

**THE BOY-CHILD SCHOOL DROP-OUT PROBLEM IN
NIGERIA: STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND PRIORITIES
FOR INTERVENTION.**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AME	Agency for Mass Education
CASSAD	Center for African Settlement Studies and Development
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CENFET	Center for Non Formal Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EEC	European Economic Community
EFA	Education for All
FGD	Focal Group Discussion
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
GED	General Educational Development
IDA	International Development Association
IDPs	International Development Partners
KII	Key Informant Interview
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMEC	National Mass Literacy Commission for Adult and Non-formal Education
SAGEN	Strategy for Achieving Girls Education in Nigeria
SAME	State Agency for Mass Education
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
VEC	Village Educational Committee
WAC	World Accreditation Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The tendency of boys' to drop out from school, a relatively recent phenomenon in Nigeria, has assumed alarming proportions in the Eastern States and major cities in other parts of the country. Exacerbated by a myriad of reasons among which is the erroneous perception that education no longer ensures employment and self reliance, widespread poverty, as well as the over-emphasis on acquisition of wealth by fair or foul means.
- UNICEF, in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria has been tackling this problem through systematized intervention of advocacy, community mobilization and the establishment of literacy classes in conjunction with the State Agencies for Mass Education in the five Eastern States three sampled northern Cities and Lagos.
- In order to obtain the current perspective of the Boys' school dropout phenomenon in Nigeria, UNICEF commissioned the Center for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD) to produce documentation on the problem. This documentary is purported to produce and provide current information on the magnitude, dimension, spread and trend analysis of the boys' school dropout conundrum. It will also identify and discuss interventions to the problem at national, state and community levels.
- The qualitative research methodology of focus group discussions and key informant interviews were employed in this documentary research, and the inquiry targeted out-of-school boys engaged in commercial activities, and those attending NFE Centers, SAME officials in the foci States, Development partners working in the area, CSOs/NGOs/CBOs and opinion leaders.
- Results emerging from the project indicate that the boys' dropout trend is increasing in the States. The reasons specifically fingered for this increasing trend include: parental poverty, low returns on education, insufficient time to devote to learning, little awareness of the importance of education, presence of many children in the family, absence of political will, ethnic and religious riots, peer influence, poor performance in school, incessant and prolonged strikes, warped societal values among others.
- This challenge of the boys' drop out in Nigeria is being taken on head long by various stakeholders including the Federal Government, UNICEF, other International Development Partners, Non-governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations with varying degrees of success.

- Specifically, UNICEF-supported interventions have led to increased sensitization and awareness of the FGN, State governments and other stakeholders to the magnitude, pattern, dimension and contributory causes of the problem, essentially through research and survey studies funded by UNICEF.
- Recommendations proffered here include reduction of school fees and abolition of all forms of obnoxious levies in order to cushion the effect of poverty level of the parents thereby making education affordable, prompt and regular payment of Teachers' salaries and all other emoluments in order to minimize the incidence of disruptive strikes, making education more functional and relevant, as well as the provision of job opportunities for youth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria appreciates the key role that education can and should play in moving the country towards the attainment of its social and economic goals. Consequently, she has put in place a very comprehensive National Policy on Education and has embarked on educational development programmes which are at various stages of implementation. Stakeholders in the Nigerian educational sector recognize that high levels of literacy and numeracy are prerequisites for creating a competitive workforce and a nation of effective parents and active citizens. However, they also face an uphill battle in building an education system capable of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults. Financial and human resources are scarce, so difficult decisions must be made in determining how best to allocate them. Thus it is imperative that scarce resources be used as efficiently as possible. Although significant progress has been made in increasing the number of pupils enrolled in school in Africa's most populous nation, these gains are undermined by the persistently large number of pupils who take more than one year to complete a particular class/grade and/or who drop out of school before completing even the primary cycle.

A survey of the Nigerian educational scene reveals a series of disparities (Federal Ministry of Education, 1999). There is disparity between urban and rural schools, and between schools owned and controlled by the Federal Government and those owned and controlled by the states and private agencies. Gaps are also observed between male and female enrolments and between admission figures and available teaching resources.

Repeating classes/grades and dropping out exert a terrible personal toll on the pupils involved and absorb a large share of the limited resources available for education in Nigeria. Finding ways to minimize 'school dropout/wastage' must play a central role in any serious effort to reach the goal of Education for All (EFA).

Dropout/Wastage is about missed opportunities for individuals, communities and the entire nation. It deprives a developing country like Nigeria of the ability to make the most efficient use of scarce resources and it takes its greatest toll on the most vulnerable groups in our society. In the past, school drop-out was seen as a phenomenon common to girls. Experience has shown that in many parts of the country, the boy-child school drop-out rates have become a major problem affecting the balance socio-economic development of the country.

As a corollary, one of the great dangers facing Nigeria today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of her communities. When critical masses of individuals or groups become marginalized, society itself becomes polarized. We appear to be moving toward a country in which wealth of all kinds — economic assets, social capital,

political influence and knowledge is being concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. Such a nation is one that is neither efficient nor just nor safe.

The many roots of this polarization include factors ranging from the corruption and financial recklessness among those in governance to gross indiscipline and degradation of societal values. Unfortunately, education, which is often seen as a means of promoting equality, can also contribute to inequality. In today's knowledge-based Nigerian society, those who obtain a good basic education can continue to learn throughout their lives and thus remain economically viable, while those lacking a solid educational foundation are destined to fall further and further behind. Reducing school dropout/wastage is thus a critical necessity on ethical and economic grounds for Nigeria. It is refreshing to note that finding ways to reduce school wastage (particularly among the boy-child) has become an urgent priority for Nigeria and her allies; the Development Partners, of which UNICEF is a frontliner.

The Goal of the Study

The goal of the study, as characterized in the TOR, is to provide current and in-depth information on the boy-child school drop-out with a view to informing future programmatic intervention, especially in relation to the EFA/SAGEN goals of achieving parity by 2005 and removing all gender disparities by 2015.

The Specific Objectives of the Study

- (i) assess the magnitude, dimension and spread of boys' drop-out problem including the trend analysis of the prevalence at State and National levels;
- (ii) find out the responses hitherto made to address the problem by the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local), International Development Partners (especially UNICEF), CSOs, NGOs, CBOs;
- (iii) document good practices in form of the success stories, approaches and strategies that worked; and
- (iv) make recommendations on the way forward to solve the problem.

METHODOLOGY

The project spanned over an eight-week period, during which the Consultants/ Researchers carried out the following activities:

- (i) **Literature Review:** Desk review of existing literature/studies on the situation of boys' drop out problem in Nigeria was carried out. This was done within the context of Africa and World situation. The secondary data was collected from Universities, educational research institutes, international development partners and independent researchers/academia.
- (ii) **Design of Instrument for Data Collection:** FGD and KII guides among other instrument for data collection were designed by the project team.

- (iii) **Data Collection in States and Cities where Boys' Drop out are Prevalent:** Visits were conducted to Five Eastern States (Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia States) and 4 cities (Kano, Lagos, Minna and Kaduna) to conduct Focus Group Discussions, (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with relevant stakeholders. This is with a view to documenting what the situation is. The stakeholders visited/met include officials of SAME/UNICEF, International/National Development Partners, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, Opinion Leaders, Researchers and Members of the Academia working on boys' drop out problem. What all these stakeholders have done/are doing, their intervention and inputs were documented. All the data collected was analyzed and presented using appropriate graphs, tables, diagrams and maps.
- (iv) **Preparation of Report:** All the data collected from i-iii above form the basis of the present report presented in six Chapters. **Chapter 1: Introduction:** This encapsules the Problem description, manifestation, magnitude, prevalence, and trend of the boys' drop out problem with particular reference to Nigeria. **Chapter 2: Literature Review.** In this Chapter, all the identified and assemble research work commissioned by UNICEF and other bodies in respect of boys drop out in both Nigeria and elsewhere, were presented in synthesized findings and an attempt was made to develop a linkage between the studies and the interventions that followed. **Chapter 3: The Boys' Drop Out Phenomenon:** The focus of this Chapter is the current situation, factors responsible for the phenomenon in Nigeria, its prevalence, coverage and trend. **Chapter 4: Social Responses to the Boys' Drop Out phenomenon:** Here CASSAD documented and commented freely on material, financial and technical support to NFE boys' facilities, modes and extent of community participation and good practices that are replicable; what worked and what did not across the foci States and Cities. This was done in two parts: UNICEF's/FGN/State Interventions, and Interventions by Others; Development Partners, NGOs, CBOs and Communities etc. **Chapter 5: Social Impact of UNICEF's intervention:** This Chapter assess the impact of the project on the immediate beneficiary community in terms of attitude change, decisions made, skills acquired as well as enrolment changes. An attempt was also made to identify the possible link between boys' drop out and girl's education. **Chapter 6: Way Forward.** In this concluding part; here recommendations for future strategic intervention are proffered.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept Definition: School Dropout/Wastage

From a broad perspective, the phenomenon of school *dropout/wastage* is evident in the large numbers of children who, for one reason or another, do not succeed in acquiring the full range of skills offered through primary schooling, and therefore unable to proceed beyond this level. No doubt the most serious and harmful wastage is evident in the 84 million primary-school-age children the world over, who are not enrolled in school of which three out of five are girls. (See Table 1 below). Another, but less evident, form of wastage concerns the pupils who complete the primary cycle but fail to gain the intellectual, social, cultural and ethical knowledge and skills that schooling should provide. Surveys in industrialized and developing countries alike have found, for example, that a substantial proportion of children complete their primary-school education without acquiring even an adequate mastery of reading. Children who never gain access to school and those who enroll but do not attain an adequate level of learning constitute a tragic waste of the human, social and economic potential of the countries concerned.

A narrower, operational definition of school wastage refers to pupils who do not complete their schooling in the prescribed number of years either because they drop out of school entirely or because they repeat one or more grades. It is this concept of wastage — involving drop-outs— that is examined in this report. Of course, wastage is also a serious problem in non-formal education programmes, such as adult literacy courses. However, data on such programmes are not readily available and the issues involved are often quite different from those affecting schooling.

A student is identified as a dropout if the individual is absent without an approved excuse or documented transfer and does not return to school by the commencement of the following school year, or if he or she completes the school year but fails to reenroll the following school year.

Students in the following categories are identified as dropouts.

- Students who drop out as defined above
- Students who enter the national workforce before graduation
- Students from special education, ungraded, or alternative education programs who leave school
- Students who leave school and enter a program not qualifying as an elementary/secondary school (e.g., cosmetology school)

Students in the following categories are not included in the dropout count.

- Students who die
- Students who are out of school for temporary periods with an approved excuse
- Students showing regular attendance at a state-approved alternative program
- Students known to have transferred to another public school, adult or alternative education program, or home schooling
- Students who move to another grade level
- Students who enroll in university/college early
- Students transferred or assigned to another public institution or state-approved educational program

Risk Factors in School Dropout

Evidence emerging from contemporary literature suggests that a wide range of factors are associated with school drop out.

Asche (1989) states that:

Based on a thorough analysis of the research literature, Wells and Bechard (1989) identified four major categories of factors that contribute to a student profile of characteristics that may lead to a student's dropping out of school. The four categories list risk factors that are:

- ✦ school-related,
- ✦ student-related,
- ✦ community-related, and
- ✦ family-related.

The likelihood of a student dropping out of school increases as the combination of risk factors becomes more multifaceted". (p. 10)

Poor academic performance is the single strongest school-related predictor of dropping out (OERI Urban Superintendents Network 1987; Hess, et al. 1987; Wood 1994). Research evidence also suggests that students who repeated one or more classes/grades were twice more likely to drop out than those who had never been held back, and those who repeated more than one class/grade were four times as likely to leave school before completion.

Student-related risk factors include personal problems independent of social/family background. Substance abuse, pregnancy and other forms of delinquency are frequently reported along with school-related problem behaviors such as truancy, absenteeism, tardiness, suspension, and other disciplinary infractions.

Educational psychologists also assert that parents play a crucial role in keeping young people in school. The degree and nature of family support are determined by such factors as a stressful/unstable home life, socioeconomic status, siblings' completion of high school, single-parent households, poor education of parents (Horn 1992).

Lest these correlations be misunderstood, it is also important to point out that, of the community-related factors, it is poverty that is the strongest predictor of dropping out. "When socioeconomic factors are controlled, the differences across ethnic, geographic, and other demographic lines blur" (OERI Urban Superintendents Network 1987, p. 5).

Researchers have also found that working can contribute to a student dropping out. Some research shows that student employment begins to correlate with dropping out when the student regularly works over 14 hours per week (Mann 1986, 1987). Other research places the critical level for employment higher, at 20 hours per week (Winters 1986), with the likelihood of dropping out increasing with the number of hours worked.

TABLE 1: Estimated net enrolment ratios and numbers of primary-school-age population out of school, around 1995

	Coverage		Net enrolment rates (%)			Unenrolled (in thousands) (coverage: all countries)		
	No. of countries	% school-age population	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
World total	126	82	87.1	90.0	84.0	84,331	33,402	50,917
More developed regions	21	95	99.5	99.3	99.8	275	216	59
Countries in transition	15	64	96.6	96.8	96.6	947	471	476
Less developed regions	90	82	85.2	88.7	81.6	83,097	32,714	50,383
Sub-Saharan Africa	29	52	56.5	60.7	52.3	44,360	20,132	24,227
Arab States	16	74	83.6	88.3	78.7	6,743	2,437	4,305
Latin America/ Caribbean	26	99	90.4	90.4	90.4	7,112	3,616	3,496
Eastern Asia/Oceania	13	85	98.0	98.7	97.3	3,608	1,206	2,401
Southern Asia	5	87	79.5	86.7	71.7	33,905	11,308	22,597
(Least developed countries)	29	78	55.6	60.8	50.4	41,607	18,585	23,022

The Boys' Dropout Phenomenon: the Problem

Global Perspective

The global perspective of the status of boys education generally and dropout challenge is presented by UNICEF in the 2004 edition of the State of the World's Children. The report indicates that in a minority of countries, there are fewer boys than girls enrolled in school. A recent UNICEF study of household data from 55 countries confirms that while in a clear majority of countries girls' attendance at school is far lower than boys', in some countries boys are the ones not being reached by the education system. (Table 1: Male/Female net school attendance).

Table 2
Male/Female Net School Attendance

Colombia	0.81
Haiti.....	0.84
Lesotho.....	0.45
Madagascar.....	0.82
Malawi	0.84
Mongolia	0.82
Suriname.....	0.73
Tanzania, United Republic of.....	0.81

(Among children aged 7 to 14)
Source: UNICEF, 2003

In countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Mongolia and Namibia, this is largely due to a practice of having boys look after family cattle while the men seek wage-earning work. But in most parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, which has no such ingrained pastoral tradition, the same underperformance and even disappearance of boys is evident in the school system. In Latin America and the Caribbean, boys generally have higher repetition rates and lower academic achievement levels than girls, and in some countries, a higher rate of absenteeism (Brown, 2001). In Brazil in 1996, men had an average of 5.7 years of formal education compared with 6.0 years for women. Gender disparity starts to show up around age 10 for boys, when they begin to leave school at a higher rate than girls. At ages 15 to 17, 19.2 per cent of boys have dropped out altogether, compared with only 8.5 per cent of girls (Barker, 1999).

There is evidence to suggest that for decades, the problem of boys' educational underachievement in industrialized countries remained a hidden problem. It was generally accepted that girls outperformed boys in language and humanities subjects, but as long as boys achieved better results in mathematics and science it was assumed that there was an overall balance. In recent years, however, girls' participation and performance in science and mathematics have significantly improved, due not just to school-based initiatives but also to wider changes in social expectations of women's roles. Boys' performance in language-based subjects has, however, not improved, with the result that girls have a better record across the board, as reflected in national tests from primary level through to public examinations at the end of school (UNICEF, 2004).

This has prompted substantial concern at government level in some countries. In Australia, for example, the Parliamentary Education Committee held an extensive inquiry into boys' education that made 24 recommendations ranging from classroom level through to educational and social policy (Lungard, Martino, Mills and Bahr, 2002). The recommendations include promoting strategies that teachers can use to effectively engage all boys and girls, and making the issue of gender and achievement part of pre-service and in-service teacher education. In the United Kingdom, the Government has, since 1998, required all local education authorities to produce long-term strategies to counteract boys' underachievement, and for their progress to be regularly evaluated

(The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2002; Trent and Slade, 2001; Collins, Kenway and McLeod, 2000). The Government commissioned a three-year research project to identify successful strategies for raising boys' achievement without detriment to girls' and maintains a website dedicated to providing case studies, resources and guidance for schools on how to set up a strategy to tackle underachievement by boys (Wilson, 2003).

Current research effort by educationists and other stake holders are deepening our understanding of boys' educational under-achievement (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2002; Trent and Slade, 2001; Collins, Kenway and McLeod, 2000). Researchers have different areas of emphasis but all would broadly agree with the Australian Parliament's report that the phenomenon is complex and has a range of causes. It is clear that school-based remedies will be insufficient on their own and that the problem, like that of girls' underachievement in the developing world, is inseparable from wider questions about gender and power. One emerging school of thought is that girls' socialization in the home encourages them to concentrate and stay 'on task', meaning that they are more amenable to the classroom environment. Research from Jamaica, for example, where girls outperform boys at secondary and tertiary levels, suggests that boys there are generally allowed a significant degree of freedom outside their homes while girls are expected to stay at home, required to spend their time on specific tasks. A study by the Jamaican Government showed that gender differences in achievement can be attributed to a range of factors from socialization by parents in early childhood through to gender-biased messages in society as a whole, and also to the fact that boys and girls were treated differently in the classroom. Another potentially fruitful area for research and action connects schools with the wider question of social and sexual role-models: the gender balance of teachers (Cherry, Collins and McLeod, 2000; Christenson, and Thurlow). A key strategy in sub-Saharan Africa to make schools more attractive and appropriate for girls is to increase the proportion of women teachers in a region in which the profession is dominated by men (Kitetu, Sunderland and Kitetu, 2003). The reverse may be true in industrialized countries and in Latin America and the Caribbean where, particularly at primary level, women teachers form the vast majority, leaving a potential absence of positive role models for young boys. Some researchers argue that one reason boys underperform so markedly in language and literature is that these are seen as 'girls' territory' and that reading is too often seen as 'unmanly'. As one seven-year-old British boy said when interviewed for television, "You are not a real boy if you like reading."

Gender roles and affinity are other variables associated with the level of achievement in boys. Some aver that boys' disaffection with education may be closely connected with their traditional socialization as males. It underlines the importance of fathers being involved with their children from birth, participating in their care and development during early childhood and supporting their education. Schools and education systems, though, inevitably have to cope with boys who have experienced no such positive example within their own families, and who respond instead to society's negative messages that encourage violence and behaviour that puts them and girls at risk. In

Nigeria, the Conscientizing Male Adolescents Programme has been working with teenage boys since 1995. The programme involves schoolboys committing to a year of weekly discussions with a specially trained teacher in which they talk about gender roles and how they play out in their own families, in a society where cultural domination of women is an area of concern. The curriculum is continually developing, and boys who have graduated have gained significant skills in discussion and self-expression, which mark them out as 'stars', meaning that they are also likely to be seen as role models by others.

