can shed light on the challenge of education provision in comparable cities across the globe.

This research takes a whole system perspective on basic education provision in Lagos State, focussing on policy and other stakeholder influences on the education system. The research draws on grounded thematic analysis of 18 semi-structured interviews with education stakeholders, including teachers, government officials, parents and NGO representatives.

The findings reveal a range of structural barriers to quality basic education provision, such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, limited access to technology and weak safeguarding mechanisms. Despite strong efforts to enhance provision through systematic use of education technology in Lagos State and policies for improved teachers' skills development, many gaps in implementation persist.

The research leads to over 10 practical recommendations to strengthen policy and practice in Lagos State, including more integrated continuous professional development for teachers, improved resource allocation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in the education system. The Lagos State case study offers insights that will have value across cities and implications for locations facing similar challenges to basic education provision across the globe.

Keywords: “Basic Education”, “Education Policy”, “Lagos State”, “Educational Infrastructure”, “Teacher Professional Development”

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Main highlights:

- Quality basic education builds resilient and inclusive urban communities.
- Lagos State schools face overcrowding, weak infrastructure and resource gaps.
- Teachers' professional development lacks follow-up, mentorship and practical relevance.
- EdTech impact is limited by infrastructure and skills gaps.
- Children with disabilities remain largely excluded from mainstream education.
- Policy to practice gaps and weak stakeholder collaboration hinder education reform.
- Systemic improvements need holistic, multi-stakeholder and sustained action.