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Northern Education Initiative **Plus**



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BROCHURE

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Northern Education Initiative Plus



More than
2 million
school-aged children
and youth will improve
their reading skills.

About
45,000
teachers and learning
facilitators will be
trained to deliver
Early Grade Reading
instruction in schools
and centers.

More than 30 percent of school-aged children in Northern Nigeria do not have access to basic education. This is attributed to a combination of cultural attitudes, lack of educational facilities and insecurity as a result of the insurgency.

The quality of education also leaves much to be desired. Factors contributing to this include: inadequate teacher preparedness and low motivation, lack of quality teaching and learning materials, insufficient funding to education, and inadequate parental and community support.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the five-year Nigeria Northern Education Initiative Plus project strengthens the ability of the states of Bauchi and Sokoto to provide access to quality education—especially for girls, orphans and children enrolled in nontraditional schools—and improve reading skills for more than 2 million school-aged children and youth. A third state will be announced.

USAID's Northern Education Initiative Plus uses a holistic approach to address

critical supply and demand factors that affect learning, teaching, management, parental participation and responsiveness to children's needs.

Consistent with USAID Forward strategy, this project focuses on building programmatic ownership among federal, state and Local Government Education Authorities, as well as increases their commitment to quality early grade reading instruction and improved access.

The project strengthens Local Government Education Authorities ability to better train and manage teachers, along with improving their capability to plan, budget and deliver on professional development, ensure school governance, mobilize community support for learning and the timely distribution of materials.

The USAID-supported program will train and equip about 45,000 teachers and learning facilitators who can reach children in schools and Non-Formal Learning Centers. By incorporating early grade reading instruction concepts, techniques,

practice, and materials into national teacher training programs, graduates will be equipped with a full set of instructional skills that will have a direct and positive impact on their students' primary school learning outcomes.

USAID's Northern Education Initiative Plus seeks to reach nearly 1.6 million children in first to third grades, along with more than 500,000 out-of-school children and youth attending some 11,000 Non-formal Learning Centers, Adolescent Girls Learning Centers and Youth Learning Centers.

USAID's Northern Education Initiative Plus is implemented by Creative Associates International in collaboration with three U.S.-based international organizations—Education Development Center (EDC), Florida State University (FSU), Overseas Strategic Consulting (OSC)—and four local organizations—Value Minds, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN) and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), and more than 40 community-based organizations.



Northern Education Initiative Plus



Improving Reading Skills

The goal of the Northern Education Initiative Plus' reading program is to strengthen systems at the federal, state, and local government levels to improve reading outcomes in the primary grades.

To address the poor reading abilities of primary pupils, the Initiative collaborates with state and federal partners to implement a systemic and holistic reform in the teaching of reading in Hausa and the transition to English in first to third primary grades.

Working with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, the National Commission for Colleges of Education, state education Ministries, Departments and Agencies and international experts in early grade reading, the Initiative has developed a model of teaching reading in Hausa and the transition to English in primary schools that is based on global best practices.

The project also collaborates with the

National Commission for Colleges of Education to develop and implement reading instruction curriculum for pre-service teacher education to prepare primary school teachers to teach reading in the early grades.

The project intensifies parental and community engagement through local Non-Governmental Organizations with a view to promoting the culture of reading using community mobilization techniques and media campaigns. Community dialogue about the importance of reading will increase as the project explores and uses various ICT platforms such as voice SMS, Interactive Voice Response, Closed User Groups and social media to deploy messages that improve social behavior towards education.

Over the life of the project, it is expected that children's reading skills will improve, allowing more children to be successful in school and stay longer. It

is also expected that teachers' abilities, attitudes and motivation will pave way towards improved quality of teaching and increased demand from parents to send their children to school.

The Initiative envisions that over the course of the project state and federal actors place greater emphasis and commit increasing resources to support early grade reading. Qualified, skilled, motivated and appreciated teachers will be teaching at the primary grades and have a major impact on the education system.

State systems will support the provision of quality teaching and learning materials to schools, employ more female teachers in the primary grades, and enhance teachers' professional growth throughout their careers. State and federal officials will also plan for increased enrollment and retention in the primary grades and greater numbers of pupils will transition to upper primary level.

IMPACT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Cumulative
Schools	2,209	2,209	1,225	1,225	3,434	10,302
Pupils	406,867	419,073	635,092	654,145	673,769	2,788,946
Teachers and Head teachers	12,486	12,486 (same cohort)	4,375	4,375 (same cohort)	16,861	33,722
Reading materials	510,000	530,000	640,000	660,000	687,000	3,027,000



Northern Education Initiative Plus

Mobilizing Communities for Change

Under the Northern Education Initiative Plus, communities support and promote efforts that expand access to education and improve the quality of early grade reading instruction in Non-Formal Learning Centers and formal schools.

The project will strengthen existing community structures in Bauchi and Sokoto states and a third state yet to be determined to establish 11,000 Non-Formal Learning Centers which include Adolescent Girls Learning Centers and Youth Learning Centers to cater for the educational needs of out-of-school-children.