In other areas research interest and advancement, boys have been used as strategic allies. Boys can themselves be empowered and their own social and educational development extended by participating in attempts to protect and promote girls' rights. This has been evident in Uganda, where the Girls' Education Movement has, from its inception, involved boys as strategic allies. Girls in Kibale and Mbarara districts, for instance, established their local clubs and chapters in partnership with boys, working together to identify out-of-school children by name and location and then seeking them out. Boys have been particularly valuable in addressing girls' security and safety issues during the commute to and from school – and also while they are in school. Given that the violence girls face comes from boys as well as men, the recruitment of boys as active allies in combating the problem has clear advantages for girls. But there is also an undeniable benefit to boys' own social development in their confronting violence and understanding why it is unacceptable. In Pakistan, too, adolescent boys are active and effective partners in promoting the rights of girls and women. A project aimed at empowering adolescent girls has been running for over 6 years, and has reached 25,000 girls in 500 locations across Pakistan. The project met with significant success in providing knowledge, skills and new opportunities for girls. But over time the girls who were benefiting from the project Rhodes (2003) made it known that they felt boys in their communities were starting to lag behind and recommended that the project be opened up to allow boys' participation. In response, the training package for girls was modified appropriately for boys, and leaders were identified at each location whose skills were then developed, enabling them to guide follow-up activities and report progress. The object of including boys was to provide them with knowledge that would not only empower them but also help them acknowledge their new roles and enable them to understand and support girls' rights. The initiative was successfully piloted before being rolled out to 45 locations across all 4 provinces of the country. The initial response from the boys involved is encouraging. They have become more supportive of girls and have begun to get involved in constructive community-development activities.

The role of poverty in the whole saga of boys' education is quite significant. In the Caribbean, governments have become increasingly aware that boys and young men are more likely to be alienated from school if they come from poor socio-economic circumstances. There have been some interventions aimed specifically at such young males, such as the Youth Empowerment and Skills Training programme in the Bahamas, which targets those having trouble with the curriculum, and the Uplifting Adolescents Project in Jamaica, which focuses on the young unemployed outside the

school system. In Brazil, too, boys' problems with education are difficult to disentangle from their social class. Anderson's vivid picture of the call of the streets is backed up by a recent International Labour Organization study that looks at what it means to be in a Brazilian youth gang, a *comando*. In this kind of peer group a premium is put on actions and behaviours that are not likely to fit very easily into the average classroom, particularly in low-income areas. In addition, analysis of income data indicates that boys from poorer areas would have justification in thinking that schooling may not reap them sufficient financial rewards. People from low-income areas need to have 11 years of education before they reach the average earnings of people with just four years of schooling in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro as a whole.

In summary, the 'reverse gender gap' in Latin America and the Caribbean is by no means a simple phenomenon but rather one in which factors related to gender interact with class and race in telling ways, not to mention the individual differences, which of course mean that many boys perform well and happily in school while many girls find it extremely difficult. The challenge for educational researchers and policy makers in the region – and in the industrialized countries that are noting similar trends – is to find ways of countering boys' negative experience of education while not reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Gender sensitivity means what it says: being clear about the needs of both girls and boys, and creating school systems, classrooms and societies in which all children flourish – the ultimate objective of Education for All (UNICEF, 2004).

The Nigerian Perspective of Boys' Education/Dropout Problem

Focus on the South-East

The current Nigerian perspective on the challenge of boy-child education problem in the south-east is presented by Professor R. N. ORANU (2004) of the Faculty Of Education, University Of Nigeria, Nsukka in his paper titled "Boy-Child Education in the South-East Nigeria".

Giving a historical perspective on this problem, Oranu stated that the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, made up of five states, namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo had early contact with the Western type educational system and therefore education formed the cornerstone of their economic life. Families embraced the western type education and ensured that their children especially the boys and later the girls attended schools. The communities took pride in building, equipping and employing teachers for their schools without waiting for government assistance. Religious bodies also built schools to augment the community and later the government efforts to establish schools.

On the origin of the challenge of boy-child Education in the South-East, he asserts that the phenomenon of reduction in the number of boys attending schools in the zone is a relatively new development. During the advent of the Western Education in the South-East girls were the group with limited number in school. Parents preferred sending

their male children to school than their female children. However, after the Nigerian Civil war the situation changed as more boys dropped out of school and more girls were registered in schools.

A survey of the school system shows that there are more girls in all levels of the educational system, starting from the primary to the tertiary level in the zone. Many parents, except perhaps some educated ones allowed their children to drop out of school in pursuit for quick money making ventures such as child hawking, petty-trading, touting for commuter-buses and for big-time politicians

On a psycho-social profile of the typical boy-child in the area, Oranu states, this individual ranges between ages seven (7) and 18 years. They look like normal children, showing no visible physical disabilities. Many of them are unable to meet the educational expectations of the school, are easily frustrated and therefore seek satisfaction in some other pursuits they can achieve success. These boys see their continued staying in school as a "waste of time". They showed less interest in studying their school subjects or attending to their school assignments and consequently underachieve in their academic work and finally drop-out of school.

These boys are restless and easily bored pursuing academic activities which are of less interest to them. They would however, persist and persevere in doing those activities they found interesting and useful in solving their needs. They have little or no experience about the realities of life, take minimal responsibilities for their actions and depend entirely on their parents. They are active, very adventurous and enterprising. They make friends easily, adapt to any conditions fast and have very strong peer group influence and allegiance. On the factors responsible for boy-child education phenomena in South-East, Oranu outlines the following reasons:

1. Parental Neglect: Most parents show very little enthusiasm over their children's education. They are more interested in the amount of naira they accumulate in their businesses and never ask the child how he/she is doing at school. The only time they care a little is when the term or year ends and the child's result is brought home. If the child failed in his examination, the father blames the mother and the mother blames the father for the boy's poor school performance.

2. Societal Neglect: Education was regarded some years ago as the collected responsibilities of the family, community, state and in fact the nation. This close tie which enables families and communities to cater for children from their villages, towns no more exist. What ever is happening in the school is of little interest and consequence to the parents and other members of the society. School facilities decay, buildings collapse and equipment deteriorate and all these are of little concern to the community, the state and the nation. Children roam the streets in the villages, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes in the early hours of the morning without a feeling of guilt and without the society ever admonishing such terrible behaviour.

Wealth and power exhibition are what the society acknowledges as signs of success. Boys admire flashy cars driven by these 'affluent' adolescent billionaires, who are primary or secondary school dropouts. They also watch the society hail and honour those "child billionaires" with societal revered titles which were hitherto reserved to honest, diligent citizens of the society. The child-boy therefore queries what then is the essence of going to "waste" the long years in school instead of quickly acquiring the money and power through any fraudulent means. This is because they believe the end justifies the means.

3. The school, the Church and the Mosques: These institutions have failed in their responsibilities of shepherding their flocks. The school teaches with obsolete curriculum which does not satisfy the technological aspirations nor the wealth acquisition propensities of the boy-child. Subjects are taught which the boy-child cannot see their economic and social relationships with his present day need of demonstrating that he is acquiring wealth and that he is maturing into manhood. The school has also lost its moral grip on children since the take over of schools by the government. The concomitant effect of all these is that the boys are dissatisfied with the school and its programmes.

The mosques and churches are losing their strict teaching on honesty and for righteousness in the acquisition of wealth and humility in the demonstration of power. Nowadays, wealthy members and powerful adherents are pageantry ushered into the front seats. Children observe these happenings and knowing how some of these individuals made the money and gained their power, they loath the idea of schooling and attending Jumat and Sunday services.

4. Poverty/Economic Factor: Some not too distant years ago education especially boys education was a community responsibility. Communities pay what was known as "Assumed Local Contribution". This means that communities have to pay school fees for a number of children which the school is expected to accommodate.

Once this is done, the community has to ensure that children are sent to school to meet the number of spaces paid for. This functions in the primary school level and served as a free primary education policy for the community. Children whose parents cannot afford school fees were free and able to attend school. In some communities school uniforms are provided for children who would have dropped out of school, due to lack of school uniform. At the end of the Nigeria civil war many parents lost their means of livelihood and therefore cannot sponsor their boy-child in schools. This economic down-turn exposed the boy-child to new means of survival. They found out that by learning trading, serving as touts to commuter buses, grinding food condiments in the market places they could make some money to sustain not only themselves but also their parents and siblings. Schooling therefore becomes a less attractive means of preparing for earning a living.

Focus on the Northern Cities and Lagos

The boy-child education in the North has historically neglected the Western education in favour of the Arabic language based Islamic religions education. Islam and the Arabic language first penetrated Northern Nigeria in the 1st century of the second millennium as a result of growing trade and travel across the Sahara. The strong Islamic influence of the traders coupled with the Jihad of Sheik Usmanu Danfidiyo led to the conversion of the ruling dynasties of the Hausa City States, and the gradual but strong entrenchment of Islamic (Quranic) education. The spread of Arabic and Islamic religion went hand in hand. Since Arabic is the language of the Quran and every Muslim is obligated to use prescribed portions of the Arabic Text of the Quran in his five daily prayers, some pains were taken to teach the Arabic language to the early converts. Arabic later became the language of literature, administration and law in the Northern Muslim States.

Wherever there are Muslim communities in the North, there are Quranic schools in which Arabic and the Islamic religion constitute the core curriculum. For avoidance of doubt, let it be made clear that the bulk of the Quranic schools found and visited in the course of the field work and referred to in this report are elementary level Islamic education institutions. These schools are characterized by personalized instruction in atimes fairly large classes manned by a local Mallam and situated either within the premises of a mosque, inside the courtyard of a private house or under the shade of a tree. Children aged from 6 years attend such schools which employ the rote/choral technique. The youngsters are taught some rudiments of reading and writing but not the meaning of the words they memorized (UNICEF, 2001).

These youngsters are neither exposed to formal western education nor educated on the importance of being literate in other ways aside of the Quranic texts. They are taught to jealously guard the Quranic education, shun any other form of literacy and have implicit faith in and, almost imbibing to the point of hook, line and sinker, whatever the Mallams teach them.

Since the parents of these youngsters went through the same rather indoctrinating system, they more often than not do not see any negative implication of the system. They very often willingly entrust the care and education, in essence, the determination of the future of their children to the custody of the Mallams who are often regarded as God's own sent angels. This then explains the large group of youngsters, of school going age who are not in formal schools where they could access basic literacy and numeracy. The Mallams take on large numbers of these boys with the minimum found being 40 as evident on Table 3. These boys not only live completely under the care of the Mallams, who maintain them from his own scarce resources and the proceeds of begging done by the boys, but also move with the Mallams anytime and each time the Mallams have the need to relocate.

Table 3: Statistics of Youngsters (Almajiris) Found in the Quranic Centres Visited

City	No. of Centres Visited	No. of Boys Found	Total
Kaduna	1 st Centre	60	100
	2 nd Centre	40	
Kano	1 st Centre	120	180
	2 nd Centre	60	
Minna	1 st Centre	70	150
	2 nd Centre	90	

Source: Fieldwork, 2004.

Many (about 75%) of the boys found as Almajiris with the Mallams have their ages ranging between 6 years and 16 years. All these are boys who by virtue of their physical and cognitive development are set for and are supposed to be accessing formal education in a school setting. Herein, lies the hidden contribution of their state to the importance of the focus of this study – boys drop out phenomenon. Many of them are those who should at the stage of life they are in be provided with basic grounding in literacy, numeracy, life skills and general knowledge that will help lay a sound basis for success in later life.

Many of the boys are taken to the Mallams' farms, many go to the streets to beg, bringing the proceeds to the Mallams either in terms of cash or food items. The exposure and exploitation of these children amount to nothing other than gross extent of child abuse; or how else would anyone explain the case of a Mallam in one of the cities visited who owns a car through nothing else other than the sweat of these boys and proudly says it.

Investigation and observation revealed that these children are completely separated from their parents and with no provision of basic necessities. Many of them roam the streets, looking hungry, unkempt, dejected and infested with such communeable diseases like ringworm and scabies. Since these boys are many miles away from their parents, mutual visits between the parents and the children are out of the case. Atimes the Mallams move from one community to another and this compounds the issue of parent – child bonding since the parents may not even know the exact domicile of the child at any particular point in time.

Attempt to ask some of these boys in the custody of the Mallams if they would like to see their parents and not be involved in the begging job met with hostility and fierce resistance, in all cases, but especially with a Mallam in Minna. However, interview with some of the ones met on the streets gave some revelations. Many of them would want to go back to their parents, and would if given a choice opt out of the begging activity – an indication of a need for emancipation and help. A good proportion however do not see anything wrong or negative with what they are doing – an indication of the loss or even non-acquisition of sense of shame and decency.

Back to the issue of education in the North in historical perspective, the disparity in western style education between the North and the South is not a recent phenomenon. By 1914, when North and South were united into one colony, there were 59 government and 91 mission primary schools in the South; all 11 secondary schools except for King's college in Lagos were run by the missions. In 1914 there were 11 of primary school pupils in the North compared with 35, 700 in the South. The North had no secondary schools compared with 11 in the South. When by 1957, secondary school enrolment for the whole country went up to 36, 000 from the 10, 000 it was in 1947, 90% of this enrolment was recorded in the South (Education Online Nigeria .Com, 2004).

There should have been no need for educational disparity if the North had advantageously used its Quranic school system to integrate western formal education, for as far back as 1919 Northern Nigeria had about 25, 000 Quranic schools, and it was only by the 1970s that education experts were asking how the system could be integrated into the more formal education system (MapZones .Com, 2004).

With integration, there would have been quality education with diversification of the curriculum to include "secular" or general subjects like Mathematics, Civics, Geography, General Science etc., as a major intervention, instead of just the recitation of the Quran by rote taught the children. This type of integration is not alien to Mauritania for example. It is however gratifying to note that attempts are already being made in Nigeria with the assistance of UNICEF to introduce integrated curriculum into the NFE Quranic schools. Kano for example has integrated a few Quranic schools by introducing 4 core subjects into the curriculum.

The non-integration may not be unconnected with negative attitude rooted in socio-cultural beliefs and sensitivities, including the fear of the children losing their Muslim identities as a result of socialization in institutions that does not promote exclusive religious instruction.

CURRENT LITERATURE ON DROPOUT PREVENTION/ INTERVENTION

Dropout prevention programs are interventions designed to increase primary and secondary school completion rates. These interventions can include such techniques as the use of incentives, counseling, or monitoring as the prevention/intervention of choice.

What Do We Know About Dropout Prevention? Why is Preventing Dropout a Critical and Immediate Nigeria National Educational Goal?

Today in Nigeria, nearly all pupils are expected, [as part of the mandate of the Universal Basic Education (UBE)] to complete primary education and hopefully proceed to the secondary level. Yet, hundreds of thousands of these children leave school early each year without the First School Leaving Certificate. Data from the 1990

Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) showed that primary and secondary education setting in Nigeria found relatively low rates of participation at both the primary and secondary school levels and great urban/rural, and regional disparities. Just over one-half of the school-age children in Nigeria attended primary school (57% of males and 51% of females). 35% of the primary school-aged population was over or under the official primary school age range. 20% of secondary school-age youth attended secondary school (21% of males and 19% of females). Educational attainment among adults was relatively low, though it has been increasing. There was great gender disparity in educational attainment of adults. The rate of literacy among women was moderate. 36% of the population ages 15 and older had completed primary school. 13% of the population ages 20 and older had completed secondary school. Educational attainment has been on the increase: the percentage of men and women with no schooling was much lower for those 20 to 24 than for those 65 and above. 63% of women reported that they were literate.

More recent data from the 2003 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) show that only 36% of the population 15 and older has completed primary school. Men are 1.7 times more likely than women to have completed primary school: 45% of men have completed primary school, compared with only 27% of women. Only 13% of those ages 20 and above have completed secondary school. Men are more than twice more likely than women to have completed secondary school; 19% of men have completed, compared to only 8% of women.

Although the majority of the household population age 6 and older has some education, 46 percent of females and 31 percent of males have never attended school. With the exception of the youngest age group, some of whom will begin to attend school in the future, the proportion with no education increases with age. For example, the proportion of women who have never attended any formal schooling increases from 27 percent among those age 10-14 to 89 percent among those age 65 and above. For men, the proportion increases from 18 percent of those aged 10-14 to 70% of those aged 65 and older. Approximately one-quarter of women and one-third of men have attended at least some secondary schooling, however, the median number of years of schooling is 0.2 for females and 3.6 for males. Educational attainment is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The proportion of the population that has achieved any education varies among Nigeria's geopolitical regions. The North West and North East have the highest proportion of persons with no education—seven in ten women and half of men—while the South East has the lowest percentage who have never been to school among females (18%) and South-South among males (9%).

Significant Costs to Individuals and Society when Youths do not Complete School

The number of students in our nation who are not completing school is particularly alarming in today's society because there are few employment opportunities that pay living wages and benefits for those who have neither completed a secondary school

education nor acquired necessary basic skills. On average, youth who drop out are more likely than others to experience negative outcomes such as unemployment, underemployment, and incarceration. Secondary school dropouts are less likely to be employed than "O" Level holders.

Students who do not complete school cost taxpayers billions of Naira in lost revenues, welfare, unemployment, crime prevention, and prosecution. Logically, disproportionately higher percent of secondary school dropouts are employed compared to those of secondary school graduates not in tertiary institutions, and they earn much more than those who do not complete school. In light of the negative consequences of dropout for society and individuals, facilitating school completion for all students must be a priority for educators, administrators, and policymakers across the country.

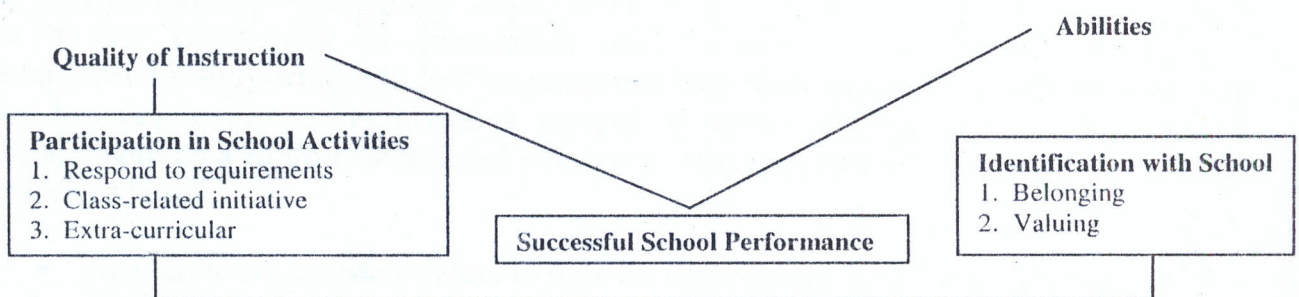
What Does Current Thinking Tell Us About How to Address Dropout? Dropping out of School is a Process of Disengagement that Begins Early

The decision to leave school is typically not an instantaneous event (Finn, 1993). Many students who drop out are expressing an extreme form of disengagement from school that has been foreshadowed by indicators of withdrawal (e.g., poor attendance) and unsuccessful school experiences (e.g., academic or behavioral difficulties) (Rumberger, 1995). These overt indicators of disengagement are generally accompanied by feelings of alienation, a poor sense of belonging, and general dislike for school (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock, 1986). The path leading toward school withdrawal begins early. Retrospective studies show the identification of dropouts can be accomplished with reasonable accuracy based on review of school performance (behavior, attendance, academics) during the elementary years (Barrington & Hendricks, 1989).

