AERC Project Findings, Port Harcourt (Primary)

TPG: Teacher, Government Primary School

TPP: Teacher, Private Primary School

EDP: Educational Planner, Primary (UBEC)

TSG: Teacher, Government Secondary School

TPS: Teacher, Private Secondary School

EDS: Educational Planner, Secondary (SEB)

NGOs: Non-governmental Organizations

GOs: Governmental Organizations

PP: Proprietress, Public Schools

Pp: Proprietress, Private Schools

Parent/Guardian

I: Can you describe the difficulties that covid19 pandemic and the lockdown brought to educational activities in your state?

EDP: as a director at the education board, the experience was that the children were kept at home, and for some time, they could not go to school, so, we decided that maybe we could have to learn at home through the radio and the media. We made several efforts to train teachers to teach through the media, then we made contacts with the radio houses and other media houses but at the end of the day, the cost was so much that we couldn't go on with t, although we were trying to go ahead until we had other options of bringing them into the school and split the sessions so that some would come and have their lessons for three hours and the other set will come after. The junior ones will come from 8-11AM, while the senior ones will come from 11AM-2PM. Those were the managerial issues we had and it wasn't very easy because we had to buy some materials for them to obey the protocols like hand washers, sanitizers, etc. We had to distribute the covid19 materials into the schools but it didn't sink well with the students although they had to start learning. We also sensitized the teachers and the head teachers to be able to cope with the exercises and to be able to sensitize the children but it wasn't easy at first but at the end of it we had a fair result.

I: does anyone have something else to say?

TPP1: one of the difficulties brought into the educational sector by the covid19 was the distortion in the academic calendar which affected the performance of students when they came back from school. We discovered that here was a disconnection from what they have learnt before and we just had to go back and refresh their minds on what they have been taught, but some of them could not actually pick up on time and we wanted to gain the time that was lost due to the covid19. During the period, we tried going into e-learning and we discovered that most parents did not have the opportunity to enable their children to participate in the e-learning process. Some were struggling to feed, not to talk of buying data to participate in the lesson. So, we that were dong to e-learning discovered that it was just a handful of students that participated and at the end of the day; it was like we just had to go back to everything in order to carry all the children along. So that is one of the difficulty we faced.

I: what about your own welfare as a private school teacher, were you paid your salary?

TPP1: during that period, I was actually teaching in the NNPC leadership academy, formally known as the NNPC staff school and we were being paid by contractors. During that period, contractors were not paid, so, we were not paid also and there was difficulty on how to fed the children and how to pay school fee, so, it was a problem for us.

I: will you say that all the teachers were also prepared for the e-learning and alternative learning program?

TPP1: the school didn't prepare all the teachers because I remember that my android phone spoilt as at that time, so a fellow teacher called me that I had to participate in the e-learning and I told him that I did not have an android phone so he got me a new phone and we concluded that I was pay back later. Even when I bought the android phone, the money to buy data was not there so I had to relax and continue the e-learning when I was able to get data.

I: what type of platform did you use for the e-learning?

TPP1: the school opened a WhatsApp group where we copied and pasted lessons and the children responded in classwork, so the interaction was not there because there was no time to ask questions. What makes learning usually interesting is the interaction. They just go to my page, answered questions then I marked it and send it back to them.

I: what other method did you use?

TPP1: the school did not make any other provision other than this.

I: what other kind of difficulties did we face, especially as it related to the children's learning?

TPP1: not all homes have the smartphone and some are of low education that they don't even know how to operate androids and get to the WhatsApp pages and links, so that was a difficulty.

EDP: that is for your private school. It could work to that point because it was a private school, but for public schools, we tried to start e-learning but it ended on paper because the rural areas don't even have electricity and parents were trying to feed their family, not purchase android phones for them, so it couldn't work for the public school.

I: for your own private school, do you want to tell us some of the experience?

TPP2: what he said is mostly what we experienced during that time. Most of the teachers were not actually prepared for e-learning and it just came up all of a sudden that you have to send WhatsApp assignments to the children and most of the parents too were not actually prepared for e-learning, so, the teachers were not having any interaction with the children and most of the children ended up studying and doing everything on their own with no teacher to guide them.

I: and when they resumed, did you notice that they missed learning?

TPP2: yes, because the children were all lagging behind. It was like we were teaching them what they were supposed to know and we were struggling to cover up the gap.

I: does anyone want to tell us their difficulties and experiences with the children learning during the pandemic?

