

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) level¹.

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** programs².

Only **1 in 3 adolescents** eligible for **senior secondary** school are attending³.

More than **50% of girls** are not attending school⁴ in basic education level.

66% of all OOSC are in the **Northeast and Northwest**⁵. 86% are from **rural areas**, and 65% are from the **poorest quintile**.⁶

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.

POLICY LANDSCAPE FOR OOSC



Education

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 effectively⁷.

Policy to address **educational needs of nomadic groups** has been adopted at federal and state levels but receives minimal financial and institutional support⁸.

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%⁹ 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.
4. Development of a **policy on gender in education**, costed states gender plans & **re-entry guidelines** for girls.
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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Footnotes & References

- 1 UBEC Personnel Audit and Digest of Basic Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2018 ([Link](#))
- 2 Federal Republic of Nigeria, UNESCO, and UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning. (2020). Education Sector Analysis.
- 3 Cambridge Education. (2021). *Investment Case for Out-of-School Children in Nigeria*. Cambridge: UNICEF.
- 4 *Ibid*.
- 5 UBEC Personnel Audit and Digest of Basic Education Statistics in Nigeria, 2018 ([Link](#))
- 6 Cambridge Education. (2021). *Investment Case for Out-of-School Children in Nigeria*. Cambridge: UNICEF.
- 7 *Ibid*.
- 8 Pinnock, H. (2020). Inclusive Education in Nigeria: Policy Progress Weakened by Financing. UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. ([Link](#))
- 9 Cambridge Education. (2021). *Investment Case for Out-of-School Children in Nigeria*. Cambridge: UNICEF.
10. ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education