Influential Theories

Theoretical conceptualizations have helped elucidate the important role of student engagement in school and learning and have drawn attention to key elements of engagement such as student participation, identification, social bonding, and personal investment in learning (Finn, 1993; Maehr & Midgley, 1996; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith,

Fig. 1: Finn's Participation-identification Model of School Engagement



Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Many theories have contributed significantly to the development of interventions aimed at preventing dropout and promoting school completion. Finn's (1993) theory has been extremely influential in supporting the notion that school engagement is integral to school completion. His model of dropout prevention suggests students must both actively participate in school and have a feeling of identification with school in order for them to remain in school and graduate (Fig. 1). Student participation includes behavioral indicators such as attending school, being prepared for work, and being involved in extracurricular activities. The psychological indicators of identification with school include the feelings and sense of belonging associated with school engagement. Finn's theory suggests that student participation in activities is directly related to successful school performance, which promotes identification with school.

Preventing Dropout or Enhancing School Completion?

Although dropout and school completion can be viewed as two sides of a single issue, there are differences in meaning, orientation, and implications for intervention research and practice.

Conceptually, school completion encompasses more than preventing dropout. It is characterized by a strength-based orientation (vs. a deficit orientation), a comprehensive interface of systems (vs. a narrowly defined intervention), implementation over time (vs. implementation at a single period in time) and creating a person-environment fit (vs. a programmatic "one size fits all" orientation). School completion is oriented toward a longitudinal focus, whereby interventions aim to promote a "good" outcome, not simply prevent a "bad" outcome for students and society. (Christenson et al., 2000, p. 472)

Rather than using a surface approach to increase attendance and temporarily stem the tide of dropout, interventions designed to enhance school completion address the core issues associated with student alienation and disengagement from school. These kinds of interventions address underlying problems and teach strategies and skills students can use to successfully meet academic, behavioral, and psychological demands of the school environment—and complete school.

Importance of Student Engagement in School and Learning

In the past decade, engagement of alienated youth in school and learning has emerged as a key component of prevention and intervention efforts (Grannis, 1994). Interventions supporting student engagement help students develop connections with the learning environment across a variety of domains. Christenson (2002) defines engagement as a multi-dimensional construct involving four types of engagement and associated indicators.

- Academic engagement refers to time on task, academically engaged time, or credit accrual.

- Behavioral engagement includes attendance, avoidance of suspension, classroom participation, and involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Cognitive engagement involves internal indicators including processing academic information or becoming a self-regulated learner.
- Psychological engagement includes identification with school or a sense of belonging.

These indicators of engagement are influenced by the contexts of home, school, and peers. For example, school policies and practices such as a positive school climate or the quality of a teacher-student relationship can affect the degree to which a student is engaged in school. Similarly, the provision of academic or motivational support for learning by parents or family members can enhance students' connection with school and increase success in school. A focus on factors that facilitate engagement is a promising approach to guide the development of effective interventions promoting school completion. More and more studies are recognizing the complex interplay between student, family, school, and community variables in shaping students' paths toward early school withdrawal or successful school completion (Hess & Copeland, 2001; Valez & Saenz, 2001; Worrell & Hale, 2001).

What are Key Components of Dropout Prevention Programs?

Programs that have been designed to prevent dropout vary widely. Based on an integrative review of effective interventions designed to address dropout (and associated variables) described in the professional literature, Lehr et al. (2003) found that most of these interventions could be categorized according to the following types.

- Personal/affective (e.g., retreats designed to enhance self-esteem, regularly scheduled classroom-based discussion, individual counseling, participation in an interpersonal relations class);
- Academic (e.g., provision of special academic courses, individualized methods of instruction, tutoring);
- Family outreach (e.g., strategies that include increased feedback to parents or home visits);
- School structure (e.g., implementation of school within a school, re-definition of the role of the homeroom teacher, reducing class size, creation of an alternative school); and
- Work related (e.g., vocational training, participation in volunteer or service programs).

The majority of the interventions (71%) included a personal/affective focus. Nearly half (49%) included an academic focus. Most of the intervention programs (73%) included more than one type of intervention. These findings and other research suggest that preventing dropout can be achieved in a variety of ways. Given the vast array of program types, it becomes clear that there is not one right way to intervene. Rather than searching for the perfect program, identification of components that facilitate the effectiveness of interventions may prove to be a more valuable endeavor. Identification

of these key components may help to guide the development of interventions, improve the likelihood of successful implementation, and serve as a useful framework for evaluating outcomes.

Researchers note that several components appear to be key to intervention success. Lists of critical components have been generated based on experience, literature syntheses, descriptive retrospective analyses of program implementation, and data-based approaches. However, these components require continued research and systematic implementation to determine the extent to which empirical data accumulates supporting them as essential intervention components (Dynarski, 2001; Lehr et al., 2003). The table below lists key components from several highly regarded sources and shows a significant amount of overlap. The extent to which interventions include these components in their design should be carefully considered.

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CHAPTER 3

THE BOYS' DROPOUT PHENOMENON: FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD

The boys' drop out phenomenon in the 3 Northern Cities, Lagos and the five Eastern States will be treated looking at the magnitude, the dimension and spread, including the trend analysis of the prevalence of the problem. The findings from the field are analyzed along the line of the six target groups after the general issues running through all the target groups have been taken.

THE THREE NORTHERN CITIES AND LAGOS

Magnitude and Dimension of the Problem

Conception of boys' drop out in the three northern cities

The first thing that appears reasonable to do is to give insight into what the various respondents, with the exception of the State Agency for Mass Education (SAME) Directors in the three Northern cities understand the thrust of the study (boys' drop out phenomenon) to be. They conceive the problem as being of two scenarios. There is the conception of a boy not being a drop out if he starts a level of the educational systems (primary, junior secondary, senior secondary) and completes it. In this case, if a boy starts primary 1 and finished primary 6 but did not move in to the junior secondary, such a boy to these respondents is not a drop out, or if he starts JSS 1, stayed on to JSS 3 but did not move on to the senior secondary school (SSS), he is not a drop out. So for them, each level is distinct, complete and sufficient, and a student does not necessarily need to proceed to the next level if he does not so desire. In their conception, they say that they really do not have the problem of boys starting one level of the educational system and not completing it. Rather, the problem existing is that of boys completing one level, e.g. primary 6, or JSS 3 and being able to proceed to the next level as a result of a variety of reasons. So viewed from the above perspective the respondents think that there is no problem of boys' drop out in their Cities.

But these respondents' interpretation or conception of drop out cannot really hold sway. Since education should be seen as a continuous process, and since it is the least of acquisition of schooling from primary 1 to JSS 3 that is currently regarded in Nigeria as basic education (UBE Policy Document, 2000), then a primary 6 boy not transiting to the SSS level or any other formal schooling equivalent, but moves into the informal sector is in our considered opinion a drop out. It is thus important that workers in the area of school drop out should, in addition to the broad existing conception of school drop outs, begin to define drop out in the context of what a country regards as basic education.

In addition to the above, the available statistics do not seem to support the respondent's conception that there is 100% transition from one class to another and thus no dropping out midstream in any one level of primary, junior secondary or senior secondary.

A study of Table 4 shows that in Niger State for example, no class at the primary school level was spared from the drop out phenomenon, and that a drop out rate of as high as 30.78% was recorded for boys in primary 2 in the year 2002. It could also be observed that though a low drop out rate of 60% occurred in primary 4 in 1999, no class in any year recorded a drop out rate of less than 10%. So, the boys are dropping out of schools and the problem is there. Another close examination of Table 4 shows that drop out rate appears higher in primary 1 across years followed by the same trend in primary 5. So it could appear that boys drop out more in primary 1 and probably never get back to school – a probable indication of the need to make schools child friendly so that children's first encounter with the school will not be scarring to encourage dropping out. The pattern observed for primary 5 shows that boys do not wait to completely tidy up their primary schooling and these may probably represent the fairly grown up boys selling wares along the streets.

Table 4: Primary Schools Enrolment and Male Drop Out Rate By Class In Niger State

YEAR	NO. ENROLLED: PRY CLASS 1				NO ENROLLED: PRIMARY CLASS 2				NO. ENROLLED: PRIMARY CLASS 3			
	Boys	Girls	Total	Drop Out Rate (%)	Boys	Girls	Total	Drop Out Rate (%)	Boys	Girls	Total	Drop Out (%)
1997	66679	3406	100739	19.43	53722	28874	82596	13.13	46668	25442	72110	11.20
1998	66679	34065	100739	19.43	53722	28874	82596	13.13	46668	25442	72110	11.20
1999	56765	30913	87678	17.28	46955	25140	72095	16.37	39269	21900	61169	16.32
2000	63825	33057	96882	17.84	52438	28655	81093	18.24	42872	23065	65937	16.36
2001	67495	37486	104981	24.66	50854	27828	78682	23.61	38847	21165	60012	17.14
2002	77067	43402	120469	19.54	62010	34800	96810	30.78	42923	25267	68190	17.36

YEAR	NO. ENROLLED: PRIMARY CLASS 4				NO ENROLLED: PRIMARY CLASS 5				NO. ENROLLED: PRIMARY CLASS 6		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Drop Out Rate (%)	Boys	Girls	Total	Drop Out Rate (%)	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	41440	24092	65534	10.49	37091	22016	59107		31422	18657	50079
1998	41442	24092	65534	10.49	37091	22016	59107	15.24	31422	18657	50079
1999	32859	18659	53121	4.60	31347	17071	48418	16.77	26090	14342	40432
2000	35859	20262	56121	12.62	31333	17351	48684	19.56	25203	14253	39456
2001	32190	18367	50557	11.02	28643	16509	45152	19.69	23004	13755	36759
2002	35471	20504	55975	12.23	31133	17986	49119	16.70	25935	15030	40965

Source: Niger State Primary Education Board, Minna

Using Kaduna State as case study for the pattern at the secondary school level, Table 5 also reflects a high drop out rate for the boys; with 7 out the 10 years showcased revealing a drop out rate of over 25%, while the least rate is 13%. When it is remembered that Nigeria is a populous nation with a high proportion of youths, the drop out rates (even that of 13%) when translated into raw figures speaks of a large number of individual boys dropping out of school.

Thus, in conclusion, the assertion/conception by the large proportion of the respondents *that boys' dropping out is not midway at any educational level, but that it is a case of non-transition at the end of the level (e.g. primary 6) to the next level (e.g. JS 1)* is not supported by hard core data.

The second scenario commented upon by the various target group respondents which was also observed by the researchers in the 3 Northern Cities is the existence of a fairly large army of adults who have never accessed formal education and are therefore illiterate in basic literacy and numeracy. These ones with ages ranging between 15 years and 60 years, with mean ages of 34 years in most Centres, are found in the non formal education (NFE) Centres going through basic literacy end post basic literacy programmes. These 2 programmes when completed put the products at the level of the first school leaving certificate – i.e. primary 6 level.

Table 5: Post-Primary Schols Enrolment 1994/1995-2003/2004 Sessions by Class Level and Transition Rate in Kano State

YEAR	ENROLMENT									TRANSITION RATE	
	J.S.S.			SSS			TOTAL MALE JSS & SSS	TOTAL FEMALE JSS & SSS	GRAND TOTAL JSS & SSS	TOTAL TRANSITION RATE	MALE AS RATIO OF TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL					
994/95	71953	32572	104525	68186	42457	110643	140139	75029	215168	85.0%	40.0%
995/96	81109	42071	123180	60983	37556	98539	142092	79627	221719	95.0%	44.0%
996/97	80240	38400	118640	59745	36880	96625	139985	75280	215265	85.0%	35.5%
997/98	82245	40401	122646	60849	37431	98280	143094	77832	220926	95.0%	44.0%
98/1999	78914	49345	128259	56180	33743	89923	135094	83088	218182	95.0%	44.8%
99/2000	89382	46206	135588	63890	37597	101487	153272	83803	237075	95.0%	31.5%
2000/2001	96122	46270	142392	68156	42768	110924	164278	89038	253613	95.0%	25.0%
2001/2002	98182	47431	145613	69156	43678	112834	167338	91109	258447	97.0%	14.0%
02/2003	117182	57554	174736	78379	44906	123285	195561	102460	298021	98.0%	14.0%
03/2004	118142	58984	177126	79359	45803	125162	197501	104787	302288	98.5%	13.0%

Source: Ministry of Education, Kano State, Planning and Statistics Department

Magnitude and Dimension

In all the four cities, the dropping out of boys appears to be on the increase. All respondents from the different target groups are of the opinion that the magnitude of boys dropping out of school is quite high as evidenced according to them from the increasing number of boys who are seen on the streets selling wares like recharge cards; fuel and various other commodities; or as evidenced from a large number of boys who are apprenticed to master mechanics, vehicle spare – part dealers, building material dealers etc. This increasing number of boys dropping out of school is, according to the respondents an indication that government is not coping with what it takes to educate its citizens.

Viewed from the perspective of the NFE Centres, the pattern of dropping out of boys is not conclusive. In Niger State for example, the number of males that dropped out appears rather small when compared with the number that enrolled originally. Table 6 shows that out of a cumulative grand total of 257,046 males who enrolled in NFE centers between 1992 and 2003, only 12,638, representing 4.9%, dropped out. However, the case is different in Kaduna State where from Table 7, it could be seen that the yearly non-certified males (indication of drop out) is not less than 50%. The cumulative percentage is 76.48%. However, it must be stated that in general the situation at NFE centers is relatively stable in terms of males dropping out and that the rate of completion at the basic education level appears higher than what is seen in the formal school system.

Table 6: 1992-2003 Cumulative Examination Result Analysis By Gender And Number Dropped in Niger State

GENERAL ENROLMENT			NO. THAT SAT FOR EXAM.			NO. PASSED			NO. THAT DROPPED OUT			NO. FAILED		
Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
150943	150943	407989	226072	144286	380570	220373	137597	357969	12638	8575	21213	10016	6887	16903

Source: Niger State Agency For Mass Education, Minna Literacy Department

Table 7 Cumulative Statistical Achievement in Basic Literacy 1990-2003

Year	No. Of Classes	Enrolment			Certification			Male Certified	Male Not Certified	
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL			
1994	1,456	14,904	12,220	27,124	5,095	3,038	8,133	9,809	65.81	
1995	1,400	17,326	11,726	29,052	4,549	3,128	7,677	12,777	73.74	
1996	575	4,802	5,079	9,881	2,121	1,789	3,910	2,681	55.83	
1997	602	5,850	6,190	12,040	1,579	1,725	3,304	4,271	73.01	
1998	575	2,451	2,776	5,227	1,567	1,741	3,308	884	34.43	
1999	231	2,395	3,281	5,676	821	1,095	1,916	1,574	65.72	
2000	-	No Session						-	-	-
2001	475	5,537	5,831	11,368	2,633	2,859	5,490	2,9	52.45	
2002	482	5,246	6,438	11,684	2,210	2,451	4,661	3,036	57.87	
2003	460	5,364	6,102	11,466	2,033	2,478	4,511	3,328	62.04	
TOTAL	15,000	19,3910	14,8120	34,2030	45,606	39,783	85,389	148304	76.44	

Source: Kaduna State Agency For Mass Literacy

The Boys' Drop Out Phenomenon: Current Situation and Trend Analysis

The trend of boys' drop out in the nine States will be captured using a variety of parameters such as non-attendance rate, trend in enrolment, completion rate.

Enrolment and Non-Attendance Rate

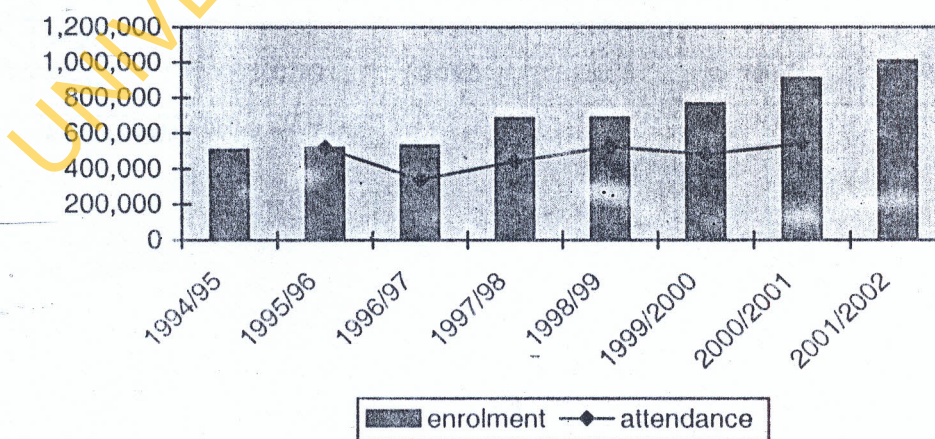
If a child registers in school and does not attend school, it could to a very large extent be interpreted that the child has dropped out of school especially when it is known that the child showed up in school for some time. Though death could bring about the scenario reported above, but in situations where the non-attendance figure is large, and there is no shown evidence of war, genocide, natural disasters like earthquake and flood, or large scale epidemic, then the concept of non-attendance being a fairly scientific index of drop out can be upheld. A look at Table 8 shows that while in the 1995/96 session, attendance and enrolment at primary school level in Kano State were almost at par (i.e. almost all the pupils that enrolled eventually attended school, the disparity between attendance and enrolment was highest in 2001 when over 900 thousand pupils enrolled and only a little above 500 thousand actually attended school. Table 8 further reveals that the trend of high disparity between attendance and enrolment and in essence dropping out from the primary school system in Kano State has been consistently on the increase from 1995.

Table 8: Enrolment and Attendance in Kano State 1994/95 To 2001/2002

YEAR	ENROLMENT FIGURE			ATTENDANCE			NO OF SCHOOLS
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
1994/95	504,280	280,676	784,956	NOT AVAILABLE			2,025
1995/96	518,409	311,785	830,194	516,743	283,826	799,872	2,073
1996/97	530,601	372,826	903,427	338,826	257,762	596,588	2,083
1997/98	683,292	355,943	1,039,385	442,323	242,222	684,545	2,137
1998/99	687,292	427,552	1,114,844	524,718	350,919	875,637	2,178
1999/2000	769,223	519,774	1,288,997	481,170	315,822	796,992	2,270
2000/01	909,463	607,970	1,517,433	541,809	370,415	912,224	2,424
2002/02	1,008,771	672,514	1,681,285	NOT AVAILABLE			2,624

Source: State Primary Education Board, Statistics Department, Kano

Fig. 1: Enrolment and Attendance in Kano State 1994/95 to 2001/2002



This picture of disparity between enrolment and attendance is graphically captured by Fig. 1. If the incursion of large disparity between attendance and enrolment had probably been noted from 1996, and some definite steps taken, maybe the situation in the 2000/2001 session when almost half of those who enrolled did not attend school would not have arisen and the incidence of male drop-out would have been earlier addressed.