TPG1: I want to add that it also brought the population of the schools down. There was a drastic reduction in the number of students after the lockdown because many students didn't resume back

I: why did they not resume?

TPG1: some parents were having issues comprehending the wholdcovid19, so for a long time after we resumed, children were coming one after the other. Parents were scared despite the fact that we had all sanitary equipment's in place and practiced social distancing. Some parents were reluctant to bring their children, especially those in the nursery schools (ECCD) but with time, they started understanding and they responded.

TPG2: many parents were redundant and didn't have a job and most of the parents couldn't afford feeding, school fees and that's what led to the drastic reduction of students in the school. Like in my school, there was a great reduction of pupils.

TPG1: and again, some of the pupils lost their parents due to the lockdown because there wasn't proper feeding, some of them were displaced and there were a lot of criminal activities in the rural area because of lack of things. People were being kidnapped and all sort of crimes were going on.

I: what do you consider some of the missed learning opportunities during the COVID19 lockdown period?

TPG1: some of the students had forgotten what they learnt completely, so when they came back, we were trying to remind them what they learnt. Like let's say for a child in primary three, starting with the primary three syllabuses will be a miss out, so you'll have to go back to the primary 2 syllabus to remind them before we continue. They really missed

I: is that true for all of us or de we have contrary views?

TPG2: yes, it's true but I want to add that in the case of sports, where children come together and play outdoors. Because of the covid19, inter-house sports was stopped only maybe except for the private schools and even the junior secondary schools that did it did their own low key, so they weren't able to

participate in their sporting activities apart from some schools that could do. They missed out in sports and outdoor activities because it had to be a group learning programme.

TPG1: again, because of the crashed program, there was no time for the students. Some of them were exhausted and they couldn't meet up with the scheme of work because their program was crashed and even the teachers were complaining, so they could not really go into the depth of what they were supposed to learn, they missed out on some of their academic work and the topic they should have covered.

TPP1: and that affected their performance in their results for that term

I: what do you think is the cost of this lockdown to you as parent and teacher? Like what did you have to go through?

TPP2: the implication was that we just had to study how to use the smartphones, social mead, zoom, google meet and all those other medias that we were not ordinarily used to and we had to interact with the students online, even afterschool time, so that was one of the implications of covid19 and lockdown.

INTERIEWER: what of your salary, was it paid regularly during the lockdown?

TPP2: No

I: so, how were you able to cope?

TPP2: I had another thing that I was doing aside from the private school work, so that was what sustained me and I know most of my colleagues that were in the same school had challenges, specially those that had nothing else to do. I actually had two jobs that I was doing asides my private school work, so that sustained me. Most of my colleagues were literally suffering because no salary was coming in. Some of them went into trading after the lockdown; they didn't go back to private school teaching.

P: I am a parent and the period that the parents and children were at home was very stressful because everybody was at home and the eating, talking and shouting increased because the period they will be at school, parents will have their time alone but they were at home from morning to night. It even hindered some parents in their business, like some will drop their children at the ECCD but there was nowhere to drop them and at this time of evil, it's very difficult for a mother to drop her children with her neighbors, so, that also affected parents in my angle.

TPG2: it causes a lot of divorce in homes. There was a neighbor who had nothing to do, the children were able to sell little things around and things were very tough for her family and it resulted to clashes between her and her husband and her husband left her. There were so many cases like that; cases of domestic violence and child abuse.

TPP2: and it also made some people to give birth, that means increase in childbirth because they were always together 247, and sometimes when you just look at them, you feel for them because from there, it brings about hardship and clashes and it causes separation.

TPG1: it brought new ideas when there was nothing to do and both the husband and wife were private school teachers, so they had to think about what to do. There were new ideas for parents to move on and

solve their problems. Some of them had to go into other things to learn and it forced some women who were not doing anything to get something to do. They were able to have their own mode of surviving and it opened their eyes to see so many opportunities.

TPG2: the workload increased when the school resumed and the time table and schedule was shortened. Instead of going to school from 7AM-1PM for the nursery and primary school, they now shortened it to 7AM-11AM and then another session will continue. So, the time table was compressed and the workload increased so, you have to struggle to meet up with time and most time, they couldn't finish the curriculum, so, it hindered the completion of the curriculum and that brought down the performance of the students. On the other hand, it brought heavy workload on the teachers and the students since they couldn't meet up with what they were to learn for the term.

