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Education opportunities for Out-of-School Children (OOSC)

UNICEF NIGERIA

BASIC EDUCATION

OOSC AT A GLANCE

1 in 3 children are OOS in Nigeria: 10.2 million at the primary level and 8.1 million at the junior secondary school (JSS) level.

12.4 million children never attended school and 5.9 million left school early.

Nigeria’s OOS population accounts for 15% of the global total.

Only 1 in 3 children aged 36-59 months have access to ECCDE programs.

Only 1 in 3 adolescents eligible for senior secondary school are attending.

More than 50% of girls are not attending school in basic education level.

66% of all OOSC are in the Northeast and Northwest. 86% are from rural areas, and 65% are from the poorest quintile.

IMPACT ON OOSC

Violations of children’s right to education and increased risk of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and recruitment to extremist groups.

Missed opportunities for learning and skills development.

Lack of access to meaningful employment, perpetuation of intergenerational poverty and inequality.

Significant losses in lifetime earnings for OOSC and those affected by school closure.

Facts about OOSC

- Most OOSC at the primary level have never entered education, but most OOSC of upper secondary age dropped out.
- Almajiri, children with disabilities, those belonging to nomadic communities, and internally displaced children are significantly excluded.
- Poor retention in school is a major challenge: 11% of learners drop out of school at each grade level.

Universal Basic Education Act (2004) and associated State UBE Laws provide free and compulsory education for all Nigerian children. The UBE Act dedicates 2% of Nigeria’s Consolidated Revenue Fund annually to UBEC, but this is not always used efficiently or effectively.

Policy to address educational needs of nomadic groups has been adopted at federal and state levels but receives minimal financial and institutional support.

National Policy on Education (2014). Section 4 states that the government will provide functional basic education for adults & youth who have never had the opportunity of formal education.

BARRIERS AND BOTTLENECKS

1. Poverty is the biggest barrier to school access, exacerbated by school fees and other costs of education. At least 43% of children are forced into child labour.
2. Attacks on schools and abduction of school children together with unsafe basic infrastructure and facilities (e.g., classrooms, furniture, fencing, WASH) keep children out of school.
3. Social and gender norms that place a low value on education contribute to girls, Almajiri children and others, not attending school or dropping out.
4. Lack of comprehensive data on OOS children limits reach and impact of interventions.
5. Chronic underfunding of education and inefficient use of available resources perpetuates the OOS phenomenon.
6. Insufficient supply of trained teachers, inefficient teacher recruitment and deployment, and weak regulatory mechanisms lead to overcrowded classrooms.
7. Poor quality teaching and learning outcomes contribute to drop out from the education system.
UNICEF RESPONSE

1. Support to FME to develop a National Enrolment Drive Framework and reached over 820,000 through enrolment campaigns in 2017.
2. Mapping of OOCS and provision of cash transfers to enable access to and retention in school.
3. Implementation of minimum standards on safe school in 12 states.
5. Development of guidelines for integration of Almajiri children into formal primary schools and IQS.
6. Improvement of infrastructure through micro-grants to CBMCs.
7. Engagement with traditional and religious leaders in 19 northern states and FCT to commit to reducing OOSC.
8. Establishment of high-level women’s groups in 12 states to advocate for girls’ education.
9. Provision of teaching and learning material to improve quality of learning in formal schools, IQSs, temporary learning spaces and informal community learning hubs.
10. Establishment of peer education clubs for girls and for boys to support girls’ retention and transition.

EDUCATION PRIORITIES FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

1. Demonstrate implementation of minimum standards on safe schools in selected states.
2. Advocate model to bring never-enrolled children into school with federal and state governments (cash, community mobilization & quality of education).
3. Build a credible and replicable model on retention and transition including gendered analysis of drop out.
4. Expand comprehensive mapping of OOSC, and monitor re-entry.
5. Provide cash transfers to poor children and to SBMCs/CBMCs to rehabilitate infrastructure & advocate provision in state budgets.
6. Improve the quality of teaching and learning on ECE, FLN and on skills development (life skills and employability skills) to enable retention and transition.
7. Build credible multiple and alternative learning pathways and strengthen linkages among pathways to facilitate mainstreaming and re-entry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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F o o t n o t e s & R e f e r e n c e s

1 UBEC Personnel Audit and Digest of Basic Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2018 (Link)
4 Ibid.
5 UBEC Personnel Audit and Digest of Basic Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2018 (Link)
7 Ibid.
10 ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education