Completion Rate

This concept refers to a situation where a cohort of students start off at the lower level of an educational ladder (primary in our present case of consideration) and stayed in school till the higher level of that particular ladder – primary 6 in the case in point. Thus, completion rate is calculated by dividing the number of pupils who started primary 1 (in 1997) and were in primary 6 in 2002.

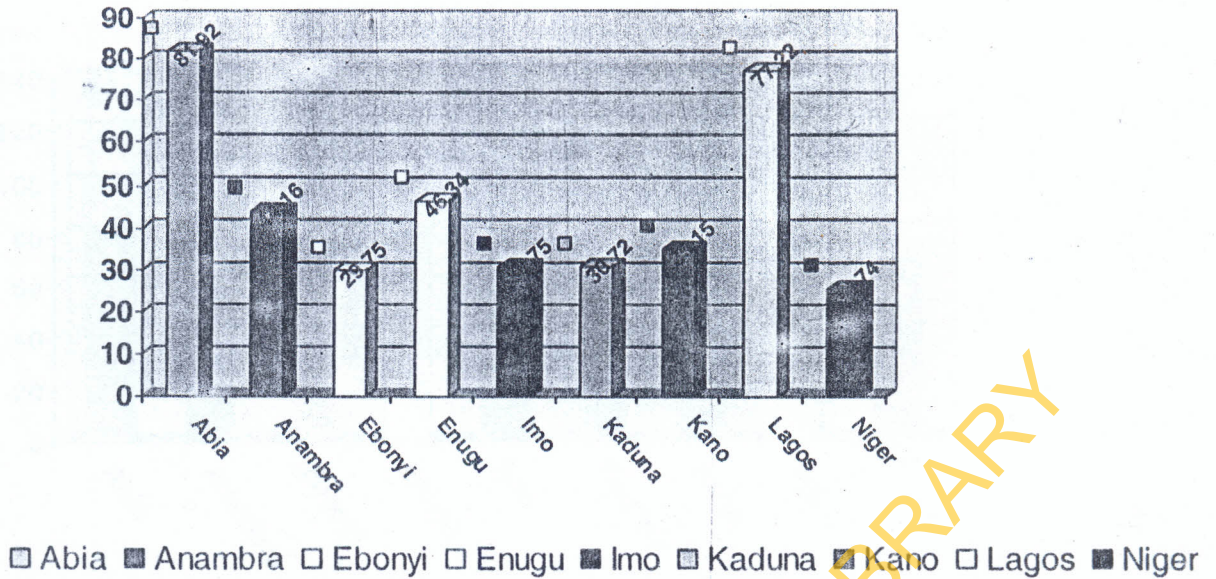
A look at Table 9 that shows the completion rate at primary school level for the nine States does not tell any cheering story about dropping out from school. Apart from Abia and Lagos States that have the completion rates of 81.92% and 77.22% respectively, all the other States have completion rate of below 50%. The situation is even worse off in Ebonyi and Niger States where the completion rate is below 30% at the primary school level.

Table 9. Enrolment and Completion Rate in Primary Schools in Nine States by Sex and State 1997 & 2002

S/N	States	1997		2002			
		Enrolment in primary 1		Enrolment in primary 6		Completion rate	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Abia	60333	25935	49428	51570	81.92	198.84
2	Anambra	63999	31374	28265	29466	44.16	93.91
3	Ebonyi	65612	32134	20271	19526	29.75	60.76
4	Enugu	45996	21760	21291	21316	46.34	97.96
5	Imo	71054	34586	39808	21850	30.75	63.81
6	Kaduna	118757	47646	47950	36483	30.72	76.57
7	Kano	165135	64544	86760	58049	35.15	78.56
8	Lagos	66295	32365	51194	49929	77.22	154.31
9	Niger	100739	34065	25935	15030	25.74	44.12

Source: CASSAD Fieldwork, 2004

Fig 2: Completion Rate for Males at Primary School



Source : Computed by CASSAD from data collected from the various States' Ministry of Education and UNICEF Field Offices, 2004

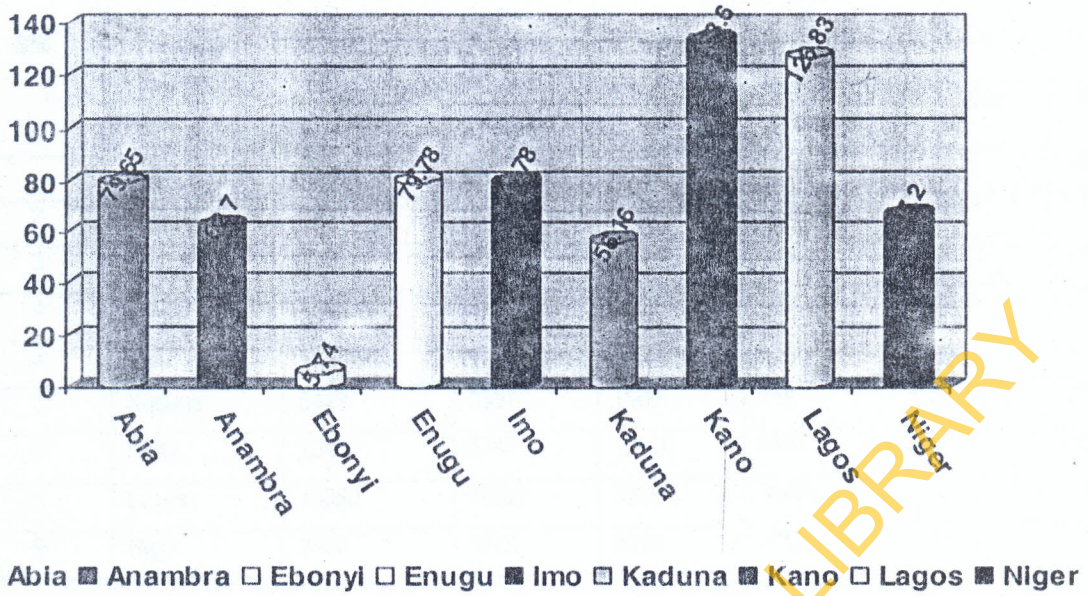
There is a different pattern at the junior secondary school (JSS) level (See Table 10). All the States except Ebonyi State recorded well over 60% completion rate with even two of them (Kano and Lagos States) having over 100% completion rate (133.61% and 126.83%) respectively. However, the case of Ebonyi State is very alarming since the completion rate is just 5.74% - an indication of a large drop out rate.

Table 10: Enrolment and Completion Rate in Junior Secondary Schools in Nine States by Sex —and State 1997 & 1999

S/N	States	1997		2002		Completion rate	
		Enrolment in JS1		Enrolment in JSS3		Male	Female
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	Abia	12702	15881	10118	11533	79.65	72.62
2	Anambra	11347	18821	7115	9058	62.70	48.12
3	Ebonyi	5259	4362	302	245	5.74	5.62
4	Enugu	11726	13196	15287	13764	79.78	104.30
5	Imo	8100	11203	6462	8039	79.78	71.75
6	Kaduna	15409	11179	8654	5301	56.16	47.42
7	Kano	13432	9682	17886	9048	133.6	93.45
8	Lagos	37199	78049	47183	46194	126.83	59.20
9	Niger	8438	6075	9731	5671	67.20	93.35

Sources: Collected from the various States Ministries of Education, 2004.

Figure 3: Completion Rate for Males at JSS Level



The pattern at the Senior Secondary School seems to show that boys are not dropping out of school since all the States except Imo and Kaduna States have completion rates of below 50% (47.24% and 30.53% respectively). One should however not be carried away by the rather high rate of completion, because the pattern of enrolment shows a different picture – the picture of decline in enrolment trend as can be gleaned from Table 11. In Abia State for example, though boys' enrolment trend shows increase from 1992 to 1994 (15,640 in 1992 increased to 73,304 in 1993 and to 88,496 in 1994). A decrease occurred in 1995 – from the 88,496 of 1994 to 62,538 in 1995. The decline was repeated in 1996 (61,230 boys enrolled) and except for 1998 where enrolment picked up a little, the decline in enrolment was steady from 1999 to 2002.

Still taking Table 11 as the guide, in all the five Eastern States, and for the 10 years reported (1992 to 2002) girls' enrolment at the secondary level was higher than that of the boys. Since population figures do not indicate that there are significantly more girls than boys, then it can safely be conjectured that these boys are not in school – they have dropped out of the school system. Apart from the hard figures indicating that the boys were dropping out of school, observation of the increasing number of boys street-hawking, street-trading, getting apprenticed to spare part dealers, mechanics etc. bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the trend of boys' dropping out of school was increasing in magnitude.

TABLE 11: Enrolment in Senior Secondary Schools in Nine States by Sex and State 1999 & 2002

S/N.	States	1999		2002			
		Enrolment in SS1		Enrolment in SS3		Completion rate	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Abia	8303	8972	7703	9101	92.77	101.43
2	Anambra	9104	18931	8310	13604	91.27	71.86
3	Ebonyi	871	758	170	183	19.52	24.14
4	Enugu	13975	11022	10595	7990	75.81	72.49
5	Imo	15699	11836	7416	5387	47.24	45.55
6	Kaduna	6449	3957	1969	118	30.53	2.98
7	Kano	13153	6747	10886	6502	82.76	96.37
8	Lagos	48030	46928	33680	35034	70.12	74.65
9	Niger	9407	4825	8399	3757	89.28	77.87

Figure 4: Completion Rate for Males at SSS Level

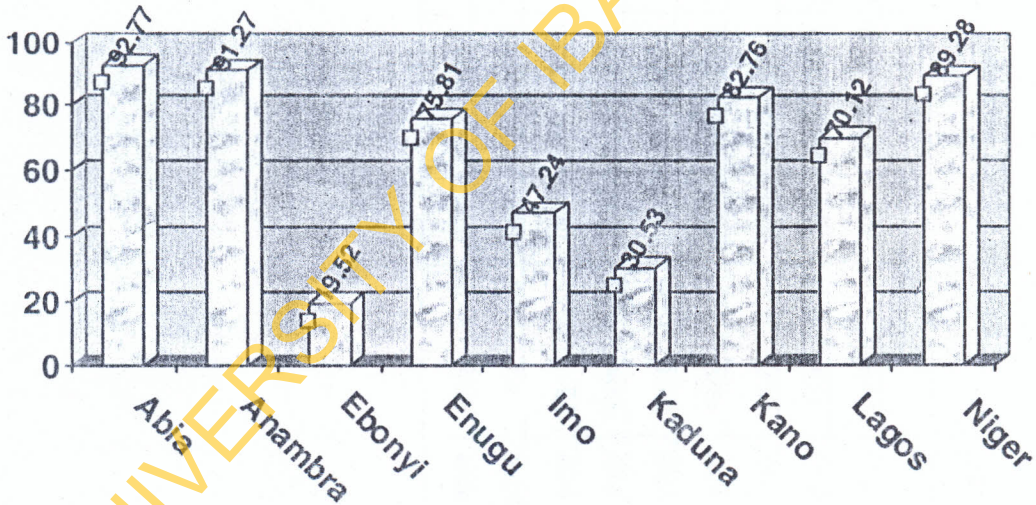
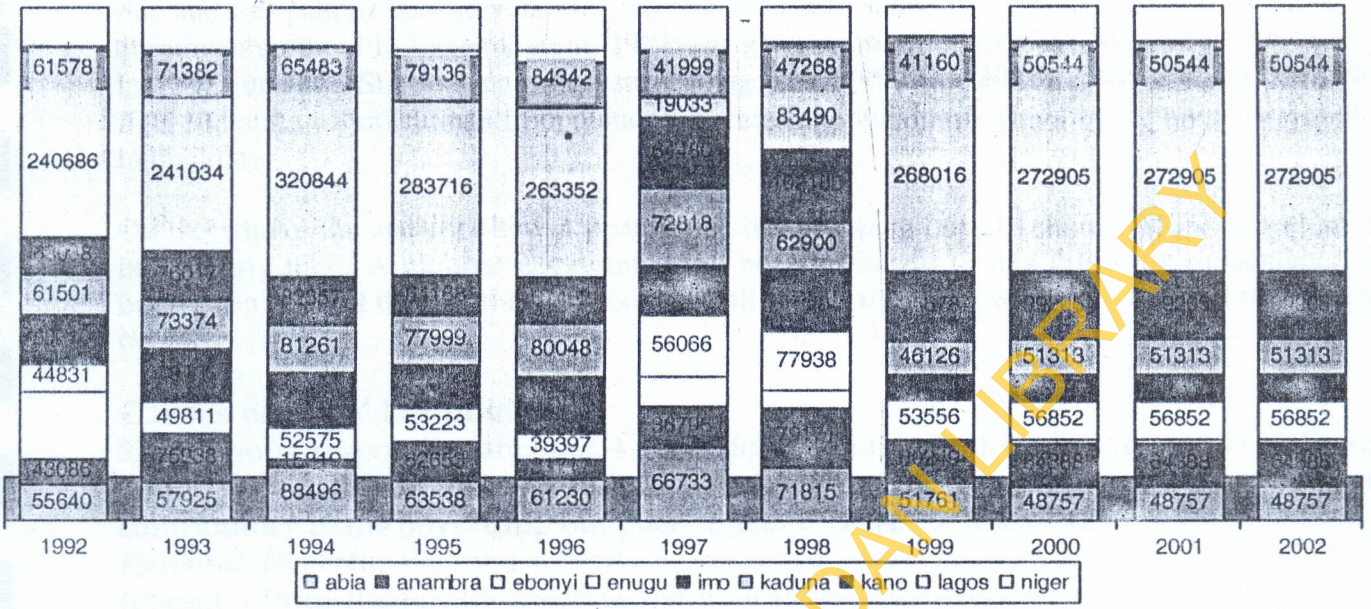


Table 12: Enrolment in Secondary Schools in Nine States in Nigeria by Sex, 1992-2002

	1992		1993		1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001		2002		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Abia	55640	57925	73304	84833	88496	82485	63538	78268	61230	63859	66733	89437	71815	81172	51761	59805	48757	58626	46108	54789	44233	54968	
Anambra	43086	75938	33035	85351	15819	81454	62653	92640	31717	82973	38796	99435	79171	97590	60249	94016	64388	97338	63003	95958	71833	94145	
Ebonyi	107998	The state was not yet created										26124	22276	26132	22276	1724	1451	3371	3301	5032	6538	7911	7835
Enugu	44831	51743	49811	52575	52575	70182	53223	78444	39397	64715	56066	75679	77938	90688	53556	66014	56852	70724	60079	73280	67416	80815	
Imo	80718	95257	79436	32191	92838	109733	70319	115707	87912	116650	45986	64727	84900	96522	37405	48054	39270	48410	42905	50232	52596	70153	
Kaduna	61501	56063	73374	56362	81261	61845	77999	58056	80048	56092	72818	57419	62900	48996	46126	28133	51313	30387	64508	34147	95799	61192	
Kano	63038	76017	76017	28560	82357	34524	64168	40803	67462	43190	64480	46297	102183	53655	95678	46896	99205	49620	114537	58199	99854	52860	
Lagos	240686	227091	241034	247915	320844	310755	283716	304438	263352	256277	19033	206172	83490	79617	268016	262582	272905	279856	291335	290370	293152	293751	
Niger	61578	30367	71382	33257	65483	34540	79136	38261	84342	40027	41999	19870	47268	20920	41160	20488	50544	23567	58224	29999	62692	32924	

Fig. 5: Enrolment in Secondary Schools in Nine States in Nigeria by Sex, 1992-2002



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Table 12 reveals that in Kaduna and Kano, boys' enrolment increased steadily between 1992 and 1994, declined in 1995, picked up in 1996 for both States, and the declining pattern was upheld in Kaduna from 1996 till 1999; after which enrolment picked up in the State from year 2000. A rise and fall pattern is observable for Niger and Lagos States from Table 12, but the decline in enrolment suffered in Lagos State in 1997 was great (from a figure of 84,342 in 1996 to 41,999 in 1998) and the State never in the succeeding years (1999 to 2002) again reached the 1996 figure in spite of indications of population increase (population of school-going boys inclusive) in the State.

On the whole, the statistics show a pattern of boys dropping out of school and the magnitude being fairly high. A number of reasons have been attributed to this fairly high magnitude of boys' drop out and the next section shall give insight into what the causes of boys' drop out are.

Causes of Boys' Dropout

The various respondents in the 4 cities for whom In-depth Interview and/or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held, X-rayed a galaxy of reasons or causes that are contributory to the boys' drop out phenomenon. These are essentially:

Parental Poverty: Parental poverty is regarded as very high, thus disabling them (parents) from financially meeting the educational obligations to their children. With inability to pay children's school fees and levies, purchase schooling materials, provide money for midday meals and refreshment, parents either encourage their children to drop out of school or support their readiness to abandon the formal school system for the informal sector where they are found as petrol sellers, bureau-de-change peddlers, textile dealers' apprentices and automobile apprentices. An opinion leader in Kaduna has this to say

In answer to your question, it is true that the school fees are not high, but the question is, "is it only school fees that make up the expenses on a child's education? The answer is "NO". There are other expenses like purchase of uniforms, money for refreshment, money to meet levies asked from time to time, money to buy books and so on. Even the low school fees is not within the reach of many parents to pay. I tell you, many, many parents of our children here are very, very poor.

Opinion Leader – Kaduna

Parental poverty was also expressed to reflect partly in household poverty – a situation that impacts heavily on learning achievement in other ways, notably through its effects on food security and nutritional health. A hungry child or a sickly child cannot make much out of school, and will rather be involved in ventures that can be income-generating than be in school where he cannot concentrate in academic pursuits.

Another aspect worthy of note is that poverty makes it extremely difficult for many Nigerian parents to provide a home environment conducive to learning. Many parents cannot provide enough or even basic reading materials for their children, nor can they afford to generate electricity on their own to counter the incessant and prolonged power cuts from the national grid. When children do not have reference resource materials (books etc.) nor electricity with which they can read or do their homework, what much

can they make out of schooling. Part of the resultant effect is dropping out of school. The foregoing represents a summary of the views expressed by various respondents on the issue of poverty in the homes and in the society.

Low Returns on Education: This is reflected in inability to find job after completion of schooling. The expectation of many (parents and students alike) is that those who finish schooling should be able to find jobs early enough after completion. But the reality is that many roam the streets and haven't seen what has happened to others in this regard, some are not leaving the future to chances and would rather prepare themselves against such an occurrence of needing to roam the street. The response at an FGD conducted in Kano throws more light on this issue.

Many of our parents are poor and they cannot afford the rather high cost of sending us to school. We need to help them. Moreso, when people finish school, they do not find jobs. We have seen many of our older ones roaming the streets or doing odd jobs. We will rather start working early so as to find our feet economically early enough and be able to support both our parents and the family we also will later be raising.