I: like you said earlier that UBEB tried as much as possible to establish the e-learning but they couldn't afford it, so what other option did they look into?

EDP: we went into several things like training teachers for e-learning but when it came to the payment of the training personnel, we couldn't pay them and we were trying to see how we could meet the radio houses to bring up our learning program on audio, but all those things were on plan, we tried to go half way but we didn't really achieve it.

I: throughout the lockdown, there was no radio communication with the students?

EDP: okay, there was but we didn't even achieve up to 30 percent because it was scheduled to be 4PM on the Radio Rivers FM and not everybody could access the program, so it didn't really give us what we wanted to achieve, although that program is still on but doesn't have wide coverage. We also reached out to the Max TV but it was only effected by the Radio Rivers FM but it had a low coverage because it didn't work out in the rural areas and it's only the people in the township metropolis that could have access to it and even in the township metropolis, how many people sit down to listen to a 4 o'clock program on radio? And it was cost effective but it wasn't able to reach our goals.

I: does anyone have anything else to add? And what were good sides?

TPG1: like in the area of innovation. I know so many people who are private school teaches but because of their discovering during the lockdown, they were making 3-4 time more than they were being paid by starting to venture into businesses. Some went to fish farming, buying and selling. So, it also helped some family to really achieve what they could not achieve for so many years. So, it was not all negative, it also had its positive sides.

TPP1: like in my family, we had a piece of land that we decided to give to people but during that period, we decided to start farming ourselves and we discovered that it was profitable for us because, for a period of time, we didn't need to buy garri; we uprooted the cassava and made the garri ourselves so we learnt a lot of things in individual business other than looking for salary to come.

TPG1: I also discovered that family members were also able to stay closely together during the lockdown; they were able to bond during this period because no one was going anywhere although there were issues of clashes and quarreling but there was also bonding.

TPG2: it also brought joy and gladness to many families. A relationship that was going on for a very long time due to lack of masses to run the wedding and traditional spending was quickly held. Many homes just came together and there was no much spending, like a low key wedding and even burials were quickly done.

I: now, let's go to the government. Do you think that the government and other stakeholders were well trained to avoid and handle these difficulties that were just discussed?

TPP1: I don't think we are so developed to handle the covid19 case. In the first place, the government has not been able to provide a consistent power supply, so how can the e-learning be achieved when there is no stable power supply? I know that they was a program on air for distant learning but the light was not there and the money was not there to fuel the generators and in Rivers state, the government sees this as an opportunity to get money from the companies around and not let the companies be involved in educating the citizens. The companies gave them money to fight covid19, but the money was not used to do that, so in rives state, they are not prepared for another similar case like this.

I: do you have any plan on the eventuality of anything like a lockdown?

EDP: like I said, we trained teachers and we went halfway to establish e-learning and radio teaching lessons. Even though we have not put it in place yet, we have made all the plans, so incase anything of such happens again, the UBEB board can just fall back on their previous plan and execute it because they already know the strategies that they can exploit.

I: So, there is a blueprint of how to respond to cases like covid19 lockdown?

EDP: yes

I: are there allocations or anything for it?

EDP: no, there has been no allocation even if the UBEC came in with covid19 financial aids and it was all used up. I don't think that there is anyone that is up right now but I'm sure that they brought in some money at that time but I don't know whether it is consistent now. Even UNICEF came in at that time to have a study of the situation concerning e-learning. They brought in a program to try out how it will work which they called the test run program for us to go into the rural areas and give the parents covid19 preventive items like sanitizers and bucket. Most of the parents complained that they couldn't sit down at home and teach their children, they had to look for money to place food on the table. We had an idea to test the teachers to go to the homes or gather the children somewhere in the community and it had about 40 percent achievement. We have tried so many things, so if this happens again, we can fall back to them.

TPP1: there is this program that they called the home grown feeding programme, I think it was sponsored by UNICEF and you discover that internationally, it had a good intention but was high jacked when it got into the country. What was given out to the contractors and coordinators was nothing to write home about. Even the palliatives, where a carton of indomie was to be given, there were given one sachet of indomie for a whole family! And they go out with the record that they have distributed palliatives and that is why I am saying that our country is not prepared, it's only an opportunity for the few rich ones to amass wealth and corruption is still high.

I: so, let's talk about the social protection and safety measures that children are supposed to enjoy during the time of covid19. And you said during that time they extended something, even if it was very small to the schools?

