

## ***Teachers' Challenges in the Implementation of the Edo State Basic Education Sector Transformation (Edobest) Programme in Edo State, Nigeria***

**Chinelo Blessing Oribhabor, Ph.D**

*Department of Guidance and Counselling*

*University of Africa, Toru-Orua*

[\*chinelo.oribhabor@uat.edu.ng\*](mailto:chinelo.oribhabor@uat.edu.ng)

[\*https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7318-1477\*](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7318-1477)

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### **Abstract**

*The study explores the challenges teachers face in implementing the EdoBEST programme in secondary schools, highlighting the use of computer-based instructional tools. The research employed a descriptive survey design to collect data from secondary school teachers in Edo State, Nigeria, utilizing questionnaire. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers as the sample size. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Teachers' Challenges in the Implementation of EdoBEST Programme Questionnaire (TCIEPQ)". The questionnaire was validated by experts in policy implementation and educational measurement from two Nigerian universities. Cronbach statistical tool was used to analyze the data collected. It yielded a coefficient value of 0.79. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation; and inferential statistics of independent sampled t-test. Findings show that poor training, change resistance, infrastructural facilities, digital literacy, classroom management, and technical support are significant barriers. In addition, the study found that there is significant difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perception of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme. The study recommends systemic solutions for long-term sustainability, regardless of gender.*

**Keywords:** basic education, challenges, implementation, programme, teachers

### **Introduction**

Education is internationally acclaimed as a key driver of socio-economic development and national transformation. In Nigeria, the government and other stakeholders have continually sought to improve the quality of education through various reforms and innovative initiatives focused on enhancing teaching and learning outcomes. A prominent example is the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) programme, which aims to revolutionize basic education in Edo State, Nigeria, using structured pedagogy, computer-based learning devices, and data-driven monitoring systems. Although EdoBEST has been

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commended for revolutionizing school reform, its success largely depends on the active participation and adaptability of teachers, who serve as the frontline implementers of change in the classroom. The programme, supported by both the World Bank and the Edo State government, seeks to improve learning outcomes by empowering teachers with innovative pedagogical techniques, digital learning resources such as tablets preloaded with lesson plans, and systematic classroom management strategies (World Bank, 2022). These measures are designed to shift instructional delivery from traditional lecture-based methods to interactive, student-centred pedagogies that foster engagement and comprehension.

However, the implementation of such reforms often encounters significant obstacles, particularly in resource-constrained environments like many Nigerian secondary schools. Studies have documented challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited digital literacy, insufficient professional development, and teacher resistance to change (Adebayo & Okon, 2021; Ifinedo et al., 2021). In secondary schools, these challenges may be further complicated by diverse curriculum demands and higher student enrolments, which require tailored implementation strategies (UNESCO, 2019). Despite growing research on the EdoBEST programme, there remains a notable gap in understanding the specific challenges faced by secondary school teachers. Most existing literature focuses on primary education, while limited attention has been given to the unique context of secondary education, a critical stage that prepares students for further education or entry into the workforce. Addressing these specific challenges is essential to designing targeted interventions that support teachers, enhance programme uptake, and improve student outcomes. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the specific challenges encountered in implementing the EdoBEST programme in secondary schools. The aim is to provide practical recommendations to programme implementers, educational managers, and policymakers. Resolving these challenges is vital to ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of the EdoBEST reforms across all levels of basic education in Edo State.

The Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) initiative was introduced as an all-encompassing reform programme aiming to improve the quality of basic education within Edo State, Nigeria, by adopting modern pedagogies and computer-based learning content. While EdoBEST has recorded tremendous success in primary schools, its implementation within secondary schools is faced with several challenges that affect the effectiveness of its core strategies. Teachers, who are central to the successful application of EdoBEST practices, are often faced with severe impediments that inhibit their efforts to fully utilize the programme's instructional tools and methods. Despite having tablets fully

loaded with lesson plans and interactive content made available, infrastructural problems such as power outages and irregular internet connectivity impede classroom implementation on a daily basis (World Bank, 2022; Adebayo & Okon, 2021). Moreover, poor training and weak teacher digital literacy have been named as primary hindrances to effective pedagogical adaptation (Ifinedo et al., 2021). Without powerful professional training and technical assistance, educators are frequently incapable of making the move towards the interactive, student-centred instruction promoted by EdoBEST.