FGD with Dropout Boys in Kano

Insufficient Time to Devote to Learning: Scholastic achievement is time consuming and adequate time need be invested in learning to make retention and retrieval easy as well as bring out the cognitive potentials in the learner. But in situations where there isn't enough time devoted to schooling and learning, the learner may not perform well and may eventually drop out of school. In cases where the boys go to school on top of engaging in income generating activities, farming, or heavy domestic chores, the resultant tiredness inevitably reduces their inability, reduces their ability to concentrate in class and limits the time available to them to read or complete their homework and assignments. Consequently, their learning achievement is bound to suffer. The above mentioned scenario appears to capture the causative factors mentioned by 2 of the boys in an NFE Centre in Minna who left school in primary 4 and another one in an NFE Centre in Lagos, who left school in JSS 2. Hear them

This is the farming season and we are presently engaged in serious farming activities. We are atimes not regular in the Centre, even atimes for days. This is because, though the Centre runs in the evenings, we are often tired after a heavy day's work on the farm. It is not easy. Little energy left for brain work again.

NFE Respondents in Minna

I dropped out of school before coming to this NFE Centre. I used to help my father in his shop every afternoon as soon as I came back from school, and I stay there till about 10pm when we close. I had no time to read, and my grades were getting poorer and poorer. I then decided of my own volition to drop out of school instead of being an object of failure and ridicule by my teachers and mates.

NFE Respondent in Lagos

Little Awareness of the Importance of Education: Education is a vehicle for development – personal and societal development. But many people in Nigeria do not yet seem to comprehend the full import of the value or importance of education. Almost all the SAME directors and other SAME officials expressed the view of people's low value for education. They are of the opinion that if the boys dropping out of school realize the value of education, they will struggle against all odds to remain in school

knowing that they will stand in better stead in future if they are educated. Also, that if parents realize the importance of education, they will choose to spend their resources (whether meager or buoyant) on the education of their children rather than on other less valuable social events like marriage ceremonies and turbaning (title taking) which they are often found to be engaged in.

Presence of Many Children in the Family: Children need to be taken care of – fed, clothed and be provided for in terms of their many other needs. Some of the respondents in the 3 Northern Cities are of the opinion that many families have more children than they can adequately cater for. The sheer fairly large number of children coupled with the engrained high poverty level in many families, make it difficult for parents to support their children educationally. To many of these respondents, the inability to take care of the children is reflected in the Almajiri phenomenon, wherein parents willingly entrust the care and upkeep of their children to the Mallams since this to some extent takes some burden off the shoulders of these parents. In this regard one respondent in Kaduna has this to say.

If parents value their children, they will not allow them to be miles away from them under a Mallam. These children can still be instructed in the tenets of the Quran without being away from their parents. But since many of the parents involved in the practice have more children than they can cater for, they see the sending of the children to the Mallams as relief to their need to cater for these children. Or, how else do you explain the case of 2 or so children from the same family domiciling with a Mallam. These parents should be told about the Islamic injunction that says parents should cater for their children and bring forth only the number they can cater for.

*An Opinion Leader in Kaduna**

Absence of Political Will: Government has a lot to do with regard to educating its citizens and the willingness of the political leaders to fund education in all its ramifications goes a long way to determine whether children will stay in school or not. Some of the respondents in the 3 Northern Cities believe that their past leaders have not attached much importance to educating the masses. Infact as one of them said

They had deliberately not funded education in the past so as to continually suppress the masses and use them to achieve their political ends. They know that if the majorities are not educated, they can be pushed any where, be told a lot of cock and bull stories, and be denied of their various rights. How do you explain the meager stipend paid to NFE instructors who are to teach those men who had before now not accessed education and can be regarded as dropouts. The government does not also supply us enough materials (primers, pencils, exercise books) for the learners we have in the Centres. How much will these things cost compared with the huge amount of money they spend on other things. There is no political will, walai

An NFE Instructor in Minna

* We wish to corroborate the opinion leader's assertion with what we found in the field. In a Quranic school in Minna where an NFE Centre operates, we found 3 children of the same family and from Chanchagan in Niger State and 2 children of the same parents from Zaria in Kaduna State living with the Mallam. we specifically requested the information after the FGD to ensure that the similarity in surname is not just a coincidence.

The issue of absence of political will to fund education was also expressed by an official of the Agency for Mass Education in Lagos City who also complained that they have a running battle keeping their NFE Centre instructors because of the paltry stipend (under N1,000.00) paid to them. He said that many have left their own-run Centres for Centres run by NGOs where they are better paid (about N2,000.00 and above), and that those who stay on with them do so simply out of interest. Indeed, the 2 female instructors interviewed at the Ketu-Ikosi Centre confirmed that they are doing the job simply out of largesse and spirit of volunteerism, that the stipend paid them, does not even cover their transportation.

Ethnic and Religious Riots: Staying on in school is to a very large extent a function of the tranquility and peace in the immediate community of a child going to school. Where there is rancour, upheavals, riots and crises schools will not open and students will not be there even if they are opened. Safety and survival will be the prime issues to seek after.

The number of various ethnic and religious riots that have taken place in the nation have displaced many youngsters and kept them out of school. This was the case in Kano and Kaduna where interviews with boys selling recharge cards, some small items, or working with battery chargers revealed that they are victims of the recent Plateau ethnic-religious crisis (in the case of the 2 boys in Kano who said they are refugees in Kano haven fled from the Jos crisis), and the past Kano riot (in the case of the boy in Kaduna who said he refused to go back to Kano when peace later returned to the City).

Peer Influence: Literature is replete with the strong influence that peer pressure can have on youngsters, especially in situations where many other negative factors like poverty, family conflicts, political insincerity, religious confusions etc. (that abound in Nigeria) help to compound the positive thinking and orientation of people, youngsters can easily be swayed by their peers to abandon better values for their own gang values. So, it is not unusual to find boys dropping out of school as a result of the influence of their peers. This is the case in this study where a number of the out-of school boys and the learners in NFE Centres who we interviewed (FGD) confessed to the fact that they left school as a result of pressure from their peers who in some cases had already left school, or who in some cases were on the verge of leaving. In the second instance, they eventually dropped out of school together, and started off at first selling small wares to occupy themselves. Some like the case of one in Lagos (Ladipo NFE Centre) later went to be apprenticed to building materials dealers. This young man who is now 29 years old and a native of Imo State said

Let me confess to you, I left school by myself in primary 5 along with four of my mates who had been persuading me to let us abandon school for something more lucrative. My father was not happy with me, but I was adamant. I started selling small wares at first and I later left home for Lagos where I learnt selling plumbing materials from my master here. Though, I am also now a master but I am now doing what I should have done many years ago (schooling).

Poor Performance in School: Good performance and high achievement in scholastic activities are motivational to the psyche, contributory to development of positive self concept and readiness to continue in school. In situations where a student is not achieving highly, the temptation to quit schooling is very high. This view which was strongly expressed cuts across the six target groups respondents. Samples from each group believe that poor performance has contributed significantly to the dropping out of boys from school. Some of the boys themselves said that with their poor performance, they considered continued going to school a waste of time. Some of the adults said that when students do not perform well, parents are discouraged from sending their children to school and are not worried if eventually such children drop out of school. They said parents would infact prefer to send such low achieving children to learn trade or go into some other commercial ventures than continue wasting their money on them in school.

Incessant and Prolonged Strikes: Teachers have many times downed tools and gone on strikes to protest not only their very poor salaries and emoluments, but the epileptic and irregular payment of these accruals. Strikes in the school system have been allowed to go on for as long as 18 months in some states in Nigeria, while in some states 7 months are about the mean. All categories of respondents alluded to the issue of strike as a very prominent contributory factor to the dropping out of boys from school. One out-of-school boy in Lagos who is 20 years old and apprenticed to an automobile spare parts dealer said

I left school 7 years ago as a result of the strike action embarked upon by our teachers. What do you want me to be doing for the 8 months during which our teachers were on strike? The first time they went on strike, it was for 3 months. I roamed the streets doing nothing. Immediately the next strike commenced, I decided I was not going to waste my time. I got accepted by my present master. Even when the strike was called off after 9 months, I lost faith in school for I was not sure when the next strike will be. I stuck on to my apprenticeship and towards the end of next year; my master will set me up since I am almost through with my apprenticeship. I have lost nothing.

THE FIVE EASTERN STATES (ABIA, ANAMBRA, EBONYI, ENUGU AND IMO)

Magnitude and Dimension of the Problem

Conception of boys' drop out in the five Eastern States

In this section of the Report, an insight will also be given on what and how the various respondents; with the exception of the State Agency for Mass Education (SAME) Directors in the Eastern States perceive the enormity of the boys' drop out phenomenon. Some of the respondents opine that boys' drop out problem is perhaps exaggerated and even politicized. This view point is supported even by some university academics who feel that the enrollment rates of the males in tertiary institutions does not justify all the clamour about boys drop out problem in that geopolitical zone. Another school of thought also presents a perspective that is not far from what we observed in the northern cities. That is the fact that a boy should not be

seen as a drop out if he starts a level of the educational systems (primary, junior secondary, senior secondary) and completes it. In this case, if a boy starts primary 1 and finished primary 6 but did not move in to the junior secondary, such a boy to these respondents is not a drop out, or if he starts JSS 1, stayed on to JSS 3 but did not move on to the senior secondary school (SSS), he is not a drop out. So for them, each level is distinct, complete and sufficient, and a student does not necessarily need to proceed to the next level if he does not so desire. The dimension added by the respondents in the east here is that going into trading is a form of continuation of education which is even more functional and relevant to the needs of the individuals. To them continuation with western education does not guarantee self-reliance (in the short term that is), but learning a trade does. From this perspective the respondents think that there is no problem of boys' drop out in the East.

Even with this added dimension of the logic from the East, the respondents' conception and interpretation of drop out is untenable if not out rightly illogical since as we stated above education is a continuous process, and since it is the least of acquisition of schooling from primary 1 to JSS 3 that is currently regarded in Nigeria as basic education (UBE Policy Document, 2000), then a primary 6 boy not proceeding to the Senior Secondary School level or any other formal schooling equivalent, but moves into the informal sector is technically a school drop out.

Magnitude and Dimension

In all the five Eastern States, the prevalence of boys dropping out of school is evidently increasing. Virtually all respondents from the different target groups surveyed in the field are of the opinion that in spite of the obvious benefits of formal education which the average core Eastern States' indigene is aware of, the magnitude of boys dropping out of school is quite high and is not abetting. The respondents aver that the evidence of this increasing trend is the fact that many young males who are supposed to be in formal schools are involved in all kinds business like selling in "go-slow supermarkets" where they hawk commodities like electrical gadgets, recharge cards, fuel et cetera. A huge proportion of the boys are also learning in which they are apprenticed to master mechanics, vehicle spare – part dealers, building material dealers etc. According to the respondents, this trend is an indictment on the government of Nigeria that is neither unable to retain its young citizens in school nor provide employment for those that have been trained, thereby discouraging even more people from staying in school; an obvious vicious cycle. One respondent asserted:

"The government is paying lip-service to this problem of boys' retention in schools. If the government is serious, it should have made non-formal education part of UBE"

It is pertinent to point out here that although the completion rates at the NFE Centers are high, dropout syndrome is beginning to creep into the system in the Eastern States. In Enugu and Imo States, and some extent the other States, the apathy of government support in running the NFE Centres, especially with reference to payment of the Instructors has hampered the smooth-running of the programmes. The recurrent complaint from all stakeholders in the States is that irregular payment of the instructors'

emoluments creates apathy, and the apathy in turn affects the attendance of the learners and we are seeing evidence of dropouts with the protracted absence of their teachers.

Causes of Boys' Dropout

A cross section of the various respondents in the Eastern States for whom in-depth key-informant interviews and/or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held, adduced a myriad of reasons or causes that are contributory to the boys' drop out phenomenon in this geo-political zone. Among these are:

Low Returns on Education: The high level of unemployment in Nigeria is a cardinal pointer to this. The fact is that very many young people who have invested the time, money and effort to acquire formal education even at the tertiary levels are roaming the streets unemployed. The impression therefore is that the low returns from education are not encouraging for most young people to stay in school. As one opinion leader in Anambra asserted:

It is bad enough that we have to starve ourselves to send our children to school. It is even worse that these children who are supposed to be investments, turn out to be liabilities even after several years of formal education. I really do not blame parents who withdraw their children from school to learn trades for immediate returns.

Opinion Leader in Anambra

Logical as this may sound, education is a worthy investment and trains the mind to attain limitless possibilities. Convincing community members in this regard requires a lot of effort and should be priority for advocacy and community mobilization in the Eastern States.

Parental/Family Poverty: Economic deprivation evidenced by parental poverty, which is very prevalent in Nigeria is another contributory factor. With the high level of poverty most parents are unable to meet the financial obligations to keep their children in school. This trend is particularly evident in Ebonyi and Enugu States visited by the researchers, where the inability to pay children's school fees and levies, purchase schooling materials, provide money for midday meals and refreshment, parents either encourage their children to drop out of school or support their readiness to abandon the formal school system for the informal sector.

What is in it for most of us? It is very difficult to convince parents not to withdraw their children from school when they cannot afford the basics for survival. Even if the ordinary school fees are free, what of the maintenance of the children in school....? Their books, feeding and "illegal dues" charged by the teachers. For most parents it is better for us all to survive without education than pay the fees and starve...."

Opinion Leader – Ebonyi

As evident in other parts of the country, parental poverty was also expressed to reflect partly in household poverty, where the family is so poor that the daily focus is survival. The kind of situation of course directly impacts heavily on the child's learning achievement in other ways, notably through its effects on food security and nutritional health. A hungry child or a sickly one is best described as "at-risk child" and can actually not make much out of school, and will rather be involved in ventures that can be income – generating than be in school where he cannot concentrate in academic pursuits.

Lack of basic social infrastructure is another index of poverty that makes it extremely difficult for many Nigerian parents to provide an enabling and stimulating home environment conducive to learning. Many parents cannot provide enough or even basic reading materials for their children, simply because they cannot afford it. Other fundamental services taken for granted in other parts of the world like electricity, portable water are very hard to come by here. In situations where they have to use improvised light sources to do academic work, and spend a good proportion of their time fetching water, coupled with poor nutritional status, achievement becomes untenable and frustration would lead to drop out.

Warped Societal Values: There is emerging evidence that warped societal values are contributing to the trend of boys dropping out from school in the Eastern States. The evidence of this development which is supported by opinion leaders and academics in the East is that young boys are fuzzed by the "get-rich-quick" syndrome. Little value is placed on hard work or postponement of gratification. In actual fact, the boys and their parents are equally guilty of this vice. While the parents are not eager to invest in education and wait for the long-term benefits, the boys themselves want it right now.

This syndrome in Igbo is called: "*Oba-na-nwata*". That literally means amassing immense wealth as a young boy, so that you can spend the rest of your life enjoying it. As an opinion leader said in Abia State:

Oba-na-nwata is the bane of our society. They all want to be rich overnight, build double-decker houses and ride in fancy jeep cars. They are all impatient and in a hurry, and can crush any obstacle on their way to achieving these"
Opinion leader in Abia State.

Insufficient Time to Devote to Learning: There is no doubt that scholastic achievement is time consuming venture, and therefore requires the investment of painstaking effort to make retention and retrieval easy as well as bring out the cognitive potentials in the learner. The logic therefore is that when learners are unable to devote adequate time and effort to their academic pursuits due to distractions occasioned by engaging in income generating activities, farming, or heavy domestic chores, something has to give, and usually, it is the academic work. When this trend prevails for a long period of time, the consequence could be dropout. The above mentioned scenario appears to capture the causative factors mentioned by a number of the children surveyed in the East particularly the commercial nerve centers of Nnewi and Onitsha. In their own words:

There is too much business going on around here. It is very tempting not to engage in it (have a piece of the action). There is always the need to make the extra cash because we have to support ourselves and send money home. Although I know that education will benefit me ultimately, survival is optimum. Combining school and business is not easy at all. But man must wack (eat)"
Respondent in NFE Center, Nnewi

I did not want to drop out of school, but I just could not cope. I am however very happy that I have the opportunity at the NFE Center. Now that I am older and have more energy I should do better"
NFE Respondent in Onitsha

Lack of Appreciation of the Value and Importance of Education: The lack of appreciation of the value and importance of education as a vehicle for human personal and societal development is perhaps a major contributory factor to the trend in boys' dropout in the Eastern States. This geopolitical zone has always been reputed for education, but it does seem as if there is a downward trend in that respect with one of the resultant consequences being the boys' dropout syndrome. This view was corroborated by all the academics surveyed in the East as well as the SAME Directors. The consensus of opinion is that if the level of sensitization is high enough, we will be able to curtail dropout rates. In the event however that boys drop out of school, they will appreciate and realize the value of education, struggle against all odds to remain in school all in an effort to ensure a more secured future for themselves and their families. A corollary to this of course is that enlightening parents on the value and importance of education should encourage them to be more prudent in expending their resources judiciously on the education of their children, rather than on mundane issues that are less valuable than the very positive investment that is education.

Lack of Political Will and Commitment: There is a consensus of opinion among our respondents in the Eastern States that governments of successive regimes in Nigeria (civilian and military) have left much to be desired in terms of their political will/support to the education sector. In fact one academic asserted:

There are a number of policy issues around education in Nigeria and around the Non-Formal Education sector in particular. The governments have been unserious and been paying lip service to a serious business like education. It is a big pity indeed that they politicize everything and mortgage the future of our children and this otherwise great nation"

A University Academic, Nsukka.

The issue of political will, or apparent lack of it, in terms of funding of education was harped on in all the States visited. All the SAME Directors as well as opinion leaders bitterly complained about the difficulty of paying the NFE instructors. With the exception of Abia, where the State Government has mandated the Local Government authorities to pay all the NFE Instructors, it is the same tale of woe everywhere else. Most of the Instructors in all the other States (*Eke-Awka, Anambra for example and Mechanic Village, Amakohia near Owerri*) are serving out of the spirit of volunteerism, and to a considerable extent because they have established rapport with the learners, and would not want to let them down. In the present day Nigeria however, it is quite difficult to sustain that, and the need for urgent intervention is expedient.

Peer Influence: Educational and psychological literature is replete with evidence of the strong influence that peer pressure can have on youngsters. As children grow, develop, and move into early adolescence, involvement with one's peers and the attraction of peer identification increases. As pre-adolescents begin rapid physical, emotional and social changes, they begin to question adult standards and the need for parental guidance. They find it reassuring to turn for advice to friends who understand and sympathize — friends who are in the same position as themselves. By "trying on" new values and testing their ideas with their peers, there is with less fear of being ridiculed.

This is particularly true in the Nigerian context where many other negative variables like poverty, family conflicts, political insincerity, and religious confusion abound. These help to compound the positive thinking and orientation of people who can easily be swayed by their peers to abandon positive values for their own gang values. There have been very many instances, (as evident in the findings from the field) where boys dropped out of school due to peer pressure. We have corroborative evidence from Industrial Market in Umuahia, Abia State and Ihitte-Uboma in Imo State. The case of one respondent at the Industrial Market in Umuahia is particularly interesting because, he has not only registered at the UNICEF-supported NFE Center but actually taken the JSS Examinations and passed all his papers. Excerpts from his remarks:

I was in secondary school for only three terms. I left because my best friends left to go for trading and were making some money. Even though some of those friends left because they were not doing well, but in my case I was doing very well. I regret taking that decision. Thank God for the NFE Centers and for UNICEF. I now have the opportunity to improve myself educationally. In fact I aspire to go even to University.

