



PLANE Midline Evaluation Report

Final

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PLANE Midline Evaluation Report

Executive Summary



1. Introduction

The Partnership for Learning for all in Nigeria (PLANE) is a Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) Nigeria education programme with total planned investment of up to £170 million from 2019 to 2028 aimed at supporting the Government of Nigeria (GoN) at the federal level, and with five selected states, to improve teaching, school quality, education management and the efficient delivery of basic education. PLANE is operationalised through three Windows, led by DAI and FHI360 (Window 1; the largest investment of the portfolio) and Save the Children (Window 3) in three states in the North West region and UNICEF (Window 2) in two states in the North East region. PLANE's intended outcome and impact, to which all three Windows contribute is.

The Midline Evaluation of PLANE is being delivered by a consortium led by Ecorys UK through the Human Development Evaluation Learning and Verification Service (DELVe). The purpose and objectives of the evaluation are outlined below:



Outcome: More inclusive and effective education systems deliver foundational skills, whereby state and non-state basic education providers enable better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children



Impacts: More children and young people acquire skills to be able to transition to more productive life opportunities.



Purpose

Describe and critically assess progress, outputs and outcomes along the change pathways defined in the PLANE portfolio theory of change (ToC)



Assess the progress of PLANE against the portfolio ToC and change pathways

Objective 1



Establish the appropriacy and credibility of the PLANE portfolio ToC and its intervention logic.

Objective 2



Provide evidence and recommendations to PLANE.

Objective 3



Provide evidence and recommendations to external stakeholders and participants.

Objective 4

Its scope comprises all PLANE interventions in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa states in North West Nigeria (Window 1 and Window 3) and in Borno and Yobe states in the North East (Window 2), and at federal level (Window 1). It covers the full implementation of the programme from January 2023 to August 2025.

The Midline commenced in March 2025 with a Midline Design, gathered primary data in June-July 2025, and delivered a draft findings validation workshop in October 2025.



2. Approach and Methodology

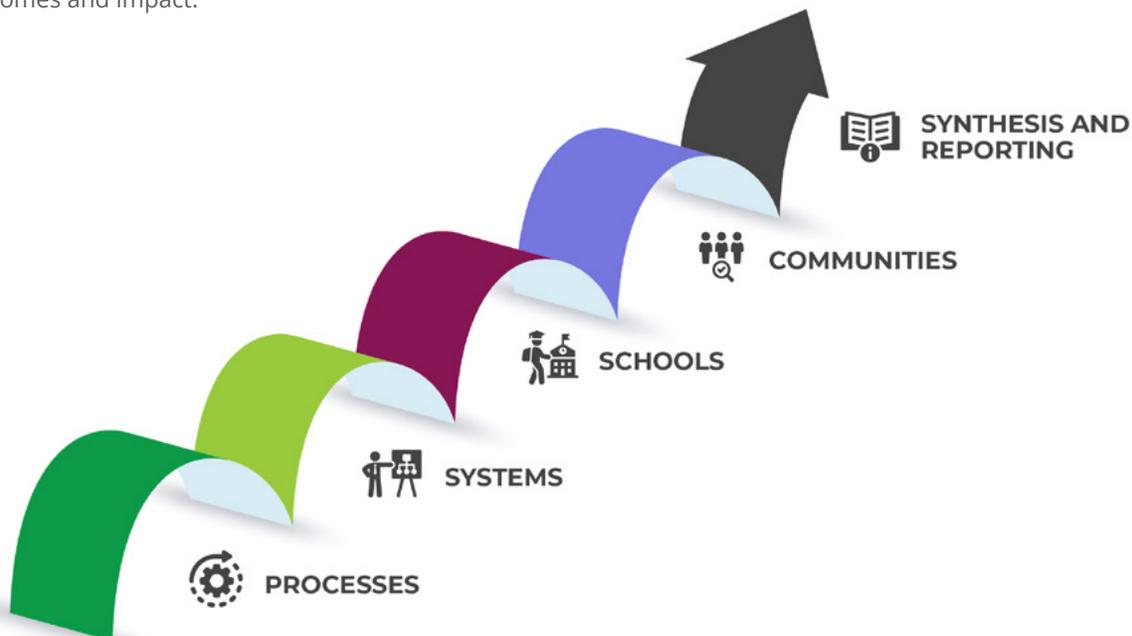
Contribution Analysis (CA) is the methodological foundation of DELVE's Performance Evaluation (PE), including the baseline evaluation (2023) and this midline evaluation (2025). CA is a theory-based evaluation approach that provides a rigorous and structured methodology for evaluating the complex PLANE programme, based on its own Theory of Change (ToC).

The evaluation design is not experimental: there is no comparison of outcomes for treatment and control groups at any level of intervention and no independent counterfactual. However, the evaluation utilises programme partners' quasi-experimental studies on student learning outcomes to evaluate PLANE's intended outcomes and impact.

The PLANE portfolio ToC is the core of the Midline, guiding evidence gathering of PLANE's contributions to change through six ToC change pathways that each contribute to the programme's outcome and impact (above). CA allows the evaluation to build a credible contribution story for PLANE by demonstrating plausible links between interventions and outcomes.

The evaluation also incorporates a developmental approach, integrating insights from existing and emerging research and learning and continuously analysing data to make adjustments to the evaluation. It is designed to be practical, inclusive, and sensitive to gender and power dynamics in all aspects of its design, operationalisation, data analysis and reporting. DELVE's overall approach to PE works across five modules:

Each of these modules is linked to Evaluation Questions aligned with the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (OECD, 2019). For example, the Schools module asks: How has PLANE contributed to improved and more inclusive education systems delivering foundational skills and learning outcomes through high quality teaching and learning? At Midline, the evaluation assesses this question through PLANE Window change pathways that include elements of improving teaching quality; improving child protection; improving instructional leadership; and improving student learning outcomes. In this way, the ToC change pathways of PLANE are mapped onto the PE Modules, OECD-DAC criteria and Evaluation Questions to provide a comprehensive framework to assess the progress and contributions of PLANE since the baseline evaluation.



2. Methods and Sample

The evaluation uses mixed methods, combining primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data. Primary qualitative data includes interviews and discussions with students, teachers, head teachers, School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and community members at local level, and with government officials at state and federal levels. Primary quantitative data were gathered through classroom observations and School Checklists. The evaluation interviewed 1,122 individuals in total. Secondary data were gathered into an annotated bibliography comprising over 150 documents for review; and data from sources including Annual School Census reports and Windows logframe data.

The midline evaluation sample was consistent with the baseline evaluation for longitudinal reporting. At midline, the team visited 53 schools across nine Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in all five states of PLANE operations, including state and non-state schools, public, nomadic, and Islamic schools, in rural and urban locations, and delivering foundational and/or accelerated teaching methodologies.

Data were cleaned following a rigorous process with core checks on duplicates, missing data, inconsistencies, translations, and formats. Qualitative data analysis was done on MaxQDA, a robust software package, using a codebook for consistency and standardisation of analysis. Quantitative data were input and analysed using MS Excel.

Preliminary findings were discussed and validated at a Validation Workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, October 2025 with 30 PLANE and external education stakeholders. This workshop provided an opportunity for comments on draft findings and recommendations, and discussions on utilising the evaluation within and beyond PLANE. Internal and external evaluation stakeholders have been engaged in discussions with DELVe for data analysis, throughout the evaluation process. These iterative feedback loops have been central to the evaluation process and were incorporated into this report.



3. Key Findings

Findings are presented by Window and – in Conclusions – for the PLANE portfolio as a whole. A four-point scale is applied to assess the extent, quality, and strength of evidence for the contribution of PLANE (Figure A).

Contextual factors beyond PLANE's direct control have affected the timeliness and extent of delivery towards outcomes for all components of PLANE. The major factors operating in all states and/or at federal level have included: insecurity and conflict; rising poverty; high inflation; weak infrastructure; high population growth rate and inadequate / uncertain governance.

Window 1

Getting the Foundations Right in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa

★★★★ Overall rating

Findings indicate well-evidenced, positive, and largely significant contribution to change, especially in improving teacher quality, school management and supervision, and student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. Student learning progress over time is generally being sustained. In the latest round of student learning assessments, Window 1 reported that 55.6% of P4 students achieved foundational Hausa literacy and 83.0% achieved foundational numeracy.



