



A teacher in Jigawa State, Wasilat Abubakar poses with learners, Abdulahi and Aishat, holding the PLANE foundational learning materials.

Evidence-Based Foundational Interventions Transforming Teaching and Learning Experiences in Over 2500 Schools

SYNOPSIS

In 2023, the PLANE Programme worked closely with government partners to strengthen education delivery by improving foundational learning skills in 2,544 basic education schools, across three states (Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa) in Nigeria. Through this engagement, 8,202 headteachers were trained on school leadership and management, and 10,845 teachers were trained on 21st-century pedagogy, subject content knowledge as well as attitude and behaviour. Over 550,000 learners were provided Hausa literacy and mathematics learning materials to improve their capacity to participate in classroom activities and learn by doing. Results from PLANE's Year One learning assessment on primary one, four and six learners in PLANE-supported schools, showed that compared to the baseline results, 36.4% of learners increased a level in Hausa literacy, while 47.1% of learners increased a level in mathematics.

INTRODUCTION

Challenges facing learners and teachers: In Nigeria, particularly in rural communities and in the northern region, children encounter a lot of challenges that affect their ability to learn in school. While these challenges are multidimensional, they have led to very poor learning outcomes, with most children being unable to read and solve simple maths problems by the age of 10.

Among other factors, the lack of evidence-based teaching and learning approaches and materials has contributed to the poor outcomes. Marginalised children and those from the lowest economic backgrounds are particularly hard hit. While learners may manage to get within the walls of a classroom, they are often faced with another hurdle - a disconnection between schooling and learning. This disconnection is often caused by factors including the quality of teachers in classrooms, and the student's inability to understand the language of instruction and feel a sense of inclusion in class.



"Before the textbooks were given to us, I could only read a word, but now I can read sentences. The good thing about the books are the pictures in it. They help you to see what you are supposed to do and how to do them. Even when you have to calculate, it shows you what to add and how to do it"
-Aisha, primary school learner.

Use of mother tongue: With language being a very important part of every culture, the use of mother tongue as the language of instruction in early primary years has been recognised by the Nigerian government as one important way to advance inclusion in education and ensure that no child is left behind. A National Language Policy was adopted in 2022, which makes the mother tongue a compulsory medium of instruction from primary one to six. However, the implementation of the policy has been challenged by a shortage of teaching and learning materials in the mother tongue as well as other systemic issues. Many children face challenges in accessing education due to a mismatch between the language spoken at home and the language of school instruction. This language barrier often hinders comprehension and academic performance.

"The books that PLANE gave us are very good. I like going to school now because I now understand the importance of education. The book they gave me helped me with reading. When I get home, I usually review what they taught us from the book."
-Shansudeen, primary school learner.



PLANE'S FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING INTERVENTION

Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) is working with the Federal Government and state governments in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa to address some of the challenges affecting the quality of teaching and learning taking place in schools. The PLANE intervention focuses on global best practices for improving foundation learning skills, prioritising the use of a child's first language in education while also focusing on the professional development of teachers through a cascade model.

Provision of foundational learning materials in mother tongue:

Working closely with relevant government ministries, departments, agencies and other contributors, PLANE successfully developed and distributed literacy and mathematics materials for learners in primary one to primary three, along with read-aloud anthologies for learners in primary one and two. PLANE also provided posters with literacy and mathematics-themed songs with cultural relevance. The pupil's textbooks, which follow the Nigerian National Curriculum, are written entirely in the language of the environment, Hausa. To simplify the experiences of teachers in the classroom and improve their delivery of the subject contents, PLANE also provided corresponding teacher's guides consisting of simple 1- page lightly scripted lesson plans also written in Hausa. All provided materials were accessible in the learner's native language and thoughtfully designed to be inclusive of different genders and disabilities.

In-service teacher development accredited by government:

With close coordination with Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the State Universal Basic Education Board, PLANE has provided technical assistance to government through the training of teachers in foundational learning focusing on literacy and mathematics and other integrated topics such as inclusion, pedagogy, safeguarding and classroom management. The training structure follows a cascade model. Expert trainers (PLANE staff and consultants) identify and train National Master Trainers who train state-based master trainers, while the state- based trainers directly train teachers, headteachers and school support officers (SSOs). To ensure effectiveness, refresher trainings are often scheduled after the initial training, and these refreshers build on feedback received from schools on gaps identified in the delivery of teachers. Beyond this, it has also ensured continuous development for teachers.

In a major milestone, the Federal Ministry of Education and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria accredited the training on the Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) produced by PLANE, making it count towards teachers' professional development. The Ministry has also gone one step ahead where all such TLM materials have been uploaded on their online portal on education.gov.ng, a move which will encourage adoption and scale-up of the intervention in other part of the country.

POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

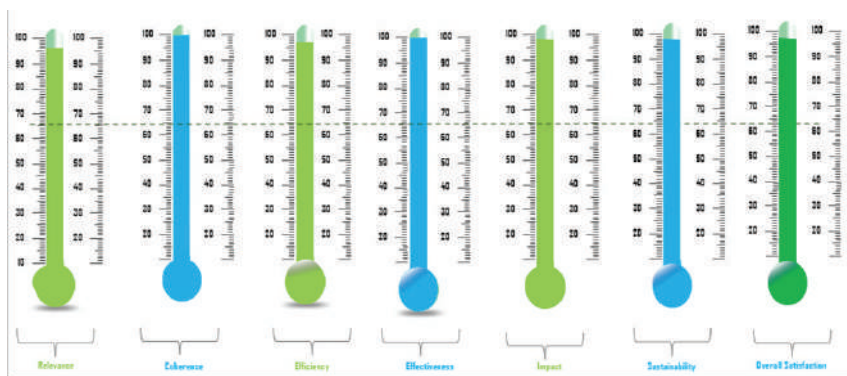
Teachers and learners reached: In its first year of implementation, PLANE successfully reached 554,648 learners across Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa States with foundational learning materials and 9,385 teachers with both teachers' guides and training programmes. This intervention is beginning to yield positive results with schools reporting major positive differences in the ability of learners to read, write and comprehend. Teachers are also demonstrating improved confidence in delivering subject content, with keen attention to inclusion during lessons. Results from PLANE's Year One learning assessment showed that compared to the baseline results, 36.4% of learners in primary two, four and six in PLANE-supported schools increased a level in Hausa literacy, while 47.1% of learners in primary two, four and six in PLANE-supported schools increased a level in Mathematics. Currently PLANE has a direct footprint in 2,548 schools, almost one in five of which are located in remote locations, emphasising the programme's focus on serving the poor and hard-to-reach girls and boys.

PLANE's learning materials provide content and a roadmap for teachers. The one-page lesson plans for 180 lessons offer clear, concise daily guidance, making it exceptionally easy for teachers to deliver high-quality lessons. This approach significantly improves learning outcomes by providing educators with a structured and efficient teaching framework. As reported by teachers, it also saves the time which would have been used in developing lesson notes and plans.



TEACHING AND LEARNING BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

More than 96% of teachers and state officials reported that the T&L material developed by PLANE were relevant and coherent with the Nigeria basic education curriculum. Over 97% of respondents were satisfied with the methodological rigour used in the development of the material. Nearly 98% shared overall satisfaction with PLANE's support and technical assistance in developing the T&L material. In a major shift in attitudes towards utilisation of the teaching and learning (T&L) material, 76% of men and women respondents stated that they always applied the acquired knowledge and skills while an additional 8% claimed to often use the materials in their work.



TESTIMONIALS



Abdullahi Ciroma, Deputy Director Quality Assurance, SUBEB Jigawa

Abdullahi Ciroma, Deputy Director Quality Assurance, SUBEB Jigawa is a Master Trainer and Chairman of the Technical Working Group on Material Development. Ciroma, who is a member of the State School Improvement Team, attested to the contribution of the Functional Learning Materials to Teaching and Learning Outcomes:

“There are huge successes recorded with the PLANE interventions in the seven selected local government areas (LGAs) in Jigawa State. Because right from the beginning there was an initiative which established the master trainers team, who are responsible for the training of teachers, head teachers and school support officers. These master trainers, before they were recruited, did examinations and they were verified. After their selections, they underwent some series of trainings on literacy and numeracy for them to be able to cascade the training to teachers and to the head teachers. PLANE was able to train them foundational learning for primary one, two and three respectively. After they receive the trainings, they go down to the various LGAs, the seven LGAs selected, and they train the teachers there, the head teachers and the assistants.

“Apart from this, pupil's books and teacher's guides were also distributed. Not only distribution, but we ensured that SSOs are there to checkmate the usage and utilisation of such materials to ensure that teachers are using teacher's guides to deliver the lessons, as well as learners are working in the book. They are writing in the books, they are doing activities in the book, and they are handling their books in such a way that it will not be damaged.

“In the past they used to skip and omit some topics while teaching, but now they realise that a learner cannot understand topic B unless he has clear understanding of topic number 1, so they follow its sequentially, because the examples, the content, the language has been simplified to the lowest level in such a way that teachers can make use of the content, the language to deliver the lessons. And we capitalized on the Nigerian language policy, where the teachers are to teach with the language of immediate environment. Here is Hausa, and the design of the content is in Hausa, so teachers find it very easy to locate the content and to use the material to deliver the lessons. Unlike in the past, where they don't have these skills”.

“It is very simple and easy for a teacher to deliver. Likewise, they use people's books, because in the past, we teach on the blackboard without allowing the learners to make use of their materials to work. But with PLANE, children are given the pupils book, where after the lessons, even during the lessons, there are some portions where the learners can work with the pupil's book as a class work with the support of the teacher.”