Poor Academic Achievement and Poor Motivation in School: The combined variables of Poor Academic Achievement and Poor Motivation in School have very strong correlation with dropping out from school. When students achieve optimally, the motivation to be retained in school is high. The converse is also true. In situations where a student is achieving poorly, there is the tendency to be frustrated and consequently drop out of school. This perspective is strongly corroborated by the views expressed by many of our respondents. Some of the boys themselves confessed that with their level of poor performance, staying in school was a monumental waste of their parents' meager resources and a waste of their own time too. Parents also feel that when a child does not have the intellect for academic work ("*onweghi isi akwukwo*") the better option would be to send such children to learn trade or go into some other commercial ventures than continuing in school.

Incessant and Prolonged Strikes: The frequent disruption of school academic programmes by incessant work-to-rule and strike actions by teachers are contributory factors to the boys' dropout phenomenon. These strikes precipitated by a myriad of reasons including protest for non payment of salaries and emoluments, but the epileptic and irregular payment of these accruals. There is evidence in the past that strikes in the school system have been allowed to go on for as long as 18 months in some states in Nigeria, (Anambra and Imo) while in some states 7 months are about the mean. All categories of our respondents alluded to the issue of strike as a very prominent contributory factor to the dropping out of boys from school. Parents feel that the long wait for teachers to return to school was a colossal waste of time and could be used judiciously in learning a trade. Usually when these children drop out, it is very difficult if not impossible to return to school as most of them would have experienced the ability to earn money outside of the school system, which returning to school cannot offer.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF BOYS' DROP OUT IN NIGERIA

Continued interest is being taken in the problem of boys' drop out in Nigeria and various bodies like the federal government, UNICEF, other International Development Partners, Non-governmental Organizations and Community-Based Organizations are contributing their own quota to stemming the tide of Boys' Drop Out in Nigeria.

UNICEF/FGN/STATES INTERVENTION

At the UNICEF/FGN level, there is a lot of collaboration to carry out research as well as implement intervention strategies. The Nigerian Government and UNICEF have demonstrated how community involvement in boys' education can make the difference. There are a number of child-friendly community programmes which have resulted in many communities benefiting. Other interventions are UNICEF, the FGN and the States are captured under the following categories:

Mobilization Strategy

UNICEF has long recognized the positive influence of community participatory cooperation in the success of any intervention programme. In this regard, opinion leaders, community based organizations and traditional heads have been instrumental to mobilizing their subjects in the wake-up call for sustained boys' education.

In the Rigasa Community of Kaduna State, for example, UNICEF colorful posters disseminating the message of the benefits of basic formal education adorned the walls of the Secretariat of the District Head. These posters, which send out messages in the most convivial presentation; according to the District Head (during the key format interview) forms one major picturesque way of mobilizing his subjects. Other ways include sensitization during "cabinet meetings" and the giving of blessings to workshops that have centred around provision of basic literacy to the residents of the community. With the solemn declaration and willingness of the Community Head along with his village Chiefs to support the basic literacy scheme, more literacy classes were being opened in Rigasa Community. The Community Head who himself is a retired Permanent Secretary has this to say: "I am prepared to mobilize my people because I myself have drank from the spring of formal education and I know it is refreshing".

Rigasa Community is not the only example of positive results of mobilization strategies that have been strongly initiated, funded and supported by UNICEF. In Iheaka in Igbo-Eze South LGA in Enugu State, the office of the Village Educational Committee (VEC) chairperson is also adorned with these UNICEF posters and handbills. The VEC chairperson commented that the initial impression people had in the community was that UNICEF gave the VEC a lot of money, and as such they sort of abandoned VEC with the NFE initiative. With intense mobilization and sensitization, things have changed for the better and there is now a high degree of commitment to the NFE programmes and activities in the community.

Educational Material Needs Development

Working in collaboration with the various State Agencies for Mass Education, UNICEF has contributed immensely to the development of learning materials used in many NFE centers. The UNICEF-developed primers in basic literacy is found in all the NFE Centers visited and report has it that they are infact the basic texts in almost if not all NFE Centers. Though some centers reported the short supply of these primers, they are nevertheless the course book of first choice along with the FGN/EEC (European Economic Community) books in subjects where the UNICEF primers are not available.

The posters and charts developed by UNICEF singly or atimes in collaboration with other bodies like UNESCO often serve to meet the clarion call for promotion of literacy in many communities and NFE centers. Supply of exercise books and other materials is another response of UNICEF to the promotion of basic literacy not only among male dropouts but indeed among all learners in NFE Centers.

Self Help Initiatives

Level/Extent of response to the literacy campaign can be assessed by the enthusiasm with which the people of a community embrace the literacy programme. This obviously varies from one community to another. It can safely be said that the people of Shakwata – a rural community, about 10kms away from Minna are enthusiastic about the literacy programme. With the building of 2 model classrooms made of blocks by UNICEF for the early child care programme, the people of Shakwata village are building another block of 2 large spacious classrooms modeled after UNICEF's design. "These classrooms will help us cater for the overcrowding which is already beginning to happen in UNICEF classrooms as you can see. This is the result of my people and the people of the surrounding villages responding to the call of government that we educate our children. If UNICEF is helping us, we must also help ourselves, since it is for our own good" is the remark of the enthusiastic village leader. Also seen were the top slabs for the VIP toilet donated by UNICEF to be used as soon as the community completes the basic structure of the toilet which at the time of visit is under construction. The people are excited about the toilet and are assiduously working to complete their own side of the bargain with the visible sight of the top slabs serving as impetus. UNICEF is not only promoting basic education in the community, but is integrating it with health facilities, using the strategy of self effort to get the community committed to the project.

At one of the CENFET Centers in Lagos, the Trader's Association of Ladipo Market made available their Association Hall for use as the NFE Center. The Association not only also donated seats (chairs with writing arms) to complement the ones brought into the Centre by CENFET, but ensures that meetings and/or any other Association activities take place in the Hall only outside the agreed upon lesson periods. The Association spokesman said the gesture is necessary since the lessons being given them have made and is making some of them gain what they lost in the years after they dropped out of school.

In Kano where an individual initiated the commencement of an NFE Centre to cater for his kinsmen, the Agency for Mass Education has recognized the Centre and this explained why staff of the Agency facilitated our visit to the Centre. The Centre which operates from 8pm to 10pm has a population of over 500 males with ages ranging between 12 and 40 at different levels of basic literacy acquisition. The Centre uses UNICEF primers, but they were in very acute short supply. Though the Centre operates in an existing public secondary school, each learner

contributes five naira (N5.00) weekly to cater for the purchase of fuel for the generators (2 small ones) which they bought from their own contributions, since the school is not connected to public power supply. It is also from the contribution that other consumables like chalk and duster are purchased. These male learners have discovered that acquiring basic literacy will improve the quality of their lives on several fronts and are therefore prepared to help themselves.

In Uruagu in Anambra State, the Obi of Uruagu near Nnewi initially made available his palace as the NFE Center. Subsequently, through community self-help initiative, a five classroom NFE Center is under construction. Members of the community through her VEC also make contributions of consumables like chalk, duster, writing paper and furniture.

Also at the Industrial Market in Umuahia, Abia State, the members of the traders association have, through self-help effort mustered resources to construct a classroom block for the NFE center. The beneficiaries of the programmes appreciate the benefits derived from the NFE and one of them commented that he is able to write receipts and invoices which are very important aspect of his business professional life. Many were not able to do this prior to their enrollment with the NFE Center.

Quranic Integrated Literacy Strategy

The war against illiteracy is a war that must be won would appear to be what UNICEF is saying in its efforts to integrate formal western education into the Quranic Schools. The Quranic schools traditionally cater for knowledge acquisition of the Quran via the rote learning method, especially in the elementary level Quranic schools. The introduction of formal literacy has until about the last 8 to 10 years been vehemently resisted by the Mallams or Quranic teachers. However, the resistance is giving way. In the three Northern cities (Kano, Kaduna and Minna) visited, examples exist of Quranic Schools accepting the inclusion of basic literacy in the curriculum. It must also quickly be said that there are scores and scores of Quranic schools where inclusion of literacy has not been accepted; and also that there is infact the need for real integration where the full compliment of the subjects taught in the formal school system will be taught on the Quranic Schools.

In the schools where there is integration, the modus operandi is that the Mallams allow a teacher recruited by the State Agency for Mass Education, to come in for about 2 hours a day (in most cases in the centers visited, the 2 hours are 4pm – 6pm) to teach basic literacy and numeracy. UNICEF, more often than not, was found to have been instrumental in the training of the literacy instructor. Also, UNICEF- developed primers are used though also found in use are the FGN/EEC primers.

UNICEF has continued to take very active steps in addressing the role of Quranic schools vis-à-vis children's access to quality formal education as evidenced in the Consultative Workshop held at UNICEF headquarter in October, 2003, as well as the Kano Pilot Project on integration of general subjects into the Quranic Schools' Curriculum. In the Kano project, four subjects were introduced into the Quranic school curriculum, and more hours are devoted to formal education acquisition.

As a result of integration of basic education elements for the Quranic schools, scores of out-of school children now have a chance to acquire basic education as well as a vocational skill introduced into the programme. Bala Ishaya, a boy of about 12 years proudly called out the various figures pointed to on the numerals table met on the chalkboard in a Quranic School in

Kano. Usman though older (aged 18 years) could not perform as well as Bala since he had just recently (about 8 months ago) joined the class from his nomadic activities. Similarly in Kaduna and Minna, over-aged primary school boys found in the Quranic NFE Centers just accessing basic education performed fairly well as reading short sentences and adding simple figures when tested by this writer. The staff of the Agency for Mass Education in Kano said that “we are not unhappy with the progress these boys are making judging by their background.” Indeed the background of rote learning by which learning goes in the recitation of the Quran has heavily influenced the pedagogic technique employed by many of the basic literacy instructors. One of them said that it is difficult for them to adopt any other teaching technique since these boys daily have a heavy dozen of rote learning and that if they want their 2 hours a day to be meaningful and fruitful, the only choice available is not to strongly dislodge the orientation of the learners. The observed situation and the avowed assertion by the NFE instructor call for in-depth examination and study by UNICEF and other researchers.

Meeting Them at Their Posts: The Outreach Approach

Boys dropped out of school in most cases in Nigeria (as already documented in this and other reports) to engage in income – generating activities or learn some particular line of trades. They are not interested in going to any place called school. So, any attempt to lure them back or rekindle their interest in schooling has to bring the school not too far from them and at hours not “injurious” to their business. UNICEF has recognized this and has given strong support to initiatives that meet these boys at their posts. One such initiative is that of CENFET in Lagos that has NFE Centers within the market premises at Ladipo and Yaba. UNICEF collaborated heavily with CENFET at the beginning of its activities and for about 5 years post conception, through training the staff of CENFET, training instructors recruited by CENFET, supplying of primers to CENFET, and provision of strong moral and psychological support to both CENFET staff and the boys CENFET was working with. This same approach has met with tremendous success in Awka (Eke-Awka) and Nnewi (Main Market) as well as Umuahia (Industrial Market) where the young attendees who are constrained by time due to the nature of the business have the benefit on on-site school with close proximity to their business locale.

Research Initiative

Research is the bedrock of good ideas and a fertile ground for the giving of insights to the various dimensions of any issue, problem or concept. The world has gained and is still gaining tremendously from the fruits of research. UNICEF as a pro-active establishment values research appropriately and has never taken research to the back burner in any issue, programme or project.

Collaborating with academics, UNICEF has commissioned and funded a number of research and survey studies on boys’ dropout in the South Eastern Zone where the phenomenon of boys/ drop out has taken an alarming dimension. UNICEF is not leaving anything to chances and in probably not wanting a similar alarming situation in the North is studying the phenomenon early so as to intervene early before any snowballing into a crisis dimension. The project giving rise to this report is another testimony to UNICEF’s effort in the regard of research.

Learner-Friendly School Initiative

Schools have to be learner-friendly if they have to attract learners and make impact on them. With UNICEF's assistance, a fairly large number of learner friendly schools exist in various communities. In these schools, the surrounding has aesthetic beauty; the classrooms are large, the building is solid; impressive, imposing and educative posters adorn the classrooms; clean toilets are available; water points exist to meet the needs of pupils; books and other learning materials are also available.

This learner-friendly schools influence positively the psyche of the pupils, making school interesting to them and learning not appear such a rigour. Bala Bello in Minna "feels like a person in this school environment than the terse environment with dilapidated buildings in the school before (he) I dropped out of school". The psychological effect does not appear to be only on the learners, it also rubs off on the teachers (instructors) who comment that better and result-oriented "teaching takes place in a relaxed atmosphere". The NFE initiative of the Girls Brigade in Onitsha Anambra State also corroborates the above. Incorporating vocational skills like soap-making and photography, based on prior needs-assessment, and provided in learner-learner friendly environment availed the learners of the opportunity of functional educational experience that positively impacted their lives.

SOCIAL RESPONSE BY OTHERS

Civil society organizations have also responded to the problem of boys' drop out in Nigeria adopting two major strategies.

Awareness Creation

"My people perish for lack of knowledge" says one of the Holy Books. The Civil Society organizations seem to believe this saying very strongly and this probably explains the time and assiduous effort they put into creating awareness about the value of formal education. Many of them have fliers promoting the value of education, they organize seminars for members in their immediate communities where they are based, they assemble youths and talk to them.

Multi-Pronged Approach

Since it has been discovered from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and other research efforts that one of the reasons why boys dropped out of school is to seek means of livelihood early enough to cater for the now and the later; NGOs involved in boys' drop out education are employing the multi-pronged approach. Most of them run NFE Centres with the Centre serving multi purposes as enumerated below:

Catering for boys who have not accessed basic education, and/or those who did not complete the primary school level before dropping out. Each person is sorted out to his level through a simple test. CARE NGO in Kaduna has developed her own IEC materials for teaching the basic and post basic level learners taking care to make them have functional use to the learner. Examples of these materials can be seen in Appendices 2 and 3. Forward Africa in Owerri Imo State lays more emphasis on business education and entrepreneurial skills for the boys. Mainstreaming to the formal sector is also encouraged.

The boys are encouraged to take the Common Entrance Examination to secondary schools and FLAN Educare, CENFET and Agape in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State have success stories of boys who had been admitted into State secondary schools.

- Caring for boys who have not completed the junior secondary level since they dropped out before taking the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSSCE). Classes are organized for these boys and they are later enrolled in through government approved secondary schools to take the JSCCE. Centre for Islamic Resurgence in Minna that has success stories of boys who have been registered for the JSSCE and passed.
- Catering for boys who did not complete the senior secondary school. Intensive classes are conducted for the boys of this level, and they are also like the boys at the JSS level enrolled via a government school for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). Many of the NGOs visited run classes for this category of boys.
- Provision of skill acquisition opportunity is a feature of some of the NGOs running NFE Centres. Learners are given opportunities to learn one basic skill – tailoring, soap making, knitting, and hair dressing. This is an important dimension and a value-added component for the learners. This prepares and/or helps the learners to have focus on livelihood – sustaining means and make them feel confident while accessing formal education that the fear of being financially deprived after completing schooling need not be there.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF BOYS' DROP OUT IN NIGERIA

Impact of UNICEF – Supported Interventions

UNICEF – Supported interventions have led to:

- Awareness and knowledge of the magnitude, pattern, dimension and contributory causes of the problem. This has been made possible or achieved essentially through research and survey studies funded by UNICEF.
- Sensitization of the government, the general public, the communities/ zones with the higher prevalence of boys' drop out, Civil Society Organizations as well as the dropouts themselves to the problem and the consequences of not addressing the problem early.
- Attainment of basic literacy by some of the drop outs.
- Improvement of the educational attainment of a number of the boys' dropouts.
- Progressive and steady march towards the achievement of the goals of EFA and the MDGs.
- Improvement in the quality of life of the drop outs.
- Strengthening of political will on the need for policy frameworks for re-educating the boys left behind educationally.
- Re-enactment of the value for education of the yesteryears.
- Establishing systematic mechanisms of data collection, development of relevant indicators and the integration of data relating to boys' participation in education.
- Intensification of advocacy with government and all other stakeholders in the education of the boy child.
- Supporting government in ensuring quality education through establishing policy dialogue and setting standards for quality education.
- Capacity building for Civil Society Organizations in methods of addressing the learning needs of adult learners.

SUCCESS STORIES/BEST PRACTICES IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF BOYS' DROPOUT

There are success stories of some good practices that have been operational in Nigeria and other countries.

- **Nigeria**

The success stories in Nigeria are based both on literature and the findings from the fieldwork of this project report. It should be pointed out that the few success stories found in Nigeria are with NGOs working with out- of- school children.

(1). An NGO called **Human Development Foundation of Nigeria** works with children (both boys and girls) under 'difficult circumstances – the blind beggars, severely disabled, extremely poor and orphan. Basic education is provided by some group in a model primary school to these disadvantaged groups in U/Rimi G.R.A. in Kaduna. These children go begging with their parents daily from morning till 12 noon (as part of the agreement for them to attend school). Thereafter, they go home, have their bath, wear their uniform and go to school which lasts from 1 pm – 5 pm (Monday to Friday). Each day, they have a hot meal (lunch) as an incentive for them to keep up attendance in school. The foundation trains them free from Nursery to Primary 6. The first set performed well and many of them gained admission into State Secondary Schools. Some of the pupils are also enrolled in the Foundation's vocational centre where cookery, basic hygiene and sewing are taught to them four times a week.

(2). **Care Action NGO**, another NGO in Kaduna runs an integrated NFE Centre. It integrates formal learning with vocational training and also encourages the learners to belong to the Centre-run Cooperative and Thrift Society. Graduates are encouraged to come back to the centre to help in whatever way they can – at the vocational training section or as peer tutors to the basic literacy learners. The NGO operates a symbiotic system of volunteerism – where instructors volunteer to teach and in return access all the other facilities of the NGO free, e.g. computer training etc.

Care Action NGO also has a Primary Health Centre (PHC) located within the modest complex which learners can access though the PHC is also accessible to the members of the immediate community. The NGO has a counseling division where learners are given opportunity one-on-one in a private discussion-friendly room to discuss and navigate through the various problems besetting them.

(3). **CENFET** in Lagos runs centres at flexible hours. In the centres sited within the markets, classes run at early part of the business hours before business picks up in earnest, and also in the later hours of business, about 5 p.m. when again there is a plateau in the business trend.

An NGO in Kano runs NFE centres from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. since these are the hours that are more convenient for the learners.

(4) **FLAN Educare** is an NGO in Lagos that integrates vocational skills with the basic literacy programme. The boys who are not apprenticed in any trade are apprenticed to masters in the boys' own profession of choice and the NGO part-pays the cost of training. Thus the learner is kept busy during the period of non activity in the Centre. At present, there are boys apprenticed to master carpenters and there is one who is about to complete his training in photography.

(5) **Centre for Islamic Resurgence** in Minna runs Quranic education with general subjects for both males and females, howbeit, at different times and not as a co-educational setup. The females have their sessions at hours that permit them to attend

to the care of their households – classes run from 10am to 12 noon and from 4 pm – 6 pm. The males have their classes from 8 am to 1 pm, and from 4 pm to 7 pm. Skills acquisition is part of the curriculum for both genders. The Centre is highly learner-friendly with aesthetic surroundings, neat classrooms with posters and charts; the classrooms are quite spacious and the class size is adequate.