Other issues include classroom management issues stemming from overcrowded classrooms and diverse student learning needs, which make it difficult to deliver differentiated student-centred instruction (UNESCO, 2019). Pedagogical innovation resistance on the grounds of deep-seated traditional teaching patterns and apprehension about novel technologies continues to adversely impact the rollout of EdoBEST reforms (Akkerman & Tondeur, 2020). In appreciation of these challenges, EdoBEST incorporates accountability and community engagement mechanisms, namely through the capacity development of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs). These systems enable communities and parents to closely monitor school performance and support student learning, promoting transparency and local ownership of the reform process (UNICEF Nigeria, 2019). The programme has been funded and technically assisted by partners like the World Bank, UBEC, UNICEF, and FCDO. Early results indicate that EdoBEST has increased the literacy and numeracy levels of pupils, teachers' attendance, and school oversight (World Bank, 2022). While these achievements should be applauded, the persistent implementation challenges at the secondary school level call for this to be investigated in more detail. Understanding the specific challenges teachers in secondary schools face is central to designing useful interventions, programme sustainability, and the overall aim of improving learning outcomes across basic education levels in Edo State.

Okunade and Eze (2021) did a study on the adoption of EdoBEST in senior secondary schools and listed infrastructural deficiencies as one of the major constraints. The study established that irregular power supply and weak internet connectivity severely impeded teachers' capacity to utilize the digital tablets and interactive lesson plans presented by EdoBEST to the fullest. These infrastructural deficiencies were found to disrupt the free flow of lessons and demotivate teachers' enthusiasm towards adopting the new technologies. Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2020) examined the hindrance to ICT use among Nigerian teachers and found that over 70% of teachers in rural and peri-urban areas reported that inconsistent electricity supply was among the most significant hindrances to installing computers and other digital devices in their classrooms. Without a continuous electricity

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supply, devices remain un-charged, and digital lesson plans and e-resources become irrelevant.

Similarly, Okonkwo and Ifeoma (2019), in a survey of 400 secondary school teachers in Anambra and Enugu State, reported that teachers who had a reliable electricity supply were three times more likely to employ digital tools in their daily classroom instruction compared to their colleagues who resided in regions with poor power infrastructure. Yusuf et al. (2021) conducted a survey of ICT integration readiness in Nigerian public secondary schools and discovered that 38% of the schools under survey had uninterrupted and stable internet access, although the rural schools were particularly disadvantaged. The teachers in the schools found it challenging to access online lesson plans, digital textbooks, and e-assessment tools, which significantly limited the quality of digital teaching.

A study of 300 secondary school teachers in Lagos State, by Iroegbu and Ede (2020), found no statistically significant correlation between electricity access and the incidence of the use of digital tools in urban schools ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Urban teachers were argued by the researchers to have devised workarounds such as the utilization of personal generators or public charging stations, which acted to alleviate infrastructural loopholes. The study further suggested that school-level administrative support and teacher encouragement were more directly associated with effective implementation of digital education initiatives than provision of infrastructure.

Olatunji and Bello (2021) conducted structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis in five southern states of Nigeria and found that infrastructure had an indirect, not a direct, effect on digital education implementation. The study revealed that institutions with good internal support channels (like ICT coordinators, peer mentoring) did not experience much negative effect from poor infrastructures. This would indicate that infrastructural deficits do not even singly predict ineffective electronic teaching in the case of strong institutional support. A study by Okeke and Nwankwo (2021) reported that unreliable supply of electricity, unavailability of the internet, and insufficient availability of working digital devices significantly constrain the ability of teachers to utilize educational technology. According to their research in secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria, close to 70% of the schools were not provided with stable power supplies, and most of the teachers shared one computer among large numbers of students.

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2022) carried out a national survey to evaluate the take-up of digital education programmes in the Nigerian National e-Learning Framework. The poll polled over 5,000 teachers across the six geopolitical zones and found that in 23% of the cases, the teachers were successful at delivering digital programmes even with weak electricity and poor internet penetration. In most of these exceptions, self-initiated teacher training, use of hotspots, and innovative pedagogy using offline resources were often the reasons. Private school teachers in Ondo and Ekiti States used e-learning materials effectively despite infrastructural challenges in a comparative analysis conducted by Ekundayo and Alabi (2020). Teacher readiness, access to personal devices, and economic capacity to meet the cost of alternative power or internet provision overcame the expected influence of infrastructure on effectiveness, according to their findings. This study points out that within areas with higher economic or institutional capacity, the statistical insignificance of infrastructure and implementation success might be existent.