Children attending these centers will acquire literacy, numeracy and life skills that facilitate their transition to formal schools.

Community mobilization activities are led by state Ministries, Departments and Agencies and local Non-Governmental Organizations chief amongst are the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN) and Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN). These Non-Governmental Organiza-



tions in collaboration with state institutions, Local Government Education Authorities and broad-based community structures mobilize communities to boost enrollment, retention and completion of basic education. They also encourage girls' education and advocate for sustainable government systems to improve reading outcomes for primary grade learners in the states supported by the Initiative.

The project builds the capacity of these organizations to manage and monitor the Non-Formal Learning Centers. They in turn set up community structures such as Community Coalitions and Center Based Management Committees to hold centers and schools accountable for improved performance.

These Non-Governmental Organizations facilitate community education dialogues by organizing regular meetings where emerging issues are raised for discussion and redress.

Some issues may require state or national attention, but the overall objective of these sessions is to create a feedback loop between the community and Local Government Education Authorities.

Promoting access to education and supporting the benefits of quality early grade reading instruction is enhanced through a variety of channels including house to house outreach, palace-based mobilization, town hall meetings, compound meetings and radio discussions.

The Reading Association of Nigeria is being engaged to hold literacy and reading related conferences, competitions and workshops on best practices in literacy, early grade reading instruction, and setting up of school libraries.

This strategy will sustain community engagement and support for education. It will particularly build the capacity of community entities to measure progress in increasing opportunities for education and improving reading outcomes.

IMPACT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Cumulative
Local NGOs	40	40	60	60	60	
NFLCs	800	1,400	1,500	2,100	4,579	10,379
CBMCs formed	800	1,400	1,500	2,100	4,579	10,379
Community Coalitions	20	20	30	30	63	



Northern Education Initiative Plus

Increasing access to quality education



The Northern Education Initiative Plus emphasizes two critical education issues – access to education and improved quality of education in the primary grades with a focus on early grade reading. Our goal with access is to ensure that more than 500,000 out-of-school-children have access to quality, safe education options that allow them acquire basic academic and life skills while strengthening government systems to reach even more children.

Working with federal and state government structures such as the National Mass Education Commission, the State Agency for Mass Education and the State Universal Basic Education Boards, the project demonstrates how the states of Bauchi and Sokoto can become more effective in increasing access to education for children, especially those marginalized - girl-children, the poor and children with disabilities.

The project is establishing more than 11,000 Non-Formal Learning Centers, Adolescent Girls learning Centers and Youth Learning Centers where quality literacy, numeracy and life skills are

taught by trained learning facilitators and are easily accessed by out-of-school-children.

Every activity is clearly led by states and driven by identified priorities that aim at increasing access and improving the quality of education with emphasis on reading.

The Initiative develops teaching and learning materials that promote education quality, access, conflict sensitivity and particularly early grade reading. The long term aim is that State Ministries of Education and supporting agencies fully assume responsibility for the provision of teaching and learning materials to all out-of-school-children in the target local governments.

Beyond providing different education options, the project supports Non-Formal Learning Centers to achieve quality and safety standards and benchmarks to promote environments that are healthy, safe, protected and gender-sensitive.

This is achieved by using data from targeted research undertakings such

as the Community Education and Conflict Assessments (CECA) that aims to identify and reduce barriers to access to school and improve factors influencing retention.

The results of this research feed into policy review and institutional gap analyses. An accreditation policy will be used to address needed revisions in the Non-Formal Learning Centers registration process.

The project also supports dialogues to regularly review the status of the states in addressing and improving school access and safety, drawing from reports from the Local Government Education Authorities and engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

These concerted efforts are expected to strengthen government systems and increase the number of students enrolled in appropriate educational options, especially girls and out-of-school-children in Bauchi and Sokoto states and a third state to be determined.

IMPACT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Cumulative
NFLCs	27,000 Learners	45,000 Learners	45,000 Learners	74,250 Learners	149,355 Learners	340,605
Adolescents Girls Centers	4,500 Girls	9,000 Girls	13,500 Girls	13,500 Girls	28,350 Girls	68,850
Youth Learning Centers	4,500 Youths	9,000 Youths	13,500 Youths	12,500 Youths	28,350 Youths	67,850
Learning Facilitators Trained	800	1,400	2,250	2,100	4,579	11,129
Reading materials	36,360	66,150	151,313	99,225	210,000	563,048



Northern Education Initiative Plus



Promoting Gender Inclusivity

The Northern Education Initiative Plus addresses key gender gaps throughout its activities. The project works with state governments to build accountability and establish a culture of gender-inclusiveness.

The Initiative supports states to develop and implement policies that address gender-based violence. The project engages with all relevant agencies, along with their state counterparts to agree on needed areas of policy reform, and propose supportive policies that are conflict and gender sensitive for government approval.

As appropriate, all data collected by the Initiative is gender-disaggregated and all reports reflect gender-sensitive analysis that can inform policy and program decisions.

The project reviews curriculum and teaching materials to assess gender dynamics and ensures teacher training and content are gender-sensitive. Existing materials are evaluated to

determine their effectiveness for building phonics skills and fluency, gender and conflict sensitivity.