Key contributions to change

- School and community-level awareness, attitudes, rhetoric and practices on inclusion and safeguarding have improved thanks to targeted, high-quality training and ongoing support on inclusion and safeguarding for over 11,000 Head Teachers, 5,000 SBMC members and 265 School Support Officers (SSOs).
- Effective, structured, child-centred pedagogies and practices among maths and literacy teachers in PLANE schools, especially in grades P2-P4, combined with better motivation and greater resourcefulness of these teachers, principally thanks to in-service teacher training reaching over 12,000 teachers and the Foundational Skills Package.
- Designing and deploying a structured pedagogy package (the

Foundational Skills Package) based on mother tongue (Hausa) instruction with guides, visual aids, local material and play-based activities – there is robust evidence that this package is contributing to improved learning outcomes in PLANE schools, including compared to non-PLANE schools.

- Instructional leadership improvement among head teachers including to monitor and support teachers and school oversight and resource (materials, infrastructure) support by SBMCs.
- Student learning outcomes in maths and Hausa at P2 and P4 have improved over time. At the end of the 2025 academic year, 55.6% of P4 students had basic literacy and 84.0% achieved basic numeracy, both beyond the 50% target at midpoint. 60% of P4 students achieved an Oral Reading Fluency speed in Hausa of over 10 words per minute. The majority

of learners continue to progress up learning levels. These improvements are associated with the Foundational Skills Package and improved teacher competence and motivation in PLANE schools.

- Education governance improvements in the three states via significant interventions for education policy reforms, notably for teacher recruitment and deployment, and for non-state schools, including through an approach to co-creation, leading multi-stakeholder forums, coalitions and cross-agency engagements at state levels.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- Identifying, including and engaging systematically with children of school-age living with disabilities.
- Generating systemic improvements in teacher competencies, practices and retention that go beyond individual trained teachers

to address weaknesses associated with system norms (retirement, re-deployment / transfer), in-service training, and silos of trained/untrained teachers within and across schools. This includes tracking the realisation of teacher policy reforms and addressing continuing gaps or weaknesses.

- Consistency and sustainability of student learning improvements: there is variability in learning gains between states and over time. Gains among P2 students in Kano reduced over the last academic year; these students did not sustain the previous year's gains.

This indicates some inconsistent learning progress over time, suggesting that learning gains during programme implementation may not be sustained longer-term, beyond PLANE.

- Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) are currently procured and distributed through PLANE for core subjects in PLANE schools. Moves towards government-led and financed TLM provision raise concerns about sustainability of these packages to schools, and therefore the sustainability of improved teaching and learning outcomes.
- Non-formal state education agen-

cies are not consistently engaged in education system reforms led by PLANE. They have expertise that can make important contributions to improving learning outcomes across the system. However, officials at these agencies report exclusion from forums and working groups. Their participation is not systematically documented, and their influence seems partial and inadequate, especially in view of the prioritisation of the Out of School Children (OOSC), including in the government's 2025 Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative (NESRI) agenda, that requires non-formal sector engagement.

Window 2

Education in Emergencies in Borno and Yobe

★★★★☆ Overall rating

The Window 2 programme has reached over 340,000 children through teaching and learning interventions. Findings demonstrate well-evidenced contributions to change, particularly in strengthening access, safety, inclusion in learning spaces and tailoring teaching and learning to children's needs in humanitarian contexts.



Key contributions to change

- Improved child protection, safety, and psychosocial wellbeing through large-scale training of teachers, headteachers and SBMCs, operationalisation of Safe School Minimum Standards, provision of psychosocial support, and strengthened school-community safeguarding structures. Schools reported improved perceptions of safety, more nurturing classroom environments, and increased attendance - especially for girls.
- Enhancement of teaching quality, inclusiveness and relevance in for-

mal and non-formal settings. Structured lesson plans, coaching, inclusive pedagogy, gender-responsive approaches, and strengthened non-formal centres (e.g., Accelerated Basic Education Programme) improved instructional practices and learner engagement. Window 2 interventions equipped nearly 7,000 teachers with inclusive, learner-centred methodologies.

- Support to foundational learning and pathways to continuity of schooling. Over 340,000 children have been reached through one of its teaching and learning programmes. In 2025, 92% of girls in Window 2-supported schools tran-

sitioned from primary grade 6 to junior secondary school. Window 2 also contributed to improved literacy and numeracy at upper primary levels, strengthened community mobilisation for enrolment and retention, and introduced mechanisms for tracking learner progression through Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) tools.

- System recovery and governance strengthening across policy reform, personnel management, public financial management, participation, accountability and service delivery. Window 2 supported domestication of key edu-

cation policies, integrating accelerated learning into formal systems, establishing functional Teacher Management Information Systems (TMIS) dashboards, improved teacher deployment data, strengthened SBMCs, and better coordination across state agencies.

- Increased state and community capacity for conflict-responsive, inclusive planning and emergency education delivery. Both states achieved conflict-responsive, gender- and disability-inclusive sector plans; LGA teams and EMIS/TMIS officers received targeted capacity building, and SBMC functionality improved through training and

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- Uneven safeguarding and lack of outcome-level data: While training coverage was high, only a portion

of sampled schools had safeguarding plans, and psychosocial well-being improvements could not be verified due to absent standardised indicators.

- Sustainability and scale risks: High teacher and facilitator turnover, weak state financing, irregular remuneration, limited instructional materials, and inconsistent supervision threaten continuity of gains. Institutionalisation of Window 2 models remains partial (although the model is only applicable in urban/secure areas, which have seen large population influx).
- Fragile system recovery due to insecurity and climate shocks: Teacher deployment, school operations, and monitoring are frequently disrupted by conflict and flooding. Infrastructure damage and IDP occupation of schools slow recovery. The W2 model is primarily applicable to urban/more secure areas,

including those with population influx. Alternative or adapted models are needed in more insecure and unstable areas including those currently supported by Education in Emergencies cluster members.

- Inclusion gaps: Despite progress, facilities, teaching aids and disability-specific supports remain limited. Reliable learning assessment data for children living with disabilities (CLWD) remain scarce, and gender-sensitive practices are uneven, especially in rural LGAs.
- Evidence and attribution limitations: Verified data on transitions into and out of primary school, system-wide adoption, and government mainstreaming remain limited; improvements are largely concentrated in PLANE-supported schools and centres.

Window 3

Community support to learning in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa

★★★★ Overall rating

Findings demonstrate variable contributions to change, from positive changes in community attitudes to inclusion and the benefits of microfinancing to education, to weaker attainment in supporting children living with disabilities and tracking learners through education pathways. Overall, evidence shows good progress at output level, but weaker evidence of change at outcome level.



Key contributions to change

- Improving supported communities' overall attitudes towards girls' education and learning opportunities for all children regardless of status and identity.
- Identification and support of children living with disabilities, includ-

ing to access learning opportunities, has been important at local and individual levels. In total, 741 children had been referred to specialist services and 597 supported to re-enrol in school.

- Community-based learning centres, especially Catch-Up Clubs (for which there is the most and strongest evidence), have in-

creased enrolled children's literacy and numeracy skills over their duration. Attendance and completion rates are strong, quantitative indications show some learning improvements, value for money indicators are good, and qualitative data is also supportive of these improvements in children's learning.

- Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) are well-evidenced as raising demand for schooling by enabling financial support for children's education. Members and children of 88 VSLA groups have benefitted from this microfinancing initiative. The approach shows signs of sustainability after PLANE leaves with members expressing commitment and capacity to sustain the associations.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- Lack of availability of quantitative data on children's learning gains from community-based learning centres. The evaluation did not have access to learning metrics (test scores) before and after the intervention, so cannot fully assess

learning gains. Data that were available show learning improvements, but these improvements do not meet the programme's expected targets for Catch up Clubs (CuCs) or Literacy Boost interventions.

- Programme funding and subcontractor management issues both limited the duration and outcomes of specific activities including social behaviour change communication and support for CLWD. Overall actual support for CLWD was 50% less than the planned target.
- Lack of consistent monitoring over time of children who complete accelerated community learning programmes: there is no systemic monitoring mechanism to track children from community learning centres into formal schooling

and formal school progression. While this is due to Window 3's focus on community learning, this has resulted in a gap in data on the programme's contribution to PLANE's outcome and impact.

- Education and learning support for CLWD is not systemic: outputs are commendable but individualised and unsustainable without PLANE funds and skills. Although advocating for more inclusive schooling, there is no evidenced contribution of PLANE to improving the system of support for educating CLWD at LGA or state levels. This is partially associated with weaknesses in internal (with Window 1) and external (with state and non-state disability organisations) collaboration.

ToC Assumptions Review

The PLANE portfolio ToC is underpinned by seven cross-cutting assumptions. The evaluation assessed the extent to which these assumptions have held and remained since 2023, applying a three-point Red-Amber Green (RAG) scale.

The evaluation finds that both of the two programme assumptions – the availability and reliability of FCDO funding, and the programme enabling effective linkages between supply and demand – are partially held but under strain. FCDO funding is under pressure and likely to be reduced going

forwards; in addition, reporting delays have contributed to fund disbursement delays previously. While supply and demand for education have both improved, PLANE's non-involvement (by design) in infrastructure improvements creates a gap in quality supply.