TPP1: it was not to all the schools. My advice is that the government should make sure that the palliatives go down to the classrooms and is not high jacked. We just see paper reports and no implementation. They should send supervisors to go down to the classrooms to see and implement the plans made for education.

EDP: I remember now that the money that was given for the covid19 was the money meant for the training of teachers. We have a program for teacher's development called the Teachers Professional Development, so a certain amount was set out for the training of teachers and that money was paid into the UBEB account. What the management told us was that money, assuming it is 10 million has been cut, and 40 percent of it has been removed, so that we should use whatever was left to do the training then the other half will be used for covid19 materials. I remember I had a training to do and some money was removed from my early childhood training and then added to covid19 materials. It was like they brought a different money for covid19 but it was cut down and it was finance that hindered most of the plans that we made against covid19 because I don't know if the money that was sent for all those things got to the board or not.

I: have there been any homegrown feeding program where children eat at least one good meal, did they make any attempt to see that children were reached out?

EDP: let me contribute to that part because I am part of the school feeding supervisor. When schools were closed due to the covid19, we didn't go anywhere but the still told us to feel the forms, so because my conscience wouldn't let me, I did not fill that I went to any school to feed because the supervisor will write to the senior supervisor of the state and they will be allocated money but no school was given any food. I wasn't filling any form and that was why I did not receive any money for months but the people that filled will write hat they went to schools to feed even if they didn't go to any school and it was like being wicked to the students and to the parents because money was given but feeding did not take place and it was very bad. I still receive the message but it is not working. Some persons just sit down in their homes and highjack the whole process to get the money and nothing is happening. It is the student and teacher's hat suffers most because the meals given to them to take to school are not enough and it isn't something that will work because there are some people that will embezzle and use it for their selfish gains. So everything still goes down to corruption.

I: so there were no social protection services to take care of the children? Now, what do you think that the government could do to prepare better for these kinds of emergencies?

EDP: what they can do is to make sure that they really work hand to hand with their supervisors, because if I am a president and I have people working under me, they should come down from the high level where there are and monitor what is happening at the grass root level to promote good monitoring and evaluation. We need effective monitoring.

I: so, what can be done to prepare us better, especially our children in causes of emergencies like this?

P: if parents and teachers can work hand in hand with the government because right now, the children's safety is not in the hands of the government but the teachers. Like sometimes, if a teacher is celebrating their birthday, we buy them gifts so that they can put a special eye on the child. When we say we are not doing anything for the teachers and the government is not paying the enough money, I bet you, nobody will say that they are using their money to take care of another person's child. Like we the parents can work with the teachers, like appreciating the teachers and collaborating with them. If we wait for the government, things will still remain the same but we parents can also assist. If you appreciate someone for title, the person will be happy to do more.

TPP1: I think we should start with the government. When appointing minister of education, let it not be political, they should go into the academic industry and appoint the technocrats who have worked in the field and felt what every other person in the field has felt. There is nothing wrong in appointing a qualified and experienced lecturer to be the minister of education and a qualified secondary school teacher or lecturer to be the commissioner of education. They shouldn't just appoint fellow politicians who have never worked anywhere before. Some just finish their education and enter into politics, they haven't even worked under anyone, so they don't feel what the citizens are feeling and they are just after the money. So, let the government appoint academic technocrats to be ministers and commissioners of education.

TPG2: parents have a lot to play in the lives of their children because I've got to understand as a teacher in the classroom that when parents are not collaborating or following the teachers in the class, it really affects the children academically. For instance, we have resumed and some children come to school without an exercise book and no writing martials, some will come with one exercise book for all the subjects and if you call for the PTA meeting and explain how they can partner with us to achieve the set goals in the lives of these children, they will tell you that they don't have money and give you all manner of excuses and some of the parents are not enlightened and don't understand the value of education but there should be a forum where some parents should be spoken to.

TPP2: I think it's the government that told us free education that affected everything. And in the rural areas, the mindset of free education where the government provides textbooks and all other equipment affects everything.

I: so, do you think that here is no free education anywhere?

TPG1: there is no free education and there cannot be because, the money for registration alone is very expensive.

P: I think that some people are just taking the government for granted. Some children are going to private schools and there is no way you can take the children to a private school without providing these things for them, so, I think that they are just taking it all for granted. Government is providing everything and in fact, the rural areas is even worse because you won't even see the children, talk less of the notebook and our youths are now into this "yahoo yahoo" and internet fraud, kidnapping and money ritual, so I think it's not something that the government can just solve. Maybe God will really show us mercy and we will really have to pray for our nation as individuals because these are deep rooted problems and we can't solve them on the surface.