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A'ishatu Iliyasu, Zakirai Yamma Primary School, Kano State

As a teacher, A'ishatu Iliyasu from Zakirai Yamma Primary School in Kano State is very excited about the Teacher's Guide and the engaging classroom activities which sometimes involve making children come around in circles.

"We received training for P1, P2, and P3. The training focused on effective teaching methods for mathematics, English, and the Hausa language. The training equipped me with valuable materials and teaching aids. I plan lessons using the provided materials, check student books, and add engaging elements like songs. This has improved students' understanding, as shown in their performance.

"Initially, there was no circle in the classroom, making it challenging to teach. After the training, a rule was implemented, ensuring students stayed within the circle, resolving the issue. Students now understand topics better and their test results have improved.

"The teacher's guide provides detailed lesson plans, making teaching easier by guiding me on what to cover from the beginning to the end of each lesson. Students have shown improvement in tests, making progress if they initially struggle. Their ability to answer questions correctly has also increased. I'm most impressed by the teacher's guide, as it provides thorough explanations of activities and daily plans, making my job easier. nrollments, because we are receiving it directly from Dashboard."

"We used to say that this child is dull, this child is slow, but with the support and advice on teaching from PLANE and using mother tongue, all of our children are being carried along. There's no dull child.

"Before PLANE was introduced, we were teaching our children in pure English. These children, when you are teaching them in pure English, they will just be looking at you. They don't know what you are saying. When you ask them questions, when you evaluate them, they cannot remember what you have told them. But now that PLANE has introduced the indigenous language books and support, when I teach these children, when I ask them questions, in fact, they understand and respond".

– Justina Omole, Teacher, Kaduna.



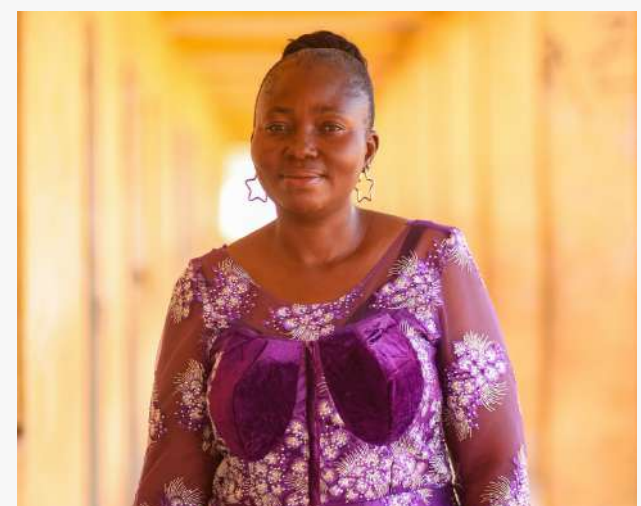
Aisha Alhazuberu, headteacher at Dr. Nuhu Special Primary School, Dutse, Jigawa State.

Aisha Alhazuberu is the headteacher at Dr. Nuhu Special Primary School, Dutse Local Government, Jigawa State. She confirmed that the learning materials have improved the ability of learners to read, write and comprehend.

"Dr. Nuhu Special Primary School is part of the beneficiaries of the PLANE programme. We got textbooks for primary 1, 2 and 3, and our teachers attended the training for the classes. Also, the materials we received are in good quality and are available.

"This PLANE programme makes it easy for our pupils to understand what they are taught using mother tongue. Even the mathematics is in their mother tongue. This has upgraded the performance of the students and has also improved their thinking. Before, there are students that do not have access to textbooks, but with the coming of the PLANE programme, all our pupils have access to textbooks. Using this textbooks help our pupils to read and write, even at home. Also, it helped the teachers to give them classwork or homework to be done inside their pupils book. Using this, the reading and writing skills of our students have improved.

“ In basic education in general, what we expect from our pupils is the ability to read, write and comprehend. Before we had the support of the PLANE programme, reading and writing were difficult for our pupils, but with the support of the programme, our pupils can now read, write and comprehend ”



ABOUT PLANE

The Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) is a seven-year programme funded by the UK Government to enable a more inclusive, safe and effective education system in Nigeria. It realises the Government of Nigeria and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)'s shared commitment to deliver sustainable improvements in learning outcomes for Nigeria's children. The PLANE programme works with federal and state leaders, legislators, education providers, civil society, children and parents federally and in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Borno, Yobe, the south-east and the south-west.

PLANE works on basic education across state and non-state education systems with a focus on marginalised groups, especially girls. It contributes towards real, transformational change, driving progress in the learning environment and supporting improvements in how education is managed and delivered. It will lead to more children going to school, staying in school and learning more. This will be done through improvements in teaching and learning with a focus on foundational skills; unlocking governance bottlenecks for better education service delivery; improvements in the regulation of the non-state sector; embedding the use of data and evidence within the education system; helping children affected by conflict; and improving the inclusion and learning of marginalised children as a whole.





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