

YEAR TWO

# EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES IN NIGERIA



THIS PAGE: Total Jikwoyi, Abuja, Nigeria.  
COVER: Mziyakwa, 13, has caught up thanks to her accelerated education class.

Photo by Ovinuchi Ejiohuo on Unsplash

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## GOING (SAFELY) BACK TO SCHOOL

When violent attacks made classrooms unsafe, Plan International stepped in.

### THE PROJECT'S FIVE GOALS:

- 1 Break down gender-based barriers to girls' education.
- 2 Strengthen community- and school-protection processes.
- 3 Establish safe, inclusive alternative-education programs for at-risk girls.
- 4 Foster supportive communities to help girls return to, and stay in, school.
- 5 Equip schools to accommodate the needs of girls and children with disabilities.

**FOR NNEKA, 13**, going to school had become too dangerous. She lives in a community in northeastern Nigeria where ongoing conflict and repeated insurgent attacks on schools are terrorizing children and making parents afraid to send them back to class – but the Education in Emergencies project is changing that.

“I’m happy to be part of the program because it helps me to be confident, especially in pursuing my goals to achieve my desired future,” says Nneka, who participated in life-skills workshops as part of the project.

The trauma that children have experienced as a result of the attacks has led to psychological and emotional challenges that make it hard for them to learn, even once they return to school.

In addition to its life-skills programs, the Education in Emergencies project includes psychosocial counselling, and accelerated-learning centres have been set up within communities so that students can get to class safely and in under 10 minutes. Safety protocols in schools and communities ensure that students learn in safe and supportive environments, and raising awareness about these programs has helped quell parents’ fears that classrooms are too dangerous for their children.

**Education in Emergencies in Nigeria is a four-year \$9.5 million project that began in December 2019 and will give 43,100 children access to safe, inclusive education.**

# The Scene



**IN NIGERIA, THERE IS VASTNESS EVERYWHERE:** in its range of landscapes, with deserts, plains, mountains and jungles; in its range of cultures, with more than 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages spoken; and, unfortunately, in the range of conflicts that have plagued its north-eastern region for more than a decade.

In the Education in Emergencies project areas of Borno and Yobe, threats to education are imminent as insurgent groups repeatedly attack schools and kidnap and harm children and teachers. Attacks on villages have forced millions of families to flee their homes and rebuild their lives in refugee camps. Despite all this, communities remain resilient. “The difficulties are real and glaring, but people are still able to put their hearts together and face the challenges,” says Hanoch Hebron, gender and inclusion coordinator at Plan International Nigeria.

## QUICK FACTS

- There are more than **2.9 MILLION INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS** in northeastern Nigeria.
- An estimated **10.5 MILLION CHILDREN** are out of school – the highest rate in the world.
- In northern Nigeria, **MORE THAN HALF OF GIRLS** are not in school.
- In conflict-affected northeastern Nigeria, at least **802 SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED** due to damage.



## TAKING THE FAST TRACK

Accelerated-learning centres condense three years of education into nine months for children who have never enrolled in school or who dropped out and have gaps in their learning.

The centres are set up in existing schools in refugee communities and are only a two- to 10-minute walk from students’ homes so their parents don’t have to worry about attacks and kidnappings. Students who complete these programs can then reintegrate into the formal school system and finish their education with their peers.



# THE RUNDOWN

Children are gaining the skills, confidence and education they need to return to class and achieve their dreams. Here are some of the accomplishments made possible by your generosity:

  
**1,170**  
**ADOLESCENT**  
**GIRLS AND**  
**BOYS**

were trained in life-skills, addressing issues related to gender roles, power dynamics, positive masculinities, conflict resolution and self-protection.

**3,192**  
**ADOLESCENT GIRLS**

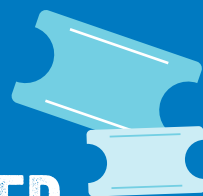
are receiving kits with period products and hygiene supplies twice a year.



  
**500 SOLAR-**  
**POWERED RADIOS**

have been distributed to girls throughout project areas to facilitate distance learning.

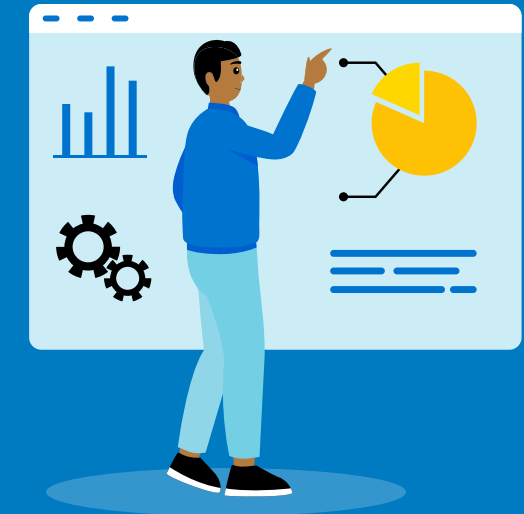
**1,227**  
**GIRLS**  
**RECEIVED**  
**VOUCHERS**



to cover educational essentials like books, pencils and uniforms.

**923**  
**TEACHERS**

were trained to accommodate the learning needs of girls and children with disabilities, and to promote safe learning environments for children affected by conflict.



**915 COMMUNITY**  
**AND RELIGIOUS**  
**LEADERS**

were engaged to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education in their communities, and to address barriers including child, early and forced marriage.



**982 PARENTS**  
**AND CAREGIVERS**

of adolescent girls attended parenting sessions addressing barriers to education like gender-based violence and early and forced marriage.

**81 SCHOOLS**

received teaching and learning materials, including materials for girls with disabilities.



**63 ACCELERATED-**  
**LEARNING CLASSES**

were established for out-of-school children to catch up on missed schooling.

**“The improvement in knowledge and skills we’ve been able to build through the life-skills, parenting, mentorship and community activities will, over time, change norms that are unhealthy for girls’ participation in school.”**

– HANOCH HEBRON, GENDER & INCLUSION COORDINATOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL NIGERIA

# Stories of Change

## ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Munira has faced incredible challenges in her life – going to school is no longer one of them.

**MUNIRA, 17, KNOWS ADVERSITY.** After insurgents attacked her home, she and her family fled to a camp for internally displaced persons, where she had to travel two kilometres each day to fetch water. On one of these outings, she was involved in a car accident and her leg had to be amputated, leaving her with lifelong mobility issues.

For girls like Munira who live in refugee camps, going to school is already a challenge. Attacks on schools make parents fear for their children's safety and the trauma children experience can limit their capacity to learn. As a result, many families choose not to give their daughters an education, even if it leads to greater risks: Girls who are out of school are more susceptible to gender-based violence and early and forced marriage.

"When education is under attack, a generation is attacked," says Charles Usie, country director at Plan International Nigeria. "Girls and women are more vulnerable in times of conflict, making them more susceptible to trauma, fear and gender-based violence and forcing them to withdraw from school. Their childhood dreams eventually fade away."

Munira's parents weighed those risks against the increased challenges she faced – they didn't think a student with disabilities could be accommodated in the classroom – and thought it best to take her out of school.

But Munira discovered accelerated-learning programs through an awareness session held by Plan International. She tentatively inquired whether she, "a girl with one leg" could join and was thrilled when the answer was a resounding "yes!"

With classes tailored to fill the gaps in her education – and accessible facilities to ensure she can easily attend – Munira is now learning basic English, math and science and is happy to be back in school with her friends. She is also challenging the stigma that school isn't suited for children with disabilities. Her mother is grateful to see her daughter thrive: "Thank you, Plan International," she says.

**"If not for this accelerated-learning program, we would not have learned that education does not have a barrier."**

– MUNIRA'S MOTHER



Children are consulted to ensure schools meet the needs of all students.

Simple but thorough solutions, like **PARTICIPANT SURVEYS & ONGOING FEEDBACK, garner community support for project interventions, CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR SUCCESS & SUSTAINABILITY**

## FEEDBACK LOOP

How the Education in Emergencies project consults communities to get things done right.

**"IT'S RARE TO HAVE A PROJECT THAT CONSTANTLY CONSULTS WITH PARTICIPANTS,"** says Hanoch Hebron, gender and inclusion coordinator at Plan International Nigeria. "Consulting with girls, boys, communities and stakeholders at every stage is the key to our success."

As with all of its projects, Plan International partners with communities to ensure that all interventions are tailored to their specific needs. This includes everything from asking parents and children what qualities they want in a teacher to inform selection criteria to shifting workshop times to accommodate people's work schedules.

**"It's all about a community-led approach. We are particular about how each community wants the project to run, so all aspects of our interventions complement one another."**

– HANOCH HEBRON, GENDER AND INCLUSION COORDINATOR AT PLAN INTERNATIONAL NIGERIA

The result is a cycle of learning and adapting. Hanoch describes a community where parent workshop attendance was low. The project team discovered that many parents in the community are businesspeople, so it was difficult for them to attend the program during the week. They moved the workshops to Saturdays – and participation increased dramatically. Now, Hanoch and his team survey participants in advance to ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the program.



A key component to inclusivity is ensuring that **everyone's voices and ideas are heard.** Plan International consulted children with disabilities when designing new accessible school facilities to ensure they meet the children's needs.

“

I'm happy to be part of the program because it helps me to be confident, especially in pursuing my goals to achieve my desired future.”

– Nneka, project participant



A group of girls receive kits with period products and sanitary supplies.

# Thank you!

Your support for the Education in Emergencies project is making long-lasting change possible for communities, families and children – especially girls – in Nigeria. Looking to the future, Hanoch is hopeful. “I want to believe that in the next five years, we could see girls who have a change of attitude because they’ve participated in our life-skills program and parents who will now prioritize their girls’ participation in education,” he says. “And we’ll see teachers whom we’ve trained who are able to support children who have faced crises in their lives.”

**From Hanoch, and all of us at Plan International Canada, thank you for your generosity.**

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Boy with his new tricycle  
wheelchair bike in  
Borno State, Nigeria.



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