(6). Humadu Initiative, Obowo LGA, Imo State

The concept of “Humadu” literally meaning brotherhood or fraternity or better still “love thy neighbour” is an NGO/CBO operating in Obowo Local Government Area in Imo State. The emphasis of the organization is to improve the lot of the rural community members in which it is located in specific areas like –poverty alleviation, literacy skills acquisition, micro-credit provision to local business folks and farmers and agro-technical assistance. The boys education initiative emerged out of the need to address the community problem of young males abandoning educational pursuits to emigrate to the cities as well as neighbouring African countries of Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon. In this regards, through community awareness, advocacy and skills acquisition initiatives, this NGO has been tackling this problem.

(7). Agape Foundation for Literacy and Rural Development, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

Founded in 1994, Agape Foundation for Literacy and Rural Development’s major focus is on literacy drive and improvement in Ebonyi State which is perhaps the most educationally disadvantaged of the five Eastern States. Due to the high prevalence of poverty in the area, for most of the boys, survival is fundamental for them, and most are forced out of school for economic pursuits. Agape Foundation’s boys education intervention is designed in such a way that through community awareness and sensitization/mobilization, the boys involved in their programmes are supported to pursue their economic interests during the morning hours, and then attend school in the late afternoon/evening period. Due to the fact that early marriage is a major problem in the area, they have put in place Child Care facilities for school-going young mothers/fathers, which really encourage school retention.

(8). Forward Africa, an Owerri-based NGO works with youth on an innovative concept called Enterprise Development Programme (EDP). EDP is designed to expose the hidden potentials of our youth in-school and out-of-school within the age bracket 15-35 years to greater opportunities that abound in the country. The Programme is operated on the principle that out-of-school youth, that is those that have dropped out of school and are in the non-formal education sector do have potentials that can be harnessed. Forward Africa has developed three basic programmes which are tools for equipping our youth with entrepreneurial skills and support to be successful business men and women, with or without formal education. These are Beginners, Continuity and Job Placement. The NGO has a counseling division where programme beneficiaries are given opportunities of one-on-one private discussion, in a youth-friendly environment to benefit from business counselling, and also discuss and navigate through other challenges facing them in other spheres of life.

(9). National Adult Training Center, Umuahia, Abia State.

National Adult Training Center, (NATC) in Umuahia, is an NGO that integrates vocational skills with the basic literacy programme for boys in the State. Through sensitization and community mobilization, they recruit boys in Umuahia and environs, who are out of school and working as apprentices. In situations where they are not learning any trades yet, they are apprenticed to masters in the boys' own profession of choice and the NGO part-pays the cost of training. The high point of their strategy is to incorporate co-curricular activities, especially soccer (football) to retain their interests in the academic part of their programmes.

(10). Mutli-Educational Services Trust (MEST)

Founded in 1998, MEST's focus is to empower boys through the integration of formal learning with vocational skills training. Through the strategies of advocacy, market rallies/community mobilization and opinion leaders sensitization, MEST has established 21 centers in and around Nsukka and it has a follow-up system of encouraging their graduates to return to the centre to help in whatever way they can – at the vocational training section or as peer tutors to the basic literacy learners.

(11). Anambra State Government-UNIDO Skills Acquisition/Academic Trades Programme:

This initiative is designed in such a way that young men who have not had the opportunity of formal education or those who have dropped out of school and are in some trade or business entrepreneurship are encouraged to register for the Anambra State Government-UNIDO Institute, where they learn trades/acquire skills and are given the opportunity to practice such skills in "industrial school" situated on-site. On completion, the graduates are given soft loans to establish small scale industrial concern, which they will run independently. Though still a concept, but this initiative holds tremendous promise in battling the boys' dropout phenomenon especially in the eastern States, since it potentially provides a premise for functional education which is directly relevant to the ultimate needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Guidance and Counseling Curriculum — The Franklin Pierce Model The central feature of the Franklin-Pierce model is a guidance curriculum for teaching navigational and planning skills students need to get the most out of middle school and high school and to plan and prepare for their post-graduate lives. Navigation classes meet twice a month and teachers and students stay together throughout the students' four-year career. The teacher is a personal advisor for purposes of course selection, advice about postsecondary planning and goals, and connections to internships, job shadows, and other career-related experiences. As part of the coursework, each student prepares a portfolio. Students plan and lead a conference each spring with their parents to show their work and discuss their progress.

The Pyramid of Intervention is used in San Diego County schools. The "Pyramid" includes "tiers" of in-school interventions. The first tier includes a student support team, a progress report every 3 weeks, a freshman mentor program, a "good friend" counselor watch, and a summer program for high school survival skills. The second tier includes case study evaluations, student support groups, a mentor program, a guided study program, weekly progress reports, and mandatory tutoring. San Diego has been extremely successful at reducing the dropout rate in their schools using this model. A contact for this program is Janet Malone who can be reached at jmalone@powayusd.com, (858) 748-0010, ext. 2235.

Enriched Learning Opportunities that provide additional support through a variety of approaches: tutorials, double class periods in targeted content areas such as math or language, before or after-school homework clubs, or activity periods, Saturday school, and summer school. These programs often are intended to help students complete homework and critical courses, and many provide incentives to increase student attendance. Many enriched learning opportunities can be developed through school/community partnerships (see below).

Alternative Programs are akin to schools-within-a-school or pullout programs of various sorts. Alternative classrooms may operate as a self-contained classroom within a traditional school and simply offer varied programs to serve at-risk students. Schools within a school may be housed in traditional schools but offer specialized programs. Some may be quite autonomous. Schools without walls may be attached to the traditional school, but deliver educational and training programs at various community locations, perhaps as work-related opportunities. Two models noted in the OSPI report are:

Schools within Schools may be created for at-risk students and often are organized by academic or career interests. Schools within schools may identify students with certain risk factors and schedule them together for academic or social support. Some high schools have implemented an interdisciplinary team approach for ninth grade students.

Talent Development Schools incorporate a number of in-school approaches. School academies are organized around a "ninth-grade success academy" and supplemented with extra time and opportunity for making up failed credits, learning content and skills that may have been missed, and developing study and social skills through special classes. Upper grades in these schools are organized into career academies.

Alternative Schools or learning centers may have a specific focus or theme. For example, they may focus on parenting skills and/or offer special job skills. They may be located in business environments (in store fronts), community centers, or they may have buildings constructed for their needs. These schools are generally characterized by small numbers of students, caring cultures, and relative autonomy in governance. Cited models of alternative schools include:

Magnet and Charter Schools are types of alternative schools that have potential to serve students at risk of dropping out. These categories of schools are commonly called schools of choice. Magnet schools typically focus on selected curriculum areas with specialized teachers. Charter schools may be theme oriented or implement other features around program, behavior, or expectations. Charter schools can now operate in this state as autonomous educational entities that receive state support without having to meet the usual regulatory provisions of public schools.

Cyber Schools, or virtual schools, are a recent addition to the list of potential alternative schools available for dropout prevention or recovery. Although online learning and virtual classrooms may be a workable approach for some students, issues and concerns arise over accountability, quality of education, and the impact of limited or sporadic contact with other people.

School/Community Partnerships

A wide variety of supportive services and activities for youth can be delivered through school/community partnerships. A national model for such partnerships is **Communities in Schools (CIS)**, an organization that mobilizes local leaders to provide out-of-school activities and services as well as in-school programming. CIS is a national network of community-based organizations affiliated with America's Promise" that focus on preventing dropouts. There are several local Communities in Schools organizations in Washington State affiliated with school districts and engaging foundations, businesses, social service agencies, and community organizations. See www.cisnet.org for national information or contact Linda Hendrickson with the state organization at www.cis-wa.org, (206) 461-3886.

Another model for these partnerships is in the **Communities That Care** model developed at the University of Washington. This model focuses on reducing risk and protective factors in the local community. A national website for information is www.channing-bete.com/positiveyouth/pages/CTC/CTC.html. The Seattle School District uses this model (see www.seattleschools.org/area/ctc/comcore.xml).

Mentoring: Create positive adult and youth interaction through mentoring. Mentoring takes many forms but essentially matches individuals to provide guidance and support in one-on-one relationships or in small groups. Students may be mentored by teachers, community members, or older students. Mentoring may include academic support but does not always. Personal support, social support, and career exploration are also contexts for mentoring.

II. Intervention — Retrieval

Dropouts into Diplomas is a national program that specializes in locating young people who have left school. They have a locating success rate of 90%. Once located, the students are either interviewed by phone or personal contact by highly trained professionals with questions customized for the local district. The success rate of "Dropouts Into Diplomas"

for returning students to school over time is 85%. They also offer a "Stay in School" service for making personal contact with students who are at-risk of leaving school. The website for Dropouts Into Diplomas is www.dropoutsintodiplomas.com and they can be reached at (800) 518-4311.

III. Intervention — Recovery

These programs serve many students who have severed connections with the regular high school. They may also enroll students who are on the "verge" of dropping out or have re-enrolled. Recovery programs can receive Basic Education Act (BEA) monies if a dropout is re-enrolled in a school district and is making satisfactory progress towards high school completion.

Recovery programs often primarily help students complete the General Educational Development (GED) certification. However, under the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, students who earn a GED certificate are considered dropouts. Also, recovery programs that do not have as their goal completion of high school diploma are legally not entitled to BEA dollars. This presents a problem for helping students progress in their education since many students have no reasonable chance of completing adequate seat time needed to earn a high school diploma. Grant applicants will need to review the legal options available to secure BEA dollars, yet eliminate the legal and practical barriers presented by the ins and outs of obtaining a diploma. For example, one major barrier for students obtaining a high school diploma is earning sufficient credits to satisfy local school district seat time requirements for graduation. A possible solution is to work with a local school district to establish a board policy that awards credit based on competency rather than on seat time, as provided for in the World Accreditation Council (WAC) 180-51-050(1)(b).

Here are some basic legal options for recovery programs:

Alternative Learning Experiences: Another option for a recovery program may be provided in (WAC) 392-121-182, which reads: "An alternative learning experience may be counted as a course of study. An alternative learning experience is an individualized course of study ...The alternative learning experience is provided in accordance with a written alternative learning experience plan that is implemented pursuant to the school district board's policy for alternative learning experiences. The school district board policy must have been adopted in a public meeting. The alternative learning experience may be conducted in part outside of the regular classroom..."

The alternative learning experience must be a written plan approved by the district, but it does not require direct instruction by certificated staff. It is more flexible in this respect than an alternative learning program, but it is an alternative "individualized course of study" rather than an alternative program.

Job Corps is an example of a continuation or recovery program and provides integrated academic, vocational, and social skills training for disadvantaged youth. Created in 1964, it is an education and job-training program for at-risk young people age 16–24. Four Job Corps Centers in Washington serve roughly 200–325 students each, depending on program capacity, and offer a range of vocational offerings. (More information is available on the Job Corps Web site at <http://www.jobcorps.org/>).

IV. Building Partnerships and Integrating Services

This dropout initiative is designed to build linkages between the first chance education system, the second chance education system, and local youth service providers. Youth Councils should continue their service integration work as an integral part of this initiative. Partnerships should be formed with other organizations to integrate services and advance the needs of youth in general.

Service integration issues to be explored include:

1. Developing a common “youth development” vision.
2. Educating local elected officials and funders about youth policies and investments.
3. Developing common tools for individual career planning, the provision of support services, eligibility documentation, and assessments.
4. Offering cross-training opportunities among partners.
5. Leveraging public and private resources to serve both targeted populations and universal youth services.
6. Identifying standards for assessing service quality and using, sharing data more effectively to promote continuous improvement, and demonstrate positive outcomes.

For purposes of developing a common “youth development vision,” a number of youth development frameworks, including risk and protective factors, developmental assets, and America’s Five Promises, are commonly used for focusing on delivering critical services to youth in order to produce healthy behaviors, including staying in school. The enclosed forms are useful tools for conceptualizing these frameworks.

THE LAST WORDS: Future Implications of Boys Not Going to School

The following are some future implications of neglecting the education of boys and over-emphasizing the schooling of girls as is about the trend currently in Nigeria.

- Gender imbalance in jobs or emergence of top loaded female positions in the public and private sectors.
- Possible increase in female-headed households – where more females can access more financially rewarding jobs and thus they will be the major income earners and providers for their homes. Since many of these financially rewarding jobs are and will continue to be demanding – time – wise, brain-wise, energy-wise etc. –

the females will be subjected and susceptible to stress – physical, emotional and psychological.

- Less time for the females to spend at home in raising their children and thus depriving the children of the much needed mother-child bond and closeness necessary for the wholesome and optimal development of children.
- Possible increase in marital conflicts, for the men (husband) may with time develop inferiority complex as a result of the clear educational disparity between them and their wives. In their bid to ward off this unconscious syndrome, they may resort to beating their wives, denying them freedom to attend to their academic and/or professional activities, picking quarrels unnecessarily, becoming non-responsive, blocking the communication channel, that is an important grease to the engine of any relationship (and especially the marital relationship).
- Low level educational aspiration for male children, since they may find no ready high level educational role models in their fathers. Also, the fathers may themselves not encourage their male children to pursue high level education.
- Power shift – females may now dominate the homes and may bring up future generations that may be gentle and sensitive like them (if they can manage situations well) or produce the opposite.
- Increased Boys' drop out will deprive the next generation of intelligent and healthy male adults who will facilitate accelerated development at the home level and at the national level. At the home level, they need to serve as educational aspiration role models to their children so that they can be interested in education early enough based on the concrete and psychological support provided them by their fathers.

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CHAPTER 6

THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

The way forward is reported from two perspectives – global perspective (what others around the globe are saying and/or doing), and from the Nigerian perspective as gathered directly from the respondents in the course of the fieldwork as well as the researchers' own contributions.

The Global Perspective

Pooled from the Global Perspective are **Key Components of Interventions Designed to Decrease Drop-out/ Increase School Completion.**

The following are based on findings from an evaluation of 20 programs funded by the School Dropout Demonstration Assistance Program (Dynarski, 2001).

- Creating small schools with smaller class sizes;
- Allowing teachers to know students better (building relationships, enhanced communication);
- Provision of individual assistance (academic and behavioral);
- Focus on helping students address personal and family issues through counseling and access to social services; and

Oriented toward assisting students in efforts to obtain GED certificates.

Fashola & Slavin (1998). Based on a review of six dropout prevention and college attendance programs for students placed at risk.

- Incorporating personalization by creating meaningful personal bonds between students and teachers and among students;
- Connecting students to an attainable future;
- Providing some form of academic assistance to help students perform well in their coursework; and

Recognizing the importance of families in the school success of their children's achievement and school completion.

Hayward & Tallmadge (1995). Based on evaluation of dropout prevention and reentry projects in vocational education funded under the Cooperative Demonstration Program (CDP) of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act.

- Smaller, more personal environment;
- Vocational education that has an occupational concentration;
- A formal counseling component that incorporates attention to personal issues along with career counseling and life-skills instruction;
- Formal, ongoing coordination of the academic and vocational components of participants' high school programs;
- A structured environment that includes clear and equitably enforced behavioral expectations; and

Personal, supportive attention from adults, through mentoring or other strategies.

McPartland (1994). Based on review of dropout prevention programs and interview data from students who dropped out of school.

- Providing opportunities for success in schoolwork (e.g., intensive reading instruction in early grades, tutoring, curriculum modification to increase relevance);

Creating a caring and supportive environment (e.g., use of adult mentors, expanding role of homeroom teachers, organizing extracurricular activities);

- Communicating the relevance of education to future endeavors (e.g., offering vocational and career counseling, flexible scheduling, and work-study programs); and

Helping students with personal problems (e.g., on-site health care, availability of individual and group counseling). *Schargel & Smink (2001)*. Based on a body of work and program database generated by the National Dropout Prevention Center.

- *Early intervention* includes comprehensive family involvement, early childhood education, and strong reading and writing programs.
- *Basic core strategies* promote opportunities for the student to form bonding relationships and include mentoring/tutoring, service learning, alternative schooling, and out-of-school enhancement programs.
- *Making the most of instruction* includes providing opportunities for professional development, exploring diverse learning styles, using technology to deliver instruction, and providing individualized learning.

Making the most of wider communities includes linking with the wider community through systemic renewal, community collaboration, career education and school-to-work programs, and conflict resolution and violence prevention programs to enhance effective interpersonal skills.

Thurlow, Christenson, Sinclair, Evelo, & Thornton (1995). Based on identification of key components across three interventions designed to increase engagement and school completion for middle school youth with learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities funded by the Office of Special Education Programs.

- Persistence plus (persistence in maintaining a focus on student educational progress and engagement with school; continuity in recognizing and attending to student needs across years via a person connected with the student; consistency in delivery of a message across adults—do the work, attend classes, be on time, express frustration in a constructive manner, stay in school);
- Monitoring (target the occurrence of risk behaviors, regularly collect data and measure effects of timely interventions);
- Relationships (building a variety of relationships to strengthen student success in school; adult-student, as well as home-school-community);
- Affiliation (fostering students' connections to school and sense of belonging to the community of students and staff); and

Problem-solving skills (developing capacity of students to solve problems and enhancing skills to meet the demands of the school environment).

The Nigerian Perspective

This is treated under recommendations to decrease school drop-outs and recommendations for re-educating school drop-outs

Decreasing School Drop: Recommendations

- **Government to Reduce School Fees:** School fees to be reduced substantially and legislate against payment of all forms of obnoxious levies and such related payments. In this way the poverty level of the parents can be cushioned, thereby making education affordable and consequently making retention of boys in school possible.
- **Prompt Payment of Teachers:** Teachers' salaries and all other emoluments are to be paid regularly and promptly, so that strikes can be avoided and teachers can be less disaffected doing their job of teaching.
- **Education to be Made Functional:** Education should be able to make products of the schools able to create jobs for themselves and not be running after government jobs which are not there anyway. In this regard, the 6-3-3-4 system of education should be implemented in all its intents and purposes. If boys find that when they graduate from the school system, they can be useful to themselves even if they do not get government jobs, they would want to stay in school, at least to the end of the junior secondary level or even the senior secondary.

- **Government to Provide Job Opportunities:** Government should create job opportunities for school leavers to encourage them to stay on in school. When boys from experience had seen that many school graduates do not find jobs, they do not want to "waste time" pursuing formal education".
- **Increased Campaign on the Value of Education:** Government and Civil Society Organizations should collaborate to mount campaigns on the value of education using various strategies. The different mass media should be used, workshops and seminars should be organized, religious leaders should make the campaign part of their services to their congregations, youth groups and organizations should be targeted both as recipients and intervention propagandists.
- **Societal Recognition of the Uneducated to be Minimized:** The giving of titles, awards and other forms of recognition to the uneducated should be de-emphasized or even stopped by all concerned, since the practice is giving wrong signals as to the importance of education in and to the society. University honorary degrees should not be given simply to the money bags as this is a gross negative portrayal of what the University stands for and a gross abuse of the antecedents of University honorary degrees.
- **Family Planning to be Encouraged:** Parents should be sensitized as to the need to bear just the number of children they can adequately cater for. Aggressive and/or many pronged strategies should be employed in this regard.