Of the five external assumptions, the evaluation finds that two are mostly held with minimal/manageable risk; two are partially held (as above); and one is barely held, the assumption having major strain with implications for the ToC.

The lack of hindrance to programme and education delivery caused by

Covid-19 means that this assumption has held and remains minimal risk; there also remains strong political will for access to quality basic education at federal and state levels, with several government agencies responsible for and prioritising girls' education and marginalised children's learning (such as Almajiri).

Assumptions of manageable insecurity and conflict and political and economic stability are partially held, with some strain and risks associated with these assumptions that do and may continue to impinge upon PLANE and the wider education system. Insecurity periodically disrupts teaching, learning and supervision across northern Nigeria; and can reproduce caregivers' fear and reluctance about schooling. While economic and political conditions have not hindered education delivery completely, they have had negative effects: altered federal education reform agendas and priorities since 2023; high inflation, fuel and food poverty, all present risks to this ToC assumption.

One assumption has barely held and is a significant risk to PLANE: the availability of accurate education data. Many datasets at state level are still not available for the last two academic years; previous data have inconsistencies and are somewhat unreliable – this is a major hindrance to effective education planning and delivery.

Level of ToC	Assumption	Rating
Programme assumption	1. Availability and reliability of FCDO funding	Partially held
	2. Programme enabling effective linkages between supply and demand	Partially held
External Assumptions	3. Insecurity and conflict do not restrict programme delivery and access	Partially held
	4. Programme and education delivery is not hindered by Covid-19	Mostly held
	5. Federal and state governments continued political will to prioritise education, poverty, gender and learning needs of marginalised children	Mostly held
	6. Wider political, macro-economic and security conditions remain stable, including election stability	Partially held
	7. MICS and ASC data are available on time and reasonably accurate	Barely held

4. Conclusion

PLANE has made substantial positive strides towards achieving its intended outcome through the interventions and gains of each of its three Windows.

There is robust evidence, in which the evaluation has a high degree of confidence, that student learning outcomes in PLANE formal schools and non-formal learning centres (overall) have improved since the baseline evaluation thanks to PLANE's interventions in teaching, learning and inclusion.

PLANE has adapted well to changes in the political economy since 2023 and is managing more recent macroeconomic and education policy instability well.

Alignment, and efforts to align, with federal and state government priorities – including the federal government's Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative (NESRI) 2025 – are visible and well-received by government and non-government stakeholders alike. There is good evidence of alignment with external organisations and programmes such as Reaching Out of School Children (ROOSC) and the new World Bank HOPE-Edu programme. These demand further attention, evidence-sharing, and strengthening going forwards.

Federal and state education policy and governance reforms have been bolstered by PLANE's contributions in the areas of teacher recruitment, deployment and retention; safe schools; and girls' education.

In the last two years, policy influencing and technical support to policy development has been a significant part of Window 1 and Window 2's work, providing space for sustainability of the programme and its gains. Quality assurance and accountability mechanisms are helping to track the institutionalisation, implementation and effects of reforms and address needs at local levels. However, many new and/or revised policies remain in the early stages of reform and continuous support is required to ensure that they are maintained, resourced and delivered effectively and sustainably.

In improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning, all Windows have made major contributions:



- **Under Window 1**, a Foundational Skills Package of a structured mother-tongue (Hausa) pedagogy plus teacher and head teacher training plus TLMs has improved teaching quality across the states. Classroom observation data at midline show improved teaching competencies and behaviours. These teaching improvements are aligned with quantified improvements in student learning in Maths and Hausa at P4 and, to a lesser extent, P2. Impact evaluation complements this, showing statistically significant foundational learning gains for students in PLANE vs non-PLANE schools.
- **Window 2's** large-scale teacher training on three learning packages – ABEP, TaRL and KARI - have mostly made improvements in instructional quality, inclusive practices and learning outcomes, especially under ABEP and KARI. KARI is another well-received, structured mother-tongue pedagogy package in Kanuri, while ABEP has proven an effective pathway for improving foundational skills rapidly to enable returns to formal schooling, especially for girls.
- **Window 3's** community learning centres show good quality child-centred facilitation, short-cycle literacy/numeracy gains and high attendance, but have limited longitudinal learning datasets, and weak tracking of re-entry to formal school. Community-based approaches – like learning centres and ABEP – seem to be effective at generating local political will for education and sustaining, with the right mechanisms (such as trained

remunerated local facilitators and VSLAs), longer-term improvements for children's learning.

Some interventions show strong potential to be sustained beyond PLANE – particularly policy reforms with budgets and plans, long-lasting training and capacity building, and improved attitudes and practices around inclusion and inclusive education. In contrast, resource-intensive interventions (such as intensive teacher coaching, mentoring, and assistive devices for individual children with disabilities) are unlikely to be sustainable by government. Measuring impact is also constrained by weak education data systems; progress in this area has been limited.

PLANE faces significant contextual risks, including reduced global funding, instability, and systemic pressures affecting national education priorities. With major funding cuts expected from April 2026 and only two to three years remaining for Windows 1 and 2, PLANE must adapt and reprioritise to embed gains within existing systems.

Despite these challenges, opportunities remain: leveraging technology to strengthen education data systems, advancing policy reforms through efficient partnerships and sustained commitment, improving teaching practices through wider adoption of materials, and deepening collaboration with state and non-state actors. PLANE's lasting contributions will depend on accelerating progress towards robust, institutionalised processes, frameworks and systems that can maintain, operationalise and realise quality basic education for all.



4. Recommendations

DELVE's recommendations are made in the context of declining Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) resources in general and for PLANE, as well as strategic shifts in government priorities for basic education since 2023. Recommendations are divided into two areas: (1) Recommendations for interventions that PLANE should aim to continue and prioritise, including with any recommended adaptations; (2) Recommendations for interventions that government and/or other financed programmes should adopt, and sustain from PLANE's successes.

1. PLANE should continue and prioritise:

1.1 Basic education policy influencing: using the framework developed by PLANE (Annex I) with three focus policies. Track policy movement to operationalisation with resources and implementation tracking. Much additional effort is required to track and support the realisation of institutional reforms – for teachers, safe schools, girls' education, and non-state school quality – into local (LGA/school) improvements.

In addition, establish costs for policy reform along the 8-point scale to develop VfM indicators for this work for wider programme and donor influencing; continue to be a lead on co-creation – coordinating multi-stakeholder technical working groups and coalitions at state level to maximise shared ownership, state and non-state cross-agency communications, productivity and efficiency. This should be prioritised in alignment with state government priorities in the following three policy areas:

- Teacher recruitment, deployment and retention: continue to advocate and encourage govern-

ment-led reforms and plans to address wider issues of deployment, transfers and attendance; unnecessary teacher transfers should be minimised to maintain continuity, build institutional capacity, and sustain the gains achieved through training and programme support.

- Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools (SSVFS) national policy domestication, operationalisation and implementation, to bolster advocacy and action (plans, budgets, expertise) for improved security and climate and conflict resilience in basic education.
- Non-state school policies and regulation, to improve education quality, safety and accountability of the non-state sector in alignment with the National Policy on Non-State Schools in Nigeria (2024).

1.2 Language of instruction evidence-based influencing and technical advice: experience and evidence across PLANE Windows indicate strongly the benefit to effective learning of mother-tongue based teaching, especially in the early grades (P1-P4). Window 2 is aiming to build Kanuri and Hausa-based models into the system in the North East; Window 1's data on learning improvements that may be aligned to its Hausa-based mother tongue instructional approach also gives credit for advocacy for Hausa-based lower grade teaching for improved learning outcomes. However, at federal level there is a pivot back to English language of instruction from the start of primary with uncertainty about how this would be implemented in Hausa-speaking states. This will likely require pragmatic responses that are locally grounded. PLANE can provide evidence to, and engage with, this current and critical debate.

1.3 Teacher training and professional development: based on the evidence of the effectiveness of existing in-service training, combined with the need for further reach and sustainability, PLANE should pivot more resources and technical expertise-sharing towards pre-service teacher training. PLANE should engage and collaborate with the National Commission for Colleges of Education and state Colleges of Education to share evidence of best practice pedagogies, effective classroom management, and record keeping, all of which have been PLANE's strengths. PLANE has a foundational relationship upon which to build for this pivot. PLANE's efforts to build the strengths of state governments for this work, built into new teacher policies, should also continue apace. Additionally, PLANE itself must – during 2026-27 – build in cascade training using Head Teachers and/or Master trainers to disseminate pedagogical good practices more widely, including to non-core teachers in PLANE schools and to teachers in non-PLANE schools.