TPG1: it's all about parents having proper understanding. There is nothing like free education and there can't be. Education cannot be totally free and parents should understand this because they have a lot of role to play when it comes to finance, guidance and every other thing. They should be involved because they are becoming to unconcerned about their children's welfare. To me, the burden of free education will be too much for the government and parents should realize this instead of depending on the governor or government to supply free education. The parents don't have the understanding that the education is longer free and that they should come in and take care of their children.

TPG2: another part of this that some teachers are being posted to a place where the transportation cost is very high and there won't be promotion or gratuity for a long time and you expect that teacher to come to school every day? This is why you see some of them going two times a week and the condition of work is very bad, how can education be achieved in such environment? Like in the place where I work, if you come very early, you'll find thugs and you'll feel that your life is at a risk, so you'll hang around and wait till people come around, and then you'll go. There are no safety regulations and almost all the school property has been vandalized.

I: So, at the level of the nursery and primary education, do we have qualified teachers?

EDP: we have qualified teachers. In our UBEB now, we don't have anybody less than NCE, you can even see doctorate degrees in our schools, so, the issue is not whether we have qualified teachers but that they are not enough. You can see a school where they have one head teacher, and one teacher in the rural area and that is the problem that we have. The issue is not that they are not qualified but that they are not sufficient. How can only one teacher and headmaster handle the whole primary one to six? And then you also have the ECCG. So, the government has not recruited since after the 2013 general elections and people are passing out and retiring every year with no replacement, promotion or recruitment.

TPG1: and no implementation of the ones they promoted and then they are no increments. When I entered the system newly, every year, it is automatic for you to step up. There supposed to be a promotion every three years but now after years, we are still on the same level. How will the teachers be effective in their teaching?

I: they put the curriculum in the hands of poorly motivated teachers because even if you have a very good curriculum and the teacher is not motivated, he can't give in his best.

P: and it's not only applicable to the government schools but also the private schools because some time ago, I my child who taught him a particular subject and when he replied, I realized that it was the same teacher that taught another subject. I wondered how a teacher who studied English will be teaching my son biology, English and social studies and I questioned that for a while. I went to the school and told the principal that I would withdraw my son if it continues. You see that the private schools don't want to pay but they collect high school fees from parents and don't pay the teachers well and their services are not always good.

I: how are the private schools coordinated in the state?

EDP: the private schools are under the care of the ministry of education and the UBEB board is in charge of the UBEB schools and public schools, so they supervise and monitor them and some of the private schools are doing very well because there are standards that the government gives to them before they can

be registered. Some private schools are not approved but the ones that are approved are given guidelines on how to operate and that their teachers should be qualified professionals but some still go and employ unqualified teachers because they don't want to pay for qualified teachers. Some employ WAEC holders, they don't employ qualified teachers and some of these schools hide or bribe the government supervisors sent to supervise them. These supervisors should be able to find out about the type of staffs in the school and if the schools do not meet standards, they should be closed down. Some of the supervisors are just there to make money. It becomes a business for them.

I: so, in the public schools, where you supervise, do you encourage rotational or individual teaching? Do you expect that at the primary school level, there should be a particular teacher for each subject or that a particular teacher should handle all he subjects?

EDP: there are levels where we have rotational and individual teachers in the primary school, but for the junior secondary, you teach your subject. In the primary school, an individual teacher teaches all the subjects but now, we have trained teachers for phonetics and we are also coming up with a rotational teacher for English and for the ICT. Apart from that, they teach all the subjects, including the ECCD.

I: so, do we all agree on the issues of inadequacy of trained teachers in some of our nursery and primary schools?

TPP1: yes, we all agree. The government should try to recruit more teachers to add to the ones already in the system and the teachers employed should be retrained periodically to update their knowledge. they should be given service training and they should be encouraged by given them sufficient salary and the promotion should also be prompt to motivate them. Some of them will turn the school into a market, especially the female teachers; they result to buying and selling in the schools and they go for what will bring in money.

TPG1: the buying and selling cannot be ruled out because the staff must look for a way to get money to feed themselves. We do not discourage such practice but they are using what they have to get what they want since them are not paid regularly and you can't discipline them because you didn't give them what they worked for. Even as I am talking, I am also affected. My last promotion was 2010, I haven't been promoted for twelve years, yet I am a director.