Re-educating School Dropouts

There is the need to intervene and re-educate the boys who have dropped out of school. In this regard, the following recommendations were made

- **Create More NFE Centres:** Many more non – formal learning centres should be created to cater for the dropouts. The closer the centres are to the drop outs, the more they can access the centres.
- **Awareness Campaigns on the Existence of NFE Centres:** Since many drop outs appear not to be aware of the existence, location and value of NFE centres, sensitization and awareness campaign should be mounted especially in areas where there is a high concentration of dropouts – such as mechanic villages/workshops, markets etc.
- **Improved Remuneration to NFE Instructors:** The current practice of payment of paltry stipends to NFE Instructors will not help the intervention being mounted on re-educating the drop outs, for if the Instructors quit or perform below efficiency level as a result of dissatisfaction with remuneration, the boys will return to status –quo. So, instructions should not only be adequately paid but also be paid promptly and regularly.

- **Quality of Instructors to be Ascertained:** The State Agencies for Mass Education who oversee the NFE Centres should ensure that it is only high quality Instructors that are recruited into the Centres. Quality should in no way be compromised, since the gains of quality are obvious and need not be overemphasized. These instructors should also periodically go through refresher courses in diverse learning-teaching styles and using technology to deliver instruction.
- **NFE Centres to be Learner-Friendly:** Provision of basic facilities (chairs, tables, electricity supply and security) should not be denied the NFE Centres. Learner-friendly Centres will promote and enhance the academic performance of the learners.
- **Adequate Monitoring of NFE Centres:** The various State Agencies for Mass Education should see to this promptly, adequately and effectively.
- **Community Participation:** Communities should be encouraged to start and own NFE Centres; thereby acting as agents of change and effective encouragement for the re-education of the boys who have dropped out of school.
- **Maintaining Moderate Class Size in NFE Centres:** Small class size will create meaningful personal bonding between the instructors and the learners and among the learners, as well as enhance communication flow.
- **Advocacy for Release of the NFE Learners:** Appeals should be made to the masters of apprenticed NFE boys for them to close early in the case of those who are attending evening-run NFE Centres, or for the release of these boys during the commerce hours for those who attend NFE Centres run at agreed hours during the day as is the case with the CENFET-run learning centre at Ladipo market, Lagos, and Industrial market in Umuahia, Abia State.
- **Large scale introduction of reforms** into the Quranic school curriculum to include general school subjects. The Kano Pilot integration project should be replicated in many more, if not all the Quranic schools.
- **Establishment of more community based Quranic schools** to enable children maintain links with their families and native environment, as well as reduce the begging activities. These Quranic schools should also be learner friendly especially when integration of general subjects must have taken place.
- **Government to extend payment** of some sort of remuneration to the Mallams, since it's been found that lack of income for these Quranic teachers puts these children at the risk of exploitation. It should be remembered that these children

are still Nigerian children entitled to protection from abuse with this protection championed by the government.

- **Students who have dropped out of school** should be found quickly and encouraged to return to schooling.
- **The Government of Nigeria at the Federal and State levels** to implement the pledge made by Education Ministers (of which Nigeria was one) at the 8th Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) in Dar-es-Salaam in Dec. 2002, that at least 20% of the budget should go to education and 50% of education budget go to the primary level (Education Today, Jan – Mar, 2003).
- **Studies and research work** to look into pedagogical strategies that can raise boys' academic achievement or that are male friendly and can be used in class without undue detriment to the girls. Such students can be commissioned by government or even the Education Committees of our various Houses of Assembly, by International Development Partners like UNICEF and UNESCO, or by academics in our tertiary institutions. In the area of parliament (Houses of Assembly) taking up the research challenge, Australia and the U.K stand out as nations that have successfully tried the approach as a way to stemming the tide of poor academic achievement and school drop out among the males in their schools.
- **Another strategy** to make schools more attractive for boys is to give a serious consideration to the gender balance of teachers with deliberate plans made to increase the proportion of male teachers, since at present the profession is dominated by females especially at the primary and secondary levels.

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APPENDIX I

LIST OF CONTACTS

ABIA

1. **SAME Director: Rev Uche Kálu Ibe,**
State Agency for Mass Education,
Umuahia,
Abia State.
2. **UNICEF Foci Person: Joy Lekwuwa,**
State Agency for Mass Education,
Umuahia,
Abia State.
3. **NFE/Adult Education Unit Head: Mrs Peace Ukaegbu,**
Isiala-Ngwa North LGA,
Isiala-Ngwa,
Imo State.
4. **NGO Official: Mr. E. Uwaga,**
National Adult Training Center,
1 Izukwu Road,
Aba

ANAMBRA

1. **Honourable Commissioner for Education: Prof L. N. Muoghalu**
Ministry of Education,
Awka,
Anambra State.
2. **UNICEF Foci Person: Mrs Ifeoma Onwudiwe,**
State Agency for Mass Education,
Awka,
Anambra State.
3. **NFE Facilitator: Mrs Eugenia Nwora,**
Eke-Awka NFE Center,
Awka.
Anambra State.
4. **NGO Official: Barrister Eucharia Ukaegbu,**
International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA),
235 Nnamdi Azikiwe Road,
Awka, Anambra State.
5. **NGO Official: Barrister Ngozi Ndide,**
International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA),
235 Nnamdi Azikiwe Road,
Awka, Anambra State.

6. **NGO Official: Dr. Clifford Okafor,**
Community Health Education and Development in Africa (CoHEDA),
c/o Harmony Hospital,
5 Igwebuikwe School Road,
Awka, Anambra State.

7. **LGA Official: Mr. C. C. Nwankwo,**
Supervisor for Education,
Nnewi LGA,
Nnewi,
Anambra State.

8. **LGA Official: Mrs C. I. Okoye,**
Desk Officer, NFE,
Nnewi LGA,
Nnewi,
Anambra State.

9. **NFE Facilitator: Mrs V. Igbokwe,**
Agboedo Market School,
Nnewi LGA,
Nnewi,
Anambra State.

10. **NGO Official: Mrs L. N. Attoh,**
Girls Brigade,
Onitsha,
Anambra State.

11. **Opinion Leader: cannon T. U. Mbanugo,**
St Stephen's Anglican Church,
Onitsha.
Anambra State.

EBONYI

1. **SAME Director: Mrs T. O. Ozor,**
State Agency for Mass Education,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

2. **UNICEF Foci Person: Mr E. Okoro,**
State Agency for Mass Education,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

3. **University Academic: Mrs S. N Nduka-Ozor,**
Ebonyi State University,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

Anambra State.

4. **NFE Facilitator: Rev Bahan Azogor,**

UNICEF-Assisted NFE School,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

5. NGO Official: Mrs Amarachi Gabriel-Odom,
Agape Foundation for Literacy and Rural development,
1 Ogoja Road,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

6. NFE Facilitator: Mrs R. Igurube,
Amovu UP School,
Ohaochara-Opi,
Afikpo-North LGA,
Anoha.

7. Opinion leader: Mr G. M. Aghalu,
Abakaliki,
Ebonyi State.

ENUGU

1. SAME Director: Mr Andy Aneke,
State Agency for Mass Education,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

2. UNICEF Foci Person: Mrs Amaka Onyisi,
State Agency for Mass Education,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

3. University Academic: Dr A. E. Eze,
Enugu State University,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

4. University Academic: Dr B. C. Alio,
Enugu State University,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

5. University Academic: Prof A. Anowo,
Enugu State University,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

6. University Academic: Prof A. S. Onyehalu,
Enugu State University,
Enugu,
Enugu State.

7. NGO Official: C. C. Ogbu,
Multi-Education Services Trust,
Nsukka,

Enugu State.

8. **Opinion Leader:** Mr Remigus Eze, (VEC Member),
Iheaka, Igbo-Eze South, LGA,
Enugu State.

9. **NFE Facilitator:** Fabian Onyeke,
NFE Center,
Ovoko,
Enugu State.

10. **University Academic:** Prof G. Obi,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka,
Enugu State.

10. **University Academic:** Dr (Mrs) Oreh,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka,
Enugu State

IMO

1. **SAME Director:** Mr D. O. Eke,
State Agency for Mass Education,
Owerri,
Imo State.

2. **UNICEF Foci Person:** Mrs Oparaku,
State Agency for Mass Education,
Owerri,
Imo State.

3. **Opinion Leader:** Chief Patrick Ugwuegbu,
Amakohia Mechanic Village,
Owerri,
Imo State.

4. **NGO Official:** Miss Nkechi Ugwu,
Forward Africa (FOFA),
Plot 65 Okigwe Road,
Owerri,
Imo State.

5. **University Academic:** Prof E. Anukam,
Imo State Universty,
Owerri,
Imo State.

6. **NGO/LGA Official:** Dr. E. C. Emerenini,
Chairman, Obowo Local Governmnet Area,
Ovoko,
Imo State.

HUMADU CSO
Obowo,
Imo State.

LAGOS STATE AGENCY FOR MASS EDUCATION

1. Same Director: - Mrs Olatubi (NOT AVAILABLE)
State Agency for Mass Education
2. Deputy Executive Director - Mrs A.O. Amore
State Agency for Mass Education
3. Principal Education Officer: Mr M.O. Adeniyi
State Mass Education
4. Chief Statistician
Lagos State Ministry of Education
5. Mr Alabi: Chief Statistician
Lagos State SPED
6. Mrs Funmi: Co-ordinator, EDUCARE – NGO
7. Mr. Kunle Ogunbayo – CEO, Metroproject Nigeria Ltd., Opinion Leader
8. Demi Igbanugo – NFE Beneficiary

NIGER STATE AGENCY FOR MASS EDUCATION

1. Executive Director - Alhaji Muhammed Sanni Barde
2. Deputy Executive Director - Mr D.Y Agwai
3. Director, Continuing Education Dept)
(Unicef Focal Person) Mallam Yakubu Madaki
4. Assistant Director (Women Education) - Alhaja Safinatu Captain
5. Director, Planning Research & and Statistic State Ministry of Education,
Minna
6. Executive Director SPEB, Minna

KANO STATE

1. Executive Director Agency for Mass Education -Alhaji Mohammed Aliyu
2. Deputy Director (A.M.E) - Alhaji Sarki Abudulkadir
3. Assistant Director (Unicef Focal Person)-Alhaja Yardada Maikano
4. Opinion Leader /Business Tycoon in Kano city-Alhaji A. G. Abdullahi A.G. ABDULLANI & SONS, KANO)

KADUNA STATE

1. MR. Samuel Wahala - State Executive Director for Mass Literacy
(RETIRING)
2. Alice Awan - State Executive Director Kaduna State Agency for Literacy
3. Alhaji Mohammed Muazu - Director Literacy Agency Mass Literacy
4. Mallam Ibrahim - Principal Mass Literacy Office
State agency for Mass Literacy
5. Alhaja Nafisat Bello - Zonal Agency Officer
State Agency for Mass Literacy
6. Christopher Ignatius - Director, Planning, Research & Statistics
Kaduna State SPEB

7. Mr. Amosa J. Aboiy - Chief Statistician
Kaduna SPEB
8. Kabila D.Kyong- Director, Planning, Research & Statistic
Kaduna State Min. of Education
9. Moses Yoyok - C.E.O (Statistics)
- Kaduna State Min. of Education
10. Dr. Bala Dogo - *Director & Coordinator
CARE & ACTION RESEARCH, KADUNA . (NGO)
11. Alhasji Umaru Idrisu - Opinion Leader, Danhalahiman
Zauzzau The District Head of Rigasa Kaduna
12. Mallam Musa Usman (DCP in charge) Kaduna prisons

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FGD GUIDE FOR OUT OF SCHOOL BOYS [TARGET GROUP 1]

Date of FGD _____

Name of facilitator _____

Name of state/city _____

Town/village _____

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This gathering is to discuss the phenomenon of boys' drop out from school, so that we can know what causes it, and what can be done to help those who have dropped out of school.

1. How many of you are natives of this City/State [Probe for where the non-indigenes are from]
2. Why do you think boys of school going age do not want to continue going to school? (Probe for why the members of the FGD stopped going to school)
3. For how long have been out of school?
4. In what class did you drop out of school?
5. Immediately after you dropped out of school, what was the first job/trade that you did?
6. What are you doing presently and how much do you make a day/month?
7. Would you like to go back to school?
[Probe for 'why' for whichever answer is given]
[Probe for how he intends to do this]
8. When you see some of your former classmates who (continued schooling)/ did not leave school and have now become "big people", how do you feel?
9. Would you want your male children to continue school till university level or will you want them to also quickly go into trading?
10. What do you think should be done to encourage boys to continue in school?
[Probe for who is the focal point for the answer given – is it federal government, state government, local government, parents, e.t.c.]
11. Are you aware of any efforts being made to address the problem of boys' drop out in the State (City)? [If yes, probe for what the effort is and who is responsible in the effort]
12. Would you like to get married to a lady who is more educated than you? [Probe for the reason for whatever answer is given]
13. What efforts do you think the dropping out of boys can have on girls' education? [Probe for the possible effects like girls also dropping out of school, educated girls not willing to marry non-educated though rich boys]

FGD GUIDE FOR SCHOOL GOING AGE BOYS WHO HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL BUT ARE IN THE NFE FACILITY

[TARGET GROUP 2]

Date of FGD _____
 Name of State/City _____
 Town/Village _____
 Name of NFE facility _____
 Age of Facility _____

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The setting up of NFE facilities is one way of addressing the phenomenon of boys' drop out in Nigeria. This gathering is to discuss what the NFE facility is offering you and how things can be improved in future.

1. How many of you are natives of this City/State? [Probe for where the non-indigenes are from]
2. When did you get into this facility?
3. How did you come into the facility?
4. What were you doing before coming into this facility?
5. What would you say you have gained since you came into this facility?
6. What do you plan to do after leaving the facility?
7. What do you think can be done to stop or reduce boys' drop out in this State/City?
8. Why do you think boys do not want to continue in the formal school system?
9. What do you think this facility should do to improve on the programme being offered boys who have dropped out of school?
10. Would you like to marry a lady who is more educated than you? [Probe for reason for whatever answer is given]
11. Do you think the dropping out of boys from school can influence girls in any way? [Probe for possible influences like girls also dropping out of school, educated girls not wanting to marry non educated though rich boys]

KII GUIDE FOR FACILITATOR/INSTRUCTOR IN NFE FACILITY [TARGET GROUP 3]

Date of interview _____
 Name of interviewer _____
 Name of City/State _____
 Town/village _____
 Name of Key Informant [Respondent] _____
 Status of Key Informant [Respondent] _____

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The problem of boys dropping out of school is of concern to many people, and efforts are being made to address this problem. Since your facility is one of the strategies to address the problem, it is important that what you are doing is known. This is the reason for requesting you to grant this interview.

1. When was this facility established and since when have you been working here?
2. Since when did you notice the problem of boys dropping out of school in this City/State?
3. Do you think the rate is increasing or decreasing in this City/State?
[Probe for index of increase or decrease]
4. How many boys are in your facility?
[Probe for the age range] also, how many girls? [Probe for age range]
5. How many of them are indigenes of this State/City?
6. Where are the others from?
7. How do the boys get into your facility [i.e. Admission/recruiting procedure]
8. What do you teach the boys who are in your facility?
Or
What programme do you have in place for the boys in your facility?
9. Do you have all the necessary materials for running the facilities [e.g. Primers, Teaching Aids etc.]
10. What difficulties do you have getting these materials and which materials are mostly affected?
11. How long does it take the boys to graduate from your facility?
12. What follow-up programmes do you have in place for them?
[Further studies? Subsidizes for study? e.t.c.]
13. How are they responding to the programme you have for them in this facility?
[Probe for how they are coping]
14. How many boys come in yearly and how many of them complete the programme you have for them?
15. What feedback do you have from [Probe for Success Stories]
 - The beneficiaries
 - Their families
 - The immediate community
16. What contributions do you have from the community?
17. Which other International Development Agencies make contributions to your centre and what are these contributions?
18. What suggestions do you have for improving the programme of your facility?
19. What suggestions would you give regarding how to reduce boys' drop out rate in this city/state?

KII GUIDE FOR SAME DIRECTORS & NMEE DIRECTORS (TARGET GP 4)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME OF CITY: _____

NAME OF RESPONDENT: _____

STATUS OF RESPONDENT: _____

GIVE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. Would you say there is problem of boys' drop out in this state/city?
(Probe for "why" for whatever answer is given)
2. Could you say a little about the Almajeris in this City?
(To find out if the phenomenon is akin to boys' drop out phenomenon)
3. What would you say are the causes of boys dropping out of school?
4. What factors would you consider as promoting the Almajeris phenomenon?
5. What is your relationship with the NFE centres?
6. How do the centres obtain their Teaching materials?
(Probe for what there materials are – books, teaching aids, e.t.c.)
7. How are the instructors recruited and what are their qualifications?
8. How are the "students" recruited girls?
Are more boys recruited than?
9. What is the duration of the programme?
10. What has been the completion rate? (Ask for statistic from various centres)
11. What follow up programmes do you have for the students?
12. Can you recount any success story of any of your students at the centre?
13. What contributions do your NFE centres receive from?
 - a. The Communities
 - b. The Parents of the Students
 - c. Other Development Partners like NGOs, UNESCO, UNICEF e.t.c.

KII GUIDE FOR NGO OFFICIALS WORKING WITH OUT OF SCHOOL BOYS

[TARGET GROUP 5]

Date of interview _____
 Name of interviewer _____
 Name of city/state _____
 Name of NGO _____
 Name of respondent (NGO official) _____
 Status of respondents _____
 Age of NGO _____

Introductory remarks

It is common knowledge that there are NGOs whose interest and focus is in working with boys who have dropped out of school, as their own contribution to addressing the phenomenon of boys' drop out. Since your NGO is one of such NGOs, we will like to have an idea of what you have been doing and your suggestions or recommendations on the way forward.

1. When did your NGO start working with boys who have dropped out of school?
2. What exactly do you do with the boys?
3. How do you recruit the boys your NGO work with?
4. What has been the trend of boys' drop out in the city/ state?
5. Do you think boys' drop out rate is on the increase or decrease?
 [Probe for index /indices of increase/decrease]
6. What strategies do you employ in working with the boys who have dropped out of school?
7. Which strategy would you assess as haven worked better?
8. What recommendation would you make regarding the way forward to solve the problem?
 [Probe for who such recommendations focus on __ government (at the federal, state or local levels), parents, IDPs, the boys, the civil society].

KII GUIDE FOR CBO/OPINION LEADERS (TARGET GP 7)

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: _____

NAME OF CITY: _____

NAME OF RESPONDENT: _____

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS (Give a Short Remark)

1. Do you have the problem of boys not wanting to go to school in this Community / City
- 2a. If yes, what do you think are the causes of the phenomenon?
b. If no, why do you think the problem does not exist?
3. Since when did you notice the problem?
- 4a. What is the magnitude of this problem?
b. What is the magnitude compared with girls' drop out problem
5. What has the community done to address the problem?
- 6a. Which Group Organizations have addressed this problem?
b. What exactly has each one done?
7. What contribution(s) does the community make to the NFE centres?
8. In your own opinion how can the problem of boys' dropout be solved?
9. Do you think the NFE centres are making any impact?
If yes, what are these impacts?
(Probe for any success stories)