1.4 SSO capacity development / strategic support: logframes do not address the emerging evidence of the importance of the role and functions of SSOs as a lynchpin between government and schools. Their role in PLANE should be formalised to enable strategic and systemic targets for capacity building and monitoring SSO outcomes, retention, and feed into school data reports.

1.5 VSLA advocacy and strategic support: Village Savings and Loans Associations make a positive contribution to children's enrolment and retention at school and to families' commitment and resourcing of education. Strategic advocacy to sustain existing structures and scale up opportunities to establish VSLAs in other communities would develop the evidence base and raise government awareness of the role of VSLAs in improving access for children, including the most marginalised.

2. Government and/or newly financed programmes should adopt and sustain from PLANE:

2.1 Teaching and Learning Materials procurement, production, distribution and tracking: shift to supporting government-led procurement and production, with appropriate budget lines, plans and processes in place, including via state Education Sector Plans.

2.2 Student learning assessments: PLANE should focus now on capacity development of government agencies, and information-sharing with the World Bank's HOPE-EDU programme, to continue student learning assessments through technical training on reading and maths foundational assessments (including EGRA/EGMA) as well as a handover of PLANE's existing assessment processes via experiential learning in 2026-2027, with manuals and tools on sampling and methodologies, data collection, analysis, and reporting for capacity building and knowledge management. This may be most feasible and efficient in alignment

with broader support to education data systems improvement, and ongoing capacity and technical support to ensure that education data systems are fit-for-purpose and sustainable. HOPE-Edu could be a critical vehicle in this sizeable and important work.

2.3 Local Government Authority capacity development for decentralised education management: adapt to include more local government engagement especially following Local Government Reform Agenda and 2024 Supreme Court ruling for fiscal and administrative autonomy. This would include LGA-led SBMC training and continuous support.

2.4 Strategic support for children of school-age living with any disability: there is a major need for leadership to establish systemic support over individualised ad-hoc interventions. Partners should systematically harness the expertise and organisations that exist to collaborate on improving inclusivity in education for these all children living with additional needs as part of efforts

to reach OOSC. This includes federal and state disability commissions and networks and non-government organisations like Sightsavers.

2.5 ABEP: ABEP has proven an effective pathway for out-of-school children to quickly acquire improved literacy and numeracy to transition back to formal school. PLANE should now plan for a gradual phase-out of direct delivery of accelerated learning, handing over processes and approaches to state and local government authorities using and developing capacities via the now institutionalised ABEP National Guidelines. The renewed focus on out-of-school children under the federal government's 2025 NESRI agenda adds impetus to this recommended process.

2.6 Support and regulation of all non-state schools, including through new non-state school policy implementation and tracking, to monitor and ensure compliance, quality, and equity, and to maximise equitable utilisation of non-state finance.



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Acronyms

ABEP	Accelerated Basic Education Programme	MT	Mother Tongue
AGILE	Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment	MTSS	Medium-Term Sector Strategy
AI	Artificial Intelligence	NCPWD	National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
AL	Accelerated Learning	NE	North East
ASC	Annual School Census	NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report	NESRI	National Education Sector Reform Initiative
BE	Baseline Evaluation	NDPA	Nigerian Data Protection Act
CDF	Capacity Development Framework	NDPR	Nigerian Data Protection Regulation
CGD	Community Group Discussion	NPE	National Policy on Education
CLWD	Children Living With Disabilities	NW	North West
CSACEFA	Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All	ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment	OOSC	Out-of-School Children
DELVe	Human Development Evaluation, Learning and Verification Services	PD	Project Director
EiE	Education in Emergencies	PE	Performance Evaluation
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment	PFM	Public Financial Management
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment	PM	Project Manager
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems	PLANE	Partnership for Learning for All in Nigerian Education Programme
EQ	Evaluation Question	PTA	Parent Teacher Association
EQUALS	Evaluation Quality Assurance and Learning Services	ROOSC	Reaching Out of School Children
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	SAME	State Agency for Mass Education
FCDO-N	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Nigeria	SANE	State Agency for Nomadic Education
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria	SME	State Ministry of Education
FME	Federal Ministry of Education	SBMC	School Based Management Committee
GAF	Governance Assessment Framework	SSO	School Support Officer
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion	SE	State Expert
GEFA	Global Evaluation Framework	SSE	Senior State Expert
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	SSVFS	Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools
GPI	Gender Parity Index	SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
GoN	Government of Nigeria	TA	Technical Advice or Technical Assistance
HT	Head Teacher	TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level
IQS	Islamic Quranic Schools	TM	Team Leader
		TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials

IQTE	Integrated Quranic and Tsangaya Education	TMIS	Teacher Management Information Systems
JONAPWD	Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities	TRCN	Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria
KaLMA	Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator	TRDR	Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention
KARI	Kano Accelerated Reading Initiative	ToC	Theory of Change
KII	Key Informant Interview	TWG	Technical Working Group
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
K-SAFE	Kano Safe Schools Accountability Framework	VfM	Value for Money
LGA	Local Government Authority	VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority	VYA	Very Young Adolescents
LNB	Literacy and Numeracy Boost	W1	PLANE Window 1: DAI & FHI360
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	W2	PLANE Window 2: UNICEF
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	W3	PLANE Window 3: Save the Children

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Programme Summary

Programme name	Human Development Evaluation, Learning and Verification Service (DELVe)
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Consortium	Ecorys Ltd (lead supplier); Itad Ltd; Preston Associates for International Development Ltd
FCDO Senior Responsible Owner	Ian Attfield; ian.attfield@fcdo.gov.uk
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1.0 Introduction

Ecorys UK Limited (Ecorys), in consortium with Itad Limited (Itad) and Preston Associates for International Development (Preston Associates), are contracted by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Nigeria (FCDO-N) to provide evaluation, learning and verification services through the Human Development Evaluation Learning and Verification Service (DELVE).

DELVE provides these services for the Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) programme, and provides FCDO with evidence for accountability, learning and decision-making. This Midline Evaluation report is delivered as part of the independent Performance Evaluation (PE) of PLANE as required by DELVE’s Terms of Reference (ToRs, Annex A). The Midline Evaluation Design document (DELVE, 2025) was approved by FCDO and independently reviewed by EQUALS in April 2025; it forms the basis of the Midline Evaluation and this report.

1.1 Context

1.1.1 The PLANE programme

PLANE is an FCDO Nigeria education programme with total planned investment of up to £170 million from 2019 to 2028 aimed at supporting the Government of Nigeria (GoN) at the federal level, and with selected states and non-state partners, to improve teaching, school quality, education management and the efficient delivery of education, benefitting up to 2 million children (FCDO, 2018). From 2019-2021 PLANE focussed on bridging interventions and building on previous programmes including education in emergencies (EiE) in the North East region, and the Kano Literacy and Maths Accelerator (KaLMA, British Council) in the North West. From 2021 to present, PLANE has focussed on its main intervention phase, delivered through three ‘Windows’ (Table 1). PLANE’s intended impact, to which all three Windows contribute is: *‘more children and young people acquire skills to be able to transition to more productive life opportunities.’*

Table 1: PLANE programme partners

Window	Implementing Partner	Thematic focus	States	Period
Window 1 (W1)	DAI FHI360	Getting the Foundations Right (A Systems Approach): more focussed teaching and learning, improved governance (for state and non-state education delivery), increased use of data and evidence	Kano Kaduna Jigawa	2021 - 2028
Window 2 (W2)	UNICEF	Education in Emergencies: support to help marginalised children affected by conflict learn foundational skills, and support to recovery of systems	Borno Yobe	2021 – 2025 (extension to 2027)
Window 3 (W3)	Save the Children	Community Support to Learning: improving inclusion and learning for marginalised children	Kano Kaduna Jigawa	2022 - 2026

PLANE is currently scheduled to continue through Window 1 until September 2028 and Window 2 until December 2027. Window 3 is due to close by September 2026. An ongoing programme financing review, necessitated by cuts announced to UK ODA by the current UK government in February 2025, may result in changes to this projection. Indeed, wider declines in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) resources have affected and continue to affect the operating environment of PLANE, other education programmes, and the Nigerian government’s strategy for financing basic education reforms.