Nwankwo et al. (2023) conducted qualitative interviews of secondary school teachers involved in EdoBEST and established that entrenched traditional teaching practices and skepticism about the effectiveness of digital tools hindered full acceptance and integration of the programme. Teachers were apprehensive about the additional workload and learning curve of gaining competence in new technologies and pedagogies. Additionally, classroom management concerns associated with large class sizes and varying student capacities further made the implementation of EdoBEST methods challenging. UNESCO (2019) indicates that large classes present challenges to individualized and participatory teaching methods, which form the core of EdoBEST, making it difficult for instructors to engage all learners effectively. World Bank (2022), in its completion report on the implementation of the EdoBEST programme, observed that although the initiative has strong potential to enhance students' academic achievement, challenges related to teacher motivation, retention, and sustained technical support continue to persist, particularly at the secondary school level. These findings support the demands for systemic intervention to address teachers beyond the initial training. In a qualitative study by Olaniyi and Yusuf (2022), many secondary school teachers were unconvinced about the effectiveness of educational technology, with fears that technology would replace their work or burden them with more work. Such a mentality often leads to backlash from the adoption of innovative digital pedagogies despite institutional rewards. Classroom management concerns within technology-laden rooms have also been documented. High teacher-to-student ratios and differences in learners' ability make it difficult for teachers to make effective use of digital tools while maintaining learner interest and control, as noted in UNESCO's (2018) ICT in education regional report.

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Concurrent with this, Ameh and Adebayo (2022), in a mixed-methods investigation of 150 male and 150 female teachers in Benin City, found that female teachers were much more likely to consider the digital component of EdoBEST a source of challenge, focusing on device operation and ICT navigation. In contrast, male teachers reported fewer tech issues but more issues of bureaucratic workload and monitoring of performance. A broader comparative study by Eze and Obasi (2020) on gender and digital pedagogy adoption in South-South Nigeria (including Edo State) found statistically significant gender differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) in how obstacles to technology adoption were viewed within the classroom. Female teachers were more likely to cite fear of making mistakes, lack of self-efficacy, and inadequate technical support, all critical drivers of EdoBEST implementation. In a related World Bank-funded evaluation of the EdoBEST programme, World Bank (2022) added that despite the fact that the programme had improved teacher proficiency in general, disparity was seen between men and women in the use of the digital learning materials made available. Gender-sensitive training and peer support schemes were recommended in the report to enable equal engagement.

Despite these differences, the two groups did not show any difference in terms of perceptions, as shown by some research, such as Osunde and Igbinedion (2023), in which the enabling environment (adequate training, mentorship, and support) was the same for both. This suggests that sociocultural and institutional aspects and not inherent predispositions could contextually drive the differences. Adeniran and Bello (2021) contrasted ICT adoption and gender among secondary school teachers in Ogun State. Using a sample of 320 teachers, the study indicated that male teachers had significantly more confidence when working with ICT tools than did female teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting the difference to be due to ICT training exposure and availability differences based on historical gender. Okwudishu and Eze (2020) established that female educators viewed poor training and technical assistance as significant impediments to EdTech adoption. The authors' cross-sectional survey of 250 secondary school instructors within Enugu and Delta States revealed that female teachers had lower levels of pre-existing training in instructional technology, which influenced their perceived ease of use and utilization of such instruments in the classroom.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the major challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing the EdoBEST programme?

2. Is there difference between male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme?

3. What are the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards the pedagogical changes introduced by EdoBEST?

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significant level:

**H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme.

### **Methodology**

The design applied in this research was a descriptive survey research design to explore teachers' challenges in implementing the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) Programme in the Edo State secondary school system. The use of this design is appropriate as it allows for the collection of quantitative data from a large population with the aim of determining the existing conditions and challenges that teachers encounter regarding the EdoBEST programme. The population for this study was all public secondary school teachers currently engaged in the implementation of the EdoBEST programme in the eighteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Edo State, Nigeria.

A multi-stage sampling technique was used. Firstly, three senatorial districts of Edo State (Edo South, Edo Central, and Edo North) were chosen purposively. Two LGAs were randomly chosen from each district. In each of the chosen LGAs, a simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting 20 public secondary schools, and from each of the schools, 10 teachers were chosen using stratified random sampling to represent subject areas and years of teaching experience. A total of 200 teachers constituted the sample size.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Teachers' Challenges in the Implementation of EdoBEST Programme Questionnaire (TCIEPQ)." The questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A gathered demographic data including gender, age, teaching experience, subject area, school location, while Section B had 4 four-point Likert scale items (Strongly Agree = 4 to Strongly Disagree = 1) measuring difficulties in the key domains of digital literacy, infrastructure, administrative support, sufficiency of training, and resource availability.

The tool underwent face and content validation from experts in policy implementation and educational measurement from two Nigerian universities. A pilot test of 30 secondary school

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teachers in Delta State (outside the study area) was conducted, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The result revealed a reliability coefficient of 0.79, which is high reliability. Copies of the questionnaire were personally distributed to the selected schools by the researcher with the support of trained field assistants. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the participants so that unbiased data could be collected. A 92% response rate was achieved. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to explain the challenges being faced by the teachers; while inferential statistics such as the independent sampled t-test was used in testing hypotheses concerning demographic variables (gender) and how they affect perceived challenges. The analyses were all conducted using SPSS version 25, and the level of significance was 0.05.

### **Presentation of results**

**Research question 1:** What are the major challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing the EdoBEST programme?

**Table 1:** Challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing the EdoBEST programme in Edo State

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	The EdoBEST digital devices are always functional and available.	1.32	0.60	Disagree
2	There is stable internet connectivity in my school for EdoBEST tools.	1.46	0.78	Disagree
3	Teachers' experience technical difficulties with EdoBEST tools.	3.71	0.66	Agree
4	Time constraints make it difficult to complete EdoBEST lesson plans.	3.89	0.40	Agree
5	Overcrowded classrooms hinder effective implementation.	3.82	0.57	Agree
6	There is administrative support for EdoBEST implementation.	1.42	0.63	Disagree
7	Teachers have resistance to pedagogical change	3.60	0.75	Agree

8	There is lack of timely support from programme facilitators	3.78	0.77	Agree
9	Frequency, duration, and follow-up of training sessions were inadequate	3.53	0.76	Agree
10	I feel overburdened with the digital lesson preparation, reporting and data collection requirements.	3.69	0.72	Agree

**Note:** Mean score of 2.50 and above signifies Agreed; Mean score of below 2.50 signifies Disagree

Table 1 shows the challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing the EdoBEST programme in Edo State, Nigeria. Results from Table 1 show that the perceived challenges faced by secondary school teachers in implementing the EdoBEST programme in Edo State, Nigeria, are the infrastructural limitations; digital literacy gaps; inadequate teacher training; administrative bottlenecks; poor electricity supply and unreliable internet connectivity; overcrowded classrooms; inadequate frequency, duration, and follow-up of training sessions; late delivery of teaching materials; increased workload due to the expectations of digital lesson preparation; data uploads; and frequent monitoring.

**Research question 2:** Is there difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme?

**Table 2:** Difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST Programme

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
male	119	30.01	1.34
female	81	38.77	1.93

Table 2 shows the difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme. The mean value of female teachers (38.77) is greater than the mean value of their male counterparts. This shows that there is a difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme.

**Research question 3:** What are the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards the pedagogical changes introduced by EdoBEST?

**Table 3:** The perceptions of secondary school teachers towards the pedagogical changes introduced by EdoBEST

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The pedagogical changes introduced are relevant to modern educational needs.	3.44	0.65	Agreed
2	I fully understand the purpose of the recent pedagogical reforms.	3.21	0.86	Agreed
3	The changes promote student-centred learning.	3.28	0.86	Agreed
4	The pedagogical changes are compatible with my teaching philosophy.	3.72	0.62	Agreed
5	I believe these changes will improve student academic performance.	3.45	0.50	Agreed
6	The changes are evidence-based and well-justified.	3.53	0.78	Agreed
7	I was adequately informed about the changes before implementation.	2.79	0.93	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.35</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 3 illustrates the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards the pedagogical reforms carried out by EdoBEST. Table 3 shows that all the items (items 1 to 7) possess mean values greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, and the grand mean (3.35) is also greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that the majority of the participants consented to the items. Therefore, the sentiments of secondary school educators towards the pedagogical reforms that EdoBEST has undertaken are that the pedagogical reforms are aligned with teaching philosophy; the reforms are evidence-based and supported; alterations will improve student academic performance; the pedagogical reforms undertaken are suitable to the demands of modern education; changes promote student-centred learning; the teachers have a clear conception of the purpose of the recent pedagogical reforms; and the teachers were adequately informed about the reforms before their implementation.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme.