The Initiative's team is working with Local Government Education Authorities, State Universal Basic Education Boards, State Agencies for Mass Education, and State Ministries of Education to review and develop systems that ensure safety of girls in schools.

The project provides integrated support for girls and boys, and the marginalized. Assessments at the family, school, community, and policy levels collect and analyze data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, income, ethnicity, language, and area.

Considerations on gender and inclusiveness for all—especially girls and for marginalized groups including the disabled, ethnic and religious minorities, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children- is an integral part of our assistance to strengthening Government of Nigeria systems for planning, implementation, and monitoring and

evaluation.

The Initiative supports Civil Society Organizations to identify women groups to serve as community partners in improving access for girls. Working together with these organizations, the project is developing procedures to ensure that positive role models exist for girls and boys, identifying constraints that drive gender disparity, building capacity to advocate on gender issues and developing outreach plans to promote girl-child education.

Our support also includes a plan to establish and maintain child-friendly learning spaces, with protocols for schools and Non-Formal Learning Centers to follow to avoid gender-based violence.

Adolescent Girls Learning Centers are established in communities to provide literacy, numeracy and vocational skills. The objective is to equip adolescent girls with critical life skills and health competencies. Skills acquired in these centers will lead to self-employment and income generation.



Northern Education Initiative Plus



Strengthening government systems

The Initiative takes a holistic approach to systems strengthening. At the forefront of our approach to program implementation is systems strengthening at all levels from education Ministries, Departments and Agencies to local governments and schools.

Nigerian ownership and partnership are central operating principles and keys to the success of the project. Embedded in the systems strengthening approach is full federal, state and local ownership.

The project is implemented through Technical Working Groups working within the state and local government



to develop materials, train and support teachers and other officials, plan and budget at state and local levels and involves Civil Society Organizations to strengthen local responses to education challenges.

The Initiative provides technical support to government officials to plan and budget for programmatic components with increased counterpart funding from state education agencies as the project progresses in implementation.

The project reviews State Education Accounts to provide a framework for measuring total education expenditures and presents that information following a user-friendly format that is easily understood and interpreted by state officials and policymakers. This provides a more complete and transparent view of total spending on education in Bauchi and Sokoto states.

Results from the review of State Education Accounts will be used to track the costs of teaching and

learning materials production and distribution. Measures of cost effectiveness will be included to help state-level decision makers plan for taking increasing responsibility for recurring costs during the project.

To achieve this, the project uses the following strategic approaches:

- Effective Participation
- Capacity Development
- Policy Influencing
- Leadership Support
- Co – Location with state institutions

The project supports government institutions to prioritize and develop action plans that improve access to quality education and reading outcomes in schools, set standards and benchmarks for education systems, increase accountability and strengthen oversight mechanisms for effective monitoring.

What Change Do We Want to See?

- Implementation of policies that encourage reading in schools
- Better funding of basic education and Early Grade Reading
- Institutionalization and sustainability of project achievements
- Quality assurance of schools that improves the education system
- Reward system for performing schools



Northern Education Initiative Plus



Using Evidence to Improve Performance

The Initiative's Monitoring and Evaluation system is designed to provide high-quality and accurate data to all key stakeholders at federal, state and local government levels to improve pupils' early grade reading achievements and increase access to educational opportunities. An additional crucial goal is to ensure the sustainability of Monitoring and Evaluation system components within state partner institutions by building capacity for on-going monitoring and integration of monitoring tools into the education system.

A strong measurement and evidence base undergirds the project. The Initiative conducts baseline, mid-line and end-line surveys to determine project effectiveness. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation as well as special

studies and assessments also helps the project learn what is working and what needs strengthening. Evidence is generated from project activities to help frame policies for planning and budgeting, and other decision-making.

The Initiative coordinates internally within its various components – Teacher Education, Reading, Access and Fragility, Monitoring and Evaluation, Community Mobilization, and Capacity Building to identify key monitoring elements needed for the development of a simple and holistic monitoring tool to track quality early grade reading instruction delivery, learners' attendance and other related factors.

To ensure effective monitoring, the project supports states in conducting monitoring visits and routine review of data. These findings are used to strengthen education implementation.

There is also a method established for monitoring Civil Society Organizations and supporting Local Government Education Authorities and communities to monitor Non-Formal Learning Centers and schools.

Ongoing monitoring and support helps local communities understand their roles and responsibilities to monitor quality, safety in schools and centers and distribution of teaching and learning materials.

The Initiative also supports Civil Society Organizations to integrate simple management and tracking tools within their systems that assist Center Based Management Committees to monitor Non-Formal Learning Centers against quality and access performance indicators.

The project collaborates with State Universal Basic Education Boards, State Agencies for Mass Education and Local Government Education Authorities to use ICT-driven monitoring tools to measure school performance against benchmarks and standards, obtain and track real-time data on school quality and safety.

Working in this systemic manner, will ensure state actors continue to effectively monitor and evaluate early grade reading progress beyond the life of the project.