1.1.2 The Nigerian context

The operating environment for donor-driven education programmes in Nigeria, such as PLANE, is changing. Stability is uncertain, and there is increasing emphasis on government-led and owned education reforms. Since 2022, political, economic and social changes in Nigeria have directly and indirectly affected PLANE's strategy and operations (Human Rights Watch, 2025; World Bank, 2025). The largely peaceful general elections on 25th February 2023 brought a new President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and new members of the Senate and House of Representatives. These changes introduced new political appointees in key partner agencies at federal and state levels, requiring renewed efforts to sustain government commitment, collaboration and understanding of PLANE's approach and agenda. Additionally:

- ▶ The removal of the fuel subsidy in May 2023 has contributed to a depreciation of the Naira and resulted in a severe cost-of-living crisis. This crisis includes rising costs of public transport; food insecurity and inflation; and labour union strikes, including among teachers.
- ▶ No overall improvements in living standards, especially among the poorest who are disproportionately affected by high food inflation. In 2025, 46% of Nigerians are estimated to live below the poverty line.
- ▶ Increasing rates of youth un- and under-employment and dissatisfaction, resulting from limited formal employment opportunities and an increasing youth population – up to 70% of Nigerians are estimated as under 30 years of age.
- ▶ Ongoing insecurity persists in disrupting economic and social activities including agriculture, trading, and schooling. In some local government areas of Kaduna state – and across the North West region – students and teachers have been targets of kidnapping, with consequent school closures and increasing fear around school safety.
- ▶ The complete withdrawal of USAID from basic education in Nigeria from early 2025, and significant reduction in aid and humanitarian funding overall, has contributed to challenging conditions, especially in the North East.

These are some of the key conditions of PLANE's intervention in basic education at state and federal level, which are likely to continue to affect PLANE going forwards into 2026 and beyond.

1.2 Purpose, Objectives and Scope

The Midline Evaluation aims to capture and record the current context and conditions of basic education in PLANE states in the North West (Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa) and North East (Borno and Yobe) regions, and at federal level, examine how these have changed since the Baseline Evaluation (BE) in 2022-3 (DELVE, 2023a), and what have been the direct and indirect contributions of PLANE to change.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a robust, evidence-based description and critical assessment of the progress of PLANE along the change pathways defined in the portfolio Theory of Change (ToC) towards its intended outcomes and impact. The evaluation describes the contextual opportunities and challenges within which change has occurred (building on section 1.1) and the relevance, appropriacy and completeness of the assumptions underpinning the ToC (section 5.9). The evaluation also provides specific and actionable recommendations, based on the evaluation findings, programmatic and contextual changes, for: (i) adjustments to the programme ToC; (ii) refinements to and focal areas of work for the programme going forwards; and (iii) government and non-government stakeholder priorities for basic education (section 7).

The Midline Evaluation has **four objectives**:

- A. Assess the progress of the PLANE programme since the BE against the portfolio ToC and change pathways, and identify specific areas of success and challenges;
- B. Establish the appropriacy and credibility of the PLANE portfolio ToC and its intervention logic, including factors that affect assumptions and change pathways;

- C. Provide robust evidence and clear recommendations to PLANE to support programme learning and adaptation, including for design, delivery, targets and indicators, within its remaining duration and budget;
- D. Provide evidence and recommendations to external stakeholders and participants, including federal and state governments and education administrators, to support wider learning on improving the sustainable delivery of quality basic education for all in northern Nigeria.

Minor adjustments to the objectives have been made since the Midline Design document approval (DELVE, April 2025) due to changes to UK ODA priorities and budget announced in February 2025 and during 2025 as a reduced financial package for PLANE 2026-2028. This has required the evaluation to emphasise findings and recommendations on maximising PLANE's impact with fewer resources, focussing on sustaining what works, and establishing whether and how programme gains may be sustainable beyond the programme by other (government or non-government) partners.

The **scope** of the Midline comprises all three implementation Windows of PLANE and activities in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa states in North West Nigeria (Windows 1 and 3 with overlap at Local Government Authority (LGA) level); Borno and Yobe states in the North East (Window 2), and at federal level (Window 1). The Midline does not include:

- i. Interventions (direct or indirect) made or supported by PLANE in southern Nigeria;
- ii. Analysis of any local partnerships at LGA or community levels to deliver PLANE;
- iii. Spillover effects of PLANE into any non-PLANE states or LGAs, except where these were specifically documented and triangulated.

The Midline covers the **full implementation of PLANE from January 2023 to August 2025**. This includes three rounds of pupil learning assessment data from W1 and W2 (2022-23; 2023-24; 2024-25). Changes during 2024-25 – approved by FCDO and driven by programme learning, prioritisations, and emphasis on systems change – have partially redefined the scope of the Midline, namely that:

- ▶ The exit of Window 3 (Save the Children) from Kaduna state at the end of the 2024-25 academic year means that the evaluation has a lighter 'endline' assessment of W3 in Kaduna focusing on impact and sustainability.
- ▶ The approved pivot of W3 in 5 PLANE-supported LGAs in Kano and Jigawa from broader community support to learning to government-supported Accelerated Basic Education Programming (ABEP) means that the evaluation has deliberately sought evidence and learning on ABEP within and beyond PLANE to share evidence for ABEP and support W3's effective implementation during 2025-26 (after which W3 will close).
- ▶ The prioritisation of evidence-based system reform by W1 – in tandem with rolling out focal LGA work in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa – has increased the focus of evidence generation for the Midline on systemic change, PLANE's contribution, strengths, weaknesses and gaps.

The **audience** for this evaluation is:

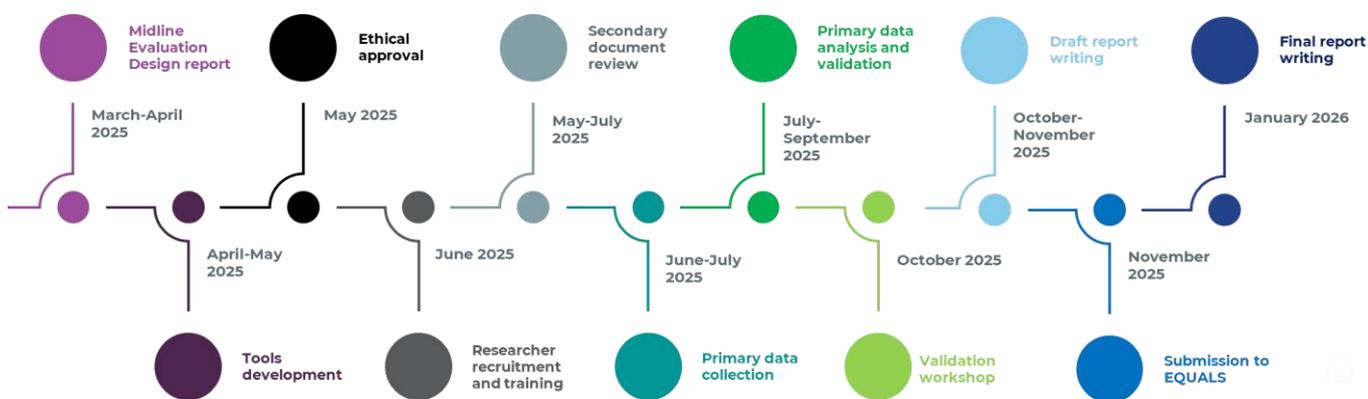
- a. FCDO, as the donor agency;
- b. PLANE programme staff from all three Windows, comprising DAI, FHI360, UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan International, as well as national implementing partners;
- c. The Nigeria federal Ministry of Education, federal education agencies (UBEC, NMEC) and state education agencies (SUBEB, mass and nomadic agencies);
- d. Nigerian and international basic education community of practitioners, policy makers, activists, academics and others for whom the findings may provide guidance and clarity on evidence-based interventions in new conditions of aid, specifically in northern Nigeria.

1.3 Evaluation Timeline

The Midline Evaluation covers the period of PLANE programming from January 2023 (the month after baseline data collection) to August 2025 (the end of the 2025 school year). In effect, the midline comprises the three consecutive academic years of 2022-23; 2023-24; and 2024-25. The Midline reflects and develops baseline findings from 2022, considering changes and progress against the ToC. The recommendations also look forward to programme implementation in 2026 and beyond. Figure 1 summarises the evaluation timeline.

This evaluation sits at the midpoint of Window 1’s programming (2021-2028) and can be considered a timely midline evaluation of W1. For Windows 2 and 3, the evaluation comes towards the end of programming, with both workstreams having one further year to run (September 2025-August 2026). For these programmes – and for W3’s work in Kaduna state, which closed in August 2025 – this evaluation is a quasi-endline evaluation, providing evidence of progress and potential adaptations for 2026, and summarises achievements, challenges, and ways forward beyond PLANE for implementing partners and others.