**Table 4:** Independent samples t-test statistics on the difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perception on the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme

Gender	N	df	t-value	p-value
male	119	198	-1.908	0.027
female	81			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 shows the difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme. Table 4 shows that the t-value is -1.908, while the p-value is 0.027. Testing the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, the p-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05; this shows that there is significant difference. Conclusively, there is significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers' perception of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme.

### Discussion of findings

The findings of this study outlined many of the crucial issues among secondary school instructors in the implementation of the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) initiative. Such issues broadly fall under infrastructural limitations, lack of digital competence, inadequate training of teachers, and administrative delays. A high proportion of respondents reported that poor electricity availability and lack of stable internet connectivity were common obstacles to the proper use of EdoBEST technological tools. These infrastructural deficiencies are consistent with a study by Okunade and Eze (2021), and Okeke and Nwankwo (2021), which found that the rollout of digital instruction in Nigerian secondary education is severely hampered by unstable electricity supply and limited broadband penetration, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, UBEC (2022) testified that Nigerian public schools, especially in rural areas, lack the basic infrastructure to host technology-driven instructional reforms like EdoBEST.

The second major issue that was established was teachers' limited digital competence, which prevents them from being capable of utilizing the tablets, lesson materials, and reporting systems provided under the EdoBEST initiative effectively. This aligns with Olaniyi and Yusuf (2022), who reported that the bulk of Nigerian teachers have low digital literacy due to limited exposure and continuous professional training in ICT. In addition, World Bank

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(2022) observations about EdoBEST indicated that only approximately 40% of schools that participate in the programme experienced regular access to mobile internet service, leaving a performance divide between teachers in urban and rural locations. Due to infrastructural deficiencies, the majority of the teachers felt demotivated and helpless. Even those teachers who were positive to utilize technology in their education claimed less effort over time due to the pressure of technology failure.

Results from research question two revealed that there is a difference between the male and female secondary school teachers' perceptions of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme. The comparison indicated that female teachers reported more trouble in adapting to the application of digital teaching aids and working with the EdoBEST tablet interface compared to males. This finding concurs with Eze and Obasi (2020), which established that male secondary school teachers in Nigeria are more exposed to and confident in the use of education technology, possibly due to socio-cultural influences and historical gender disparities in ICT capacity building.

The findings from research question three revealed that secondary school teachers generally have positive perceptions of the pedagogical changes introduced by the EdoBEST programme, with a grand mean of 3.35 above the criterion mean of 2.50. Teachers agreed that the reforms are relevant to modern educational needs, promote student-centred learning, align with their teaching philosophies, are evidence-based, and are likely to improve student academic performance. While teachers reported understanding the purpose of the changes, the slightly lower score (2.79) on being adequately informed before implementation suggests a need for improved communication and preparatory training. Overall, the results indicate strong teacher acceptance of the reforms, but enhanced orientation and professional support would further strengthen their effectiveness and sustainability.

Moreover, the finding from the hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers' perception of the challenges in implementing the EdoBEST Programme. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Eze and Obasi (2020), who worked on gender and digital pedagogy adoption in South-South Nigeria, and found statistically significant gender differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) in how obstacles to technology adoption were viewed within the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

The study highlights challenges faced by secondary school teachers in adopting EdoBEST methods, including limited infrastructure, low digital literacy, classroom management issues, and resistance to pedagogical innovation. These issues hinder the effective application of digital hardware, classroom management, and the delivery of technology-based lessons, posing a threat to the intended benefits of EdoBEST reforms. The study found that both male and female secondary school teachers face similar challenges in implementing the EdoBEST programme, indicating that these issues are systemic rather than personal. The reform efforts have been equitable, providing equal training, information, and resources to both genders. To achieve long-term sustainability, policymakers must address systemic issues and ensure inclusive capacity building for a more resilient education system.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that:

1. There should be ongoing professional training for teachers. Workshops, seminars, and refresher courses should be held regularly to expose the teachers to new pedagogy, use of digital tools, and classroom management that would help in the smooth implementation of the EdoBEST programme.
2. The government and the stakeholders concerned should provide timely availability of adequate instructional material, technological devices (such as tablets and internet access), and other required resources. This will enable the teachers to adequately deliver lessons and achieve the programme's defined standards.
3. There should be a robust technical support system to address the frequent technical issues faced by teachers, especially in using digital devices and platforms. ICT specialists can be made available on-site or via hotlines to provide instant responses to concerns raised.

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