TPP1: the demand is increasing but the money is not increasing

EDP: so, that's why when we talk to them, we only encourage them to manage because, deep down we know that hey are not being treated well and so they just do what they can do. They are not supposed to sell in school but the government can't stop them because they created the situation. Even when I go to the schools, I can frown at it but I can't do anything because I know that they are not being properly provided for. Someone came to my office some days ago, the child had gotten admission into UST and the school fee was 100,000 and the mothers salary is just 60 thousand and the child has been disturbing his mom that his friends have resumed and she is waiting for her salary to be paid before the child could start and even when they paid the salary, it wasn't still enough because she still needed to remover some money to attend to her daily needs. If they have been promoting, this teacher would have gotten up to – her salary would have been enough. The whole thing now is in the hands of the governor. The executive chairman has been begging for the employment because we have been suffering in schools. When you go

to the school, what you see there will make you not to even go again and when we look at the nominal row and see a school that has a population of about 100 and there are only two teachers there. What message is that giving to you? So, now we give this information to the chairman and he has been making pleas to employ teachers but they haven't given approval. So, until the governor gives the approval, the chairman has no power to do anything.

TPG2: I think the issue arose when the local government chairmen were appointed, they were some things that they couldn't do because they were appointed. Because of the failed tenure of the previous chairman and the burden that it will cause on the present ones, the governor Wike got angry and closed down the commission because of fraudulent practices and this why there is no employment and promotion in the local government and state and his main focus is on flyover and the rest of them. Even his so called commissioner of education cannot bring up school matter, his own is just to obey commands and receive his pay. Like she said, if you have ten children in a school, you can give an account on all of them but if you have 50 students, you can't give an account on all of them, some will be sick and you won't even know because your main focus is to just get through the day and collect your salary. So, if we the masses can come together and look at the situation, it will help us. Most schools don't even have boards, they write on the walls with chalk or charcoal while in some other schools, the students sit on the floor like you'll see a class of more than 100 but with only 50 chairs and at the end of the day, the children don't end up learning. If we can look into it and have different section that addresses different issues, we will make progress.

TPG2: there is another issue that came up; the issue of the extension of retirement age to 65 and service to 40 years. It has been approved, the federal government has implemented it and it has also started in the state government like three months ago and they had a stakeholders meeting to talk about it but the head of service hasn't said anything about it. Although, the federal government confirmed that it has started and has been approved since 2020 and effected in 2021, it hasn't started here but it has started on paper. The schools are getting emptier by the day.

TPG1: Recently, there have been this news spreading on the internet before we resumed school that the government said that all the senior staffs will retire by force, whether they like it or not. If it is remaining five years for you to retire, as long as you are an old teacher, you can retire.

EDP: that's why I said that everything is just on the surface. The younger ones don't want to learn from the older ones and no matter what you say; God has given wisdom to the elderly. The experience must be shared to us and the state doesn't want to learn from the federal. Let it be that whoever is coming to the seat of power has education in mind, because without education, the state and the country will not be able to move forward. We have to pray for the younger ones that are coming up because we see crises, abuse and criminality everywhere.

I: thank you, we are having a lot of insight on what is going on in the south-south and it is not so different from what we've been hearing from the places we've been to. Could you mention some other services thaw were provided during the lockdown but not known to the public?

TPP2: most of the news we got was just social media propaganda. They didn't provide anything for us because they claimed to provide hand sanitizers and nose masks for us, whereas, we bought it by ourselves.

I: where and how many did they provide?

TPG1: they did not provide anything. We used our money to buy sanitizers…

I: but we got information that they provided rice

TPG1: they didn't provide rice to anybody. They placed the rice in a warehouse and after the lockdown; boys broke into the place and looted everything. Nobody saw even one cup of rice but yet, they came online and said that they shared the rice. Everyone was at home and there was restricted movement, so nobody got any palliative.

TPG2: There was an Ngo that cooked jollof rice inside a takeaway plate and brought it to the Sangana Market and they started distributing it to the marketers, traders and passersby. Some other time, another Ngo came was sharing one sachet of indomie and the market women collected.

EDP: the only people that distributed well was the churches and religious organizations because I member that every member of my church got something. The pastor used her personal money and distributed palliatives to the members. We didn't get anything from the government.

TPP1: some distributed for only those that could not afford for themselves.

INTERVIWER: Let's talk of any assistance in form of ICT and E-learning. Has there been any assistance given to the ICT learning even after?

TPP1: there has been no assistance.

I: Have there been any training to upgrade the teachers or have they been given any assistance in the area of E-learning.

TPP1: we even asked our school head hat those of us that were busy with the e-learning lessons, that what do they have in view for us and she said that she is still waiting for a reply from those at the top, that she does not know for now.

INTERIEWER: any e-learning taking place?

P: no, everyone is back to the normal classroom teaching. During the pandemic, there was e-learning because I was doing most of my son's assignment on my phone and he attends private school and we paid 3000 naira and we could also see the child's result on the phone. They sent the link and the subjects to me and he will do his lessons and he will send his work to be marked. At the end of it, I saw all his result and I cannot really give a hundred percent attest that it was effective because they can decide to pass the child based on the fact that I paid the money and the whole thing ended after the pandemic. Every term, I pay for computer but he is not using computer, so they are even cheating us as parents. The teachers are suffering from the government and we the parents are suffering from the teachers so we are all suffering.

I: So, any other opinion?

EDP: the covid19 has become an eye opener on the importance of e-learning, so the board is trying to make sure that we have trained ICT teachers in all the schools and it's not possible because of lack of teachers, so until we have sufficient teachers, we try to preserve the ones we have. The problem still lies

on inadequate power supply in the rural areas although some of the schools have been provided with generators but not all the schools have and even when they have, there is no fuel to run it. Some of the computer rooms that were stuffed with computers in the primary schools are now empty due to vandalization and pilfering. There is the problem of insecurity and lack of ICT teachers.

I: what are our suggestions and recommendations that could prepare us better for unprecedented shock to education and learning activities?

EDP: the major factor remains funding then secondly, we need more manpower in terms of teachers. We can quickly do anything if we have the funds and the manpower because they are trying to train all the teachers on ICT.

I: so, you've attended trainings on ICT?

EDP: yes, even the head teachers are being rained on ICT

I: when we talk about funds, do you have international partners and sponsors who sponsor educational programs and specific areas.

EDP: We don't have NGO's but the international partners we have are UNICEF and World Bank.

I: what of the EFID?

EDP: for a long time, we do not have support from them. The UNICEF and World Bank have specific projects that they want to achieve. Like the World Bank is embarking on a Better Education Service Delivery for all (BESDA) Program in Rivers State and rivers state was among the 17 states that benefited from it, then UNICEF comes in with programs for the early childhood and make recommendations to the commissioner and even the commissioner was not on seat for the recommendations to be handed over to him. A recommendation was also submitted to the house committee chairman on education and it was not implemented and appropriated. If they can implement the recommendations made by the UNICEF, we will greatly benefit from it. They are also trying to build structures like schools in the state

TPG1: In addition to what she said, it's not just fund that is the problem because even you bring out the money and it is misused, we will not still achieve anything. They should as the school the necessary things they need that will enhance the educational process like the computers because JAMB is not written on paper but computers. Then, looking at the structures, we need to build larger and conducive structures to take in the increasing number of students in the school. We also need equipment like chairs, tables and boards. So if we can put things in order, the fund will go a long way. There should be accountability.

EDP: let me make a comment in the areas of projects, another problem we have is the problem of insecurity where most of the school property is being stolen and vandalized by hoodlums. Like we gave many computes to schools but they vandalized them. Insecurity is another major problem, otherwise, the UBEB is trying to establish many projects and send equipment and devices to the school.

TPG2: A robbery cannot occur without an insider giving information. Most of these things that are happening in the school are being perpetrated by the teachers; they'll send boys to rub the school and

when they sell the computers, they share the money, or the security that the school or the government employed.

TPG1: This issue that she is talking about is beyond the teachers and security personnel, it is a general problem…

TPP1: the school heads that should be responsible. Two years ago, my wife and I went for a scripture union program and my wife met one of her former students and the student asked my wife about their principal and the boy said that they were the ones that the school head used to steal the computers and that she used it to open her own computer center.

TPG1: some time ago, in a state school, the teachers came to the school and heard someone sleeping and snoring in their ceiling, they even kidnapped the head teacher. At the end, we should just be nice to the community boys because at some point, they can also help you.

TPG2: the issue of lack of securities in the school is another issue, because sometimes we don't have security in the school and we should employ the vigilantes because they know the nook and cranny of the community.

I: thank you very much for the information. Have a nice day.