Figure 1 Midline Evaluation Timeline



1.4 Theory of Change

The PLANE portfolio Theory of Change (ToC) describes its overarching intervention logic:

IF state and non-state basic education providers enable better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children, AND more inclusive and effective education systems deliver foundational skills (Outcome) THEN there will be more children and young people (who) can transition to more productive life opportunities (Impact)¹

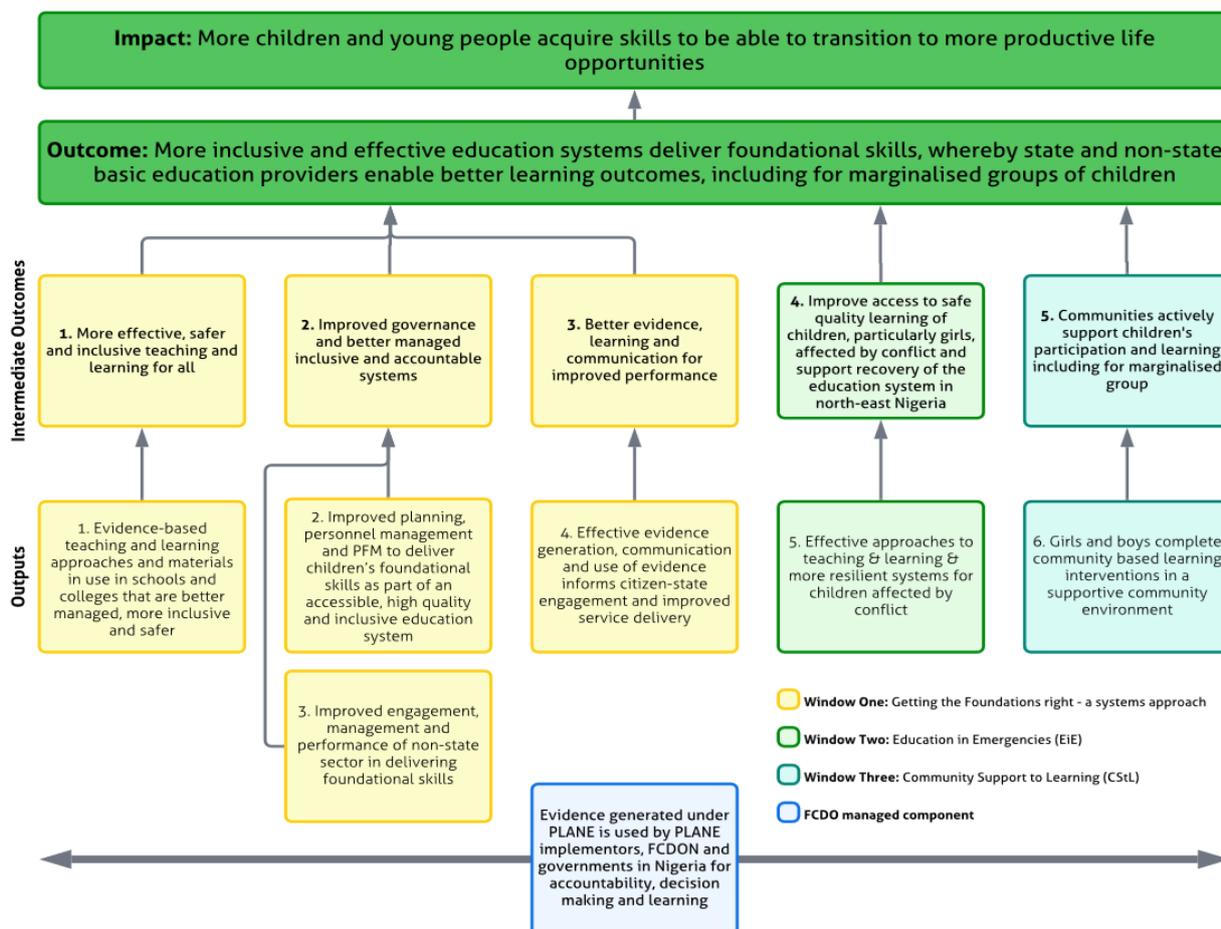
PLANE has a portfolio approach, implemented through three Windows, each with a distinct focus, which together intend to contribute to PLANE’s intended outcome and impact. The programme has **six outputs** shared across the Windows; these contribute to the outcome through **five intermediate outcomes**: three under Window 1 and one each under Windows 2 and 3 (Figure 2). The number of outputs and intermediate outcomes under each Window is broadly proportional to the financial investment in each Window.

The portfolio ToC and logframe were finalised in 2023 (Annex C) after the baseline evaluation was complete. However, these documents now underpin the objectives, approach, findings and recommendations of the Midline. The ToC intervention logic is the basis for **six change pathways** that detail the process through which each Window contributes to the programme outcome and impact. The ToC, portfolio intervention logic (Figure 2), change pathways and portfolio logframe, in turn align with the Windows’ own individual ToCs and logframes for monitoring and accountability of programme delivery, coherence and alignment. The evaluation focuses on the PLANE portfolio documents.

¹ This section summarises the *DELVe Portfolio ToC Narrative* document, 16 March 2023, attached in Annex C.

The FCDO-managed component, delivered by DELVe, generates and reviews evidence for programme accountability, decision-making and learning, through its Performance Evaluation and Technical and Research Assistance workstreams. DELVe’s contributions to change through its evaluation and research outputs are referenced throughout the findings as well as in section 5.7 – evidence generation and use.

Figure 2: PLANE portfolio intervention logic



1.5 Evaluation team

The core team comprises five international and four Nigeria based experts. They were supported by a team of researchers: Senior State Experts (SSE) and State Experts (SEs) in PLANE focal states who collected data for the Midline Evaluation. Researchers were selected based on their experience and expertise in qualitative data collection, familiarity with local contexts and language fluency (Hausa and Kanuri), with at least one female researcher per state. The same research teams were recruited, trained and deployed as at baseline (with one exception in Yobe state) thus ensuring trust, quality, and efficiency. The roles and responsibilities of the DELVe core team members responsible for the design, delivery, and dissemination of findings from the Midline are outlined in Annex B, with an overview of the researchers by state.

All DELVe evaluation team members provide an **evidence-based and independent perspective**, free from any conflicts of interest and were able to work freely and without interference. Regular communication with stakeholders and team members is maintained to address any potential concerns promptly and ensure that the evaluation is conducted ethically and responsibly. The Project Manager (PM) established a Conflict of Interest Register to contain any identified conflicts of interest, with mitigation strategies and actions to ensure transparency and maintain the integrity of the process.

1.6 Report structure

Section 1 has provided the background and context of the Midline evaluation. Section 2 describes the evaluation approach and methodology, drawing on the DELVE Performance Evaluation Design with core OECD-DAC evaluation criteria-based Evaluation Questions (EQs) and the PLANE portfolio Theory of Change. Section 3 details the adapted methods and tools utilised from baseline, while Section 4 outlines the evaluations' ethical processes and procedures (with details annexed).

Section 5 is the main body of this evaluation report, examining the evidence of progress and presenting findings for each PLANE Window against the portfolio ToC and the Midline evaluation questions. Each Window has two narrative 'Change Pathways' (CPs) that detail the process of change towards programme impact that is summarised by the portfolio intervention logic (Figure 2 above). Sections 5.1 to 5.6 present the evaluation's findings of whether and how Windows have made progress and contributed to change along these change pathways. Progress, and the strength of evidence for change, are rated on a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) scale from 1-4. Section 5.7 broadens to describe the PLANE programme's generation, communication and use of evidence; section 5.8 provides comprehensive portfolio level evidence and responses to the EQs; and section 5.9 examines whether the ToC assumptions have held and remain relevant to the current context.

Section 6 provides conclusions; section 7 presents the recommendations of this evaluation for PLANE and for government and non-government stakeholders to basic education for prioritising and sustaining education work based on these findings. Finally, section 8 offers key lessons learned for PLANE and for basic education stakeholders in Nigeria.

2.0 Approach and Methodology

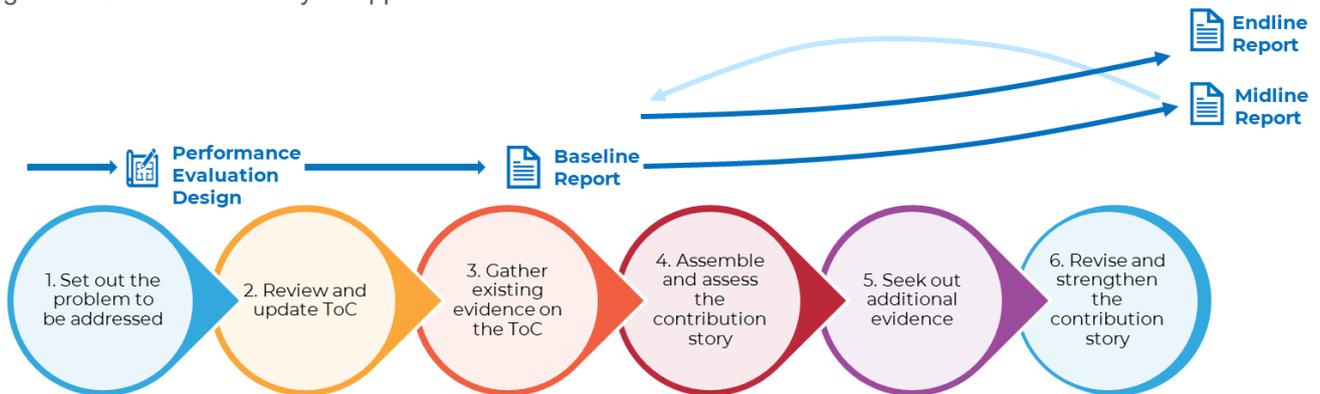
2.1 Approach to Performance Evaluation

The Midline evaluation is aligned with the BE and overarching PE to ensure quality, consistency, comparability, and results measurement. It incorporates adaptations in response to the introduction of the portfolio ToC and results framework; portfolio-wide learning; PLANE operational and strategic shifts; and changes to the operating environment at national and international level (section 1.1). This section explains both which elements remain consistent and which have been adapted to reflect current conditions within PLANE and its external context.

Theory-based Contribution Analysis (CA) is the methodological foundation of the Midline, as described in the PE Design (DELVE, 2022) and Midline Design (DELVE, 2025a). CA provides a rigorous and structured approach to evaluating the PLANE portfolio ToC against evidence collected. It builds a credible contribution story by demonstrating plausible links between interventions and outcomes. At Midline, the portfolio ToC serves as the core of the evaluation, guiding evidence collection around PLANE's contributions to change through six change pathways and its progress toward the shared, intended outcome (Figure 4 below).

CA has been applied by the PE, including at Midline, through six iterative steps (Figure 3). CA involves repeated loops of evidence gathering and checking back against the ToC, assumptions, context and evolving contribution stories. Stage 2, reviewing the portfolio ToC and logframe, have been critical at Midline given their finalisation post-baseline. Stages 3 and 5 – evidence review and gathering – are described under section 3 of this report; Stage 4 was initiated by the Baseline Evaluation and reviewed for the Midline, while Stage 6 forms the basis of the Midline Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations (sections 5-7).

Figure 3: Contribution Analysis approach



The PE incorporates elements of a developmental approach. At Midline, this has involved integrating insights from DELVE's formative evaluation and research workstreams, specifically from the School Opening and Attendance studies (DELVE, 2024 & 2025b); ABEP Scalability Study (DELVE, 2025c); and Policy Influencing Study (DELVE, 2025d). These have informed and are highly relevant to the portfolio ToC and intervention logic of all three Windows.

The Midline follows the overall PE approach and is structured around five modules: (1) Processes; (2) Systems; (3) Schools; (4) Communities; and (5) Synthesis and Reporting (Figure 4). This approach operationalises the iterative approach of CA:

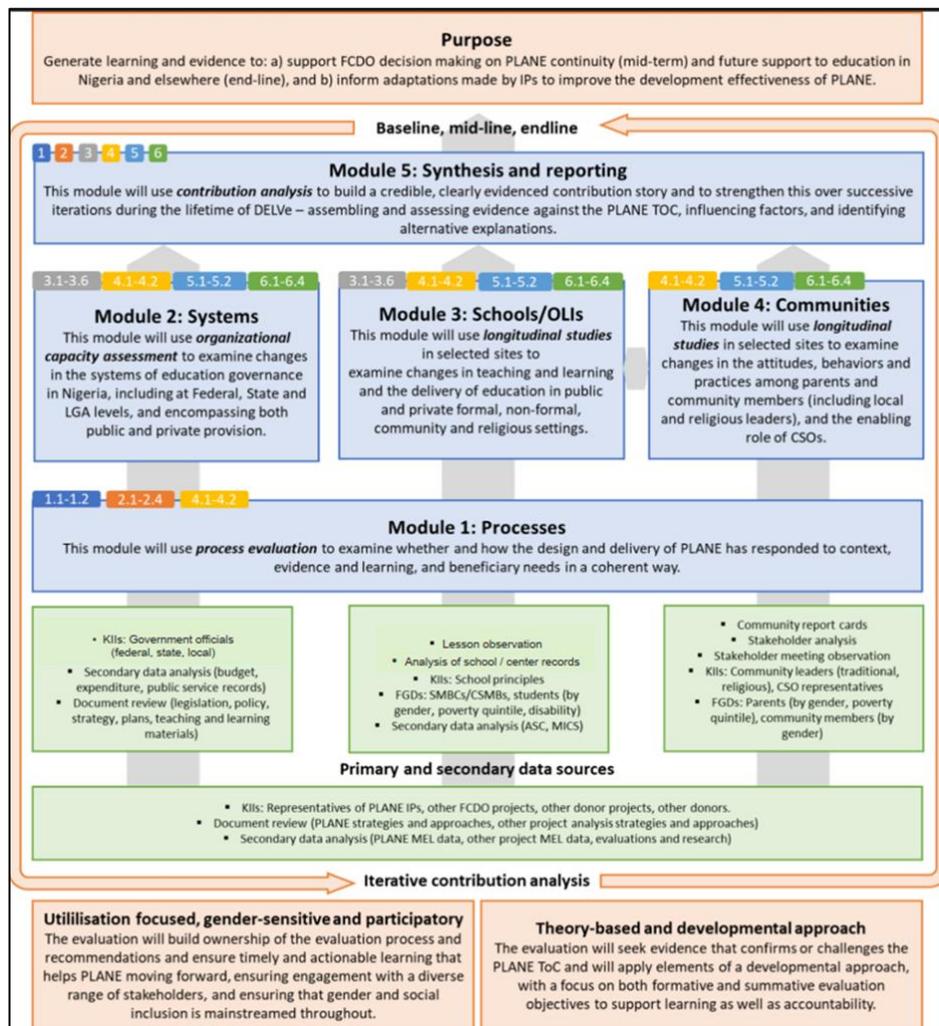
- ▶ Steps 1–3 and 5 (collating and building up the evidence base for the ToC) are part of data collection and analytical work under PE Modules 1-4.
- ▶ Step 4-6 (synthesising and seek additional evidence, revise and strengthen the contribution story) are covered by Module 5.

Alongside using CA and a developmental approach, this evaluation is designed to be practical, inclusive, and sensitive to gender, power dynamics and intersectionality, by:

1. Being attentive and responsive to **gender equality, social inclusion (GESI) and power dynamics** through all aspects of the design, operationalisation, analysis and reporting of the evaluation, including, in particular: (i) Midline Evaluation Framework (section 2.2); (ii) Methods, tools and sampling (section 3.1);

- (iii) Ethics and safeguarding (section 4); (iv) Data cleaning and analysis (section 3.3); and (v) Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations (sections 5, 6, 7). The evaluation utilises – and is limited by – the disaggregation of results by gender and disability status in PLANE implementing partner logframes and reports. This is recognising the central concern of PLANE with delivering results for marginalised groups, especially girls and children living with disabilities.
2. Taking an **intersectional approach**: looking at how different factors – such as gender, disability, poverty, religion, and location – combine to create barriers to education. This helps deepen our understanding of why some children are excluded, building on programmatic learnings. While logframe reporting remains exclusively disaggregated by sex and disability, these provide a limited explanation of the factors causing marginalisation. The evaluation also looks at other key factors that influence educational participation and attainment, based on the evidence available.
 3. Adopting a **utilisation-focused and participatory approach**. We aim to build ownership of the findings and recommendations, maximising engagement, relevance and utility for the PLANE programme and wider education stakeholders in Nigeria. This was done through an in-country Validation Workshop in October 2025 (Annex E), which brought together a wide range of stakeholders from the Federal Government, CSOs and PLANE implementing partners. The workshop provided an opportunity to discuss and give feedback on the evaluation findings, strengthen understanding of the evaluation and foster shared ownership. It also held DELVe accountable for its results and supported refinement and correction to improve their usefulness. Stakeholders at state and local levels will receive timely access to the approved Executive Summary and other accessible evaluation products, such as policy briefs translated into Hausa where needed.

Figure 4. Overall approach to Performance Evaluation



2.2 Evaluation framework: Modules, Questions, and Change Pathways

At this stage of the PLANE programme and considering recent changes in the education sector and development spending both within Nigeria and globally, it is essential to review the progress of each Window and the overall PLANE programme against its intended outcomes. At Midline, the PE approach structured around five modules (Processes; Systems; Schools; Communities; Reporting) and the Midline Evaluation Questions (Table 2 below) have been applied through analysis and evidence gathering on PLANE’s six ToC change pathways (two per Window). The portfolio intervention logic diagram (Figure 2 above) summarises the intended contribution channels through which each Window will contribute to a shared PLANE outcome and Impact. In practice, however,

‘Each Window has more complex change pathways through which they contribute to the shared portfolio outcome and impact. These change pathways are reflected in Window specific ToCs and results framework’ (Portfolio ToC Narrative, DELVe, 2023b).

These detailed change pathways are presented in boxes at the beginning of each sub-section of the Findings (section 5) and are shown as a comprehensive map in Annex C.

The Midline uses a nested model that establishes evidence against the four key PE Modules by asking the EQs to each of the six portfolio change pathways. The modules and EQs thus guide and provide a robust evaluation framework for the analysis of findings against PLANE’s ToC. The links between the modules, EQs – and the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (OECD, 2019) to which they correspond – are shown in Table 2. Not all change pathways of the ToC – and not all Windows – contribute equally to answering the EQs or providing evidence against each module. Following the evidence and analysis by Window (sections 5.1-5.6), the report therefore presents a synthesis of portfolio-wide to respond to the EQs (section 5.8).

Table 2: PE Modules, OECD-DAC criteria, and Midline Evaluation Questions

Module	OECD-DAC criteria	PE EQs
Processes	Relevance	How far and how well is the design of the programme consistent with the current political economy at state and Federal level?
	Coherence	How far and how well do the three PLANE Windows align with other interventions to support a coherent approach to improving foundational skills?
	Efficiency	How well has PLANE used resources to deliver results?
Systems	Sustainability	What steps have been taken to ensure the continuation of PLANE’s positive effects?
Schools & Communities	Effectiveness	How, and to what extent, has PLANE contributed to improved and more inclusive education systems delivering foundational skills and learning outcomes through high quality teaching and learning?
	Impact	How, and to what extent, has PLANE enabled children and young people to acquire skills to transition to more productive life opportunities?

3.0 Methods and Tools

3.1 Mixed methods

The Midline adopts mixed methods comprising a complementary and robust combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools and primary and secondary data sources to produce depth and breadth of evidence (Figure 5) The methods and tools utilised are lightly adapted from the BE, for quality, consistency and reliability of data collection and findings.

Primary data collection in May-June 2025 was coordinated to avoid (i) Windows' end of year school monitoring and learning assessments and (ii) states' academic calendar dates, including end-of term examinations and activities. Primary qualitative data were gathered through interviews and group discussions to produce narratives of the attitudes, behaviours, experiences and expectations of PLANE's stakeholders and participants. The longitudinal school-community element is the heart of primary data gathering, through which adults and children are engaged to understand and assess teaching and learning progress and educational change over time.

Secondary data were purposively and selectively gathered and analysed to examine key facets of PLANE's progress and broader conditions including:

- ▶ Student learning assessments (literacy and numeracy)
- ▶ School conditions (infrastructure and materials; teacher deployment, numbers, and quality; school leadership; school-community environments)
- ▶ Socioeconomic conditions (e.g. OOSC; conflict; climate), especially pertaining to the portfolio ToC.

The application of a mixed methods approach strengthens the evaluation by integrating deep and locally contextualised qualitative data with broader and representative quantitative data from PLANE and externally. This mix of data types and sources allows the evaluation to compare, contrast, validate and expand its analysis. Data are triangulated to enrich the contribution story at programme mid-point and strengthen the relevance, clarity and value of findings and recommendations.

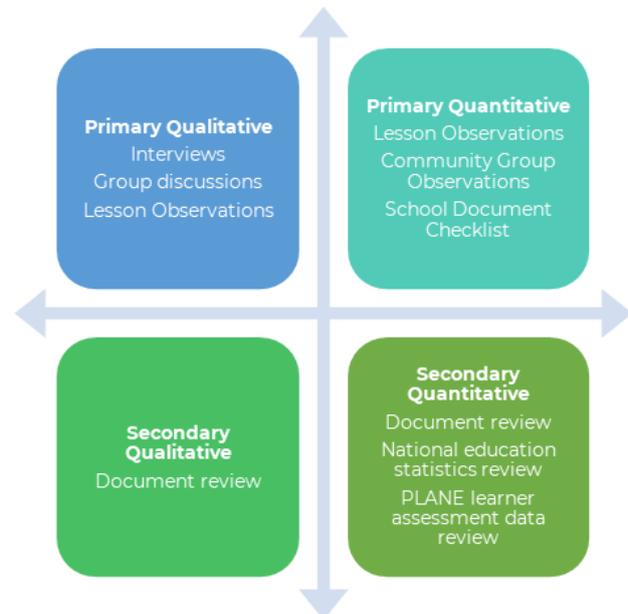
3.1.1 Primary data gathering

A summary of the methods, participants, and tools for primary data collection is provided in Table 3. All tools (in English) are given in Annex F.

Primary data collection tools were designed to be accessible and inclusive for all adults and children, including children living with disabilities and those affected by conflict, while also taking power dynamics into account. They were developed to facilitate participation regardless of language, literacy, or social status, drawing on best practices for conducting research with vulnerable populations, children, and young people. All tools were reviewed by the research team to ensure clarity, inclusiveness, and accessibility. A literacy check was done with all adult participants to ensure informed consent (see Section 4).

All tools, participant information and consent forms, were translated into Hausa. A professional translator was engaged for this purpose, and translations were quality assured by the team leader and researchers in the North West states, all of whom are fluent in English and Hausa. During data collection, participants were able to choose their preferred language. In the North East, one researcher was a fluent Kanuri speaker who interpreted the tools

Figure 5. PLANE Midline Evaluation mixed methods approach



into Kanuri upon request of participants. When Hausa or Kanuri were the preferred languages, interview and discussion notes were subsequently translated by the respective researchers into English for analysis.

Participants' sex, disability status, location, grade and age (for children only) were recorded for GESI analysis. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, personally identifiable information was anonymised as swiftly as practicable (Section 4). Whenever possible, participants were selected for inclusivity and diversity. For example, two teachers were sampled per school, following a guidance note that recommended at least one female teacher.

A summary of participants by tool and guidance / evaluation question areas (see section 2.2) is presented in Tables 3-5. In addition to tools summarised below, a School Document Checklist was deployed to gather evidence on school infrastructure and the existence and content of key documents (e.g., safeguarding plans, SBMC minutes).

Table 3: Key Informant Interviews

Participants	#	Tool	PE EQ focus
FCDO	3	KII guides	Processes; Systems
PLANE IPs	5	KII guides by Window IP	Systems; Schools; Communities
Federal government officials	13	KII guide: FME / UBEC officials	Processes; Systems
State and LGA government officials	16 / 9	KII guides: SUBEB, State Agency for Mass Education (SAME); State Agency for Nomadic Education (SANE); other	
Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All	1	KII guide: CSACEFA	Systems; Communities
Head teachers	53	KII guide: Head Teachers (English & Hausa)	Schools; Communities
Teachers	91	KII guide: Teachers (English & Hausa)	

Table 4: Student and community group discussions (CGDs)

Participants	#	Tool	Topics Covered	Considerations
Students (classes P4–P6)	53	Student Group Discussion (Options A and B)	To elicit children's experiences of learning in school. <u>Option A:</u> Standard group discussion with simple, direct questions on school experiences, factors supporting or hindering learning, and aspirations. <u>Option B:</u> Illustrated story map engaging small groups in drawing annotated pictures of their school to elicit themes and issues.	Researchers could choose either tool. The visual method (Option B) was intended for groups with low confidence, low literacy, and/or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Researchers prepared example story maps in advance for illustration.
Community members (general)	52	Community Group Discussion (CGD)	Educational backgrounds; attitudes and behaviours towards education; school access and participation; school management; other community projects; goals and aspirations.	Researchers confirmed on arrival whether any community group meetings were scheduled that day or the next to observe and participate. If not, they requested up to six community members via the head teacher for a discussion.
W3 community members	6	W3 CGD	Type, effectiveness, and strengths and weaknesses of W3 learning activities; challenges in returning to formal schools; retention, access, and inclusivity; education attitudes and behaviours; other community projects; and community needs.	Given the distinct nature of W3 activities, a bespoke tool was developed for CGDs with parents/caregivers of participating children, VSLA/Core Community Group members, and community leaders.

Table 5: Lessons and community group observations

Participants	#	Tool	Purpose and Content	Considerations
Teachers (and students in class)	64	Lesson Observation Tool	To gather evidence on teaching pedagogies, learning experiences, and outcomes. Observations were conducted in P4 and P6 classes to: (i) focus on intermediate and outcome indicators; and (ii) triangulate findings from learner group discussions.	The tool was co-created through collaboration among researchers, Windows, and FCDO, aligning with the UBEC and WB Teach Primary Observation tools. It captures pedagogical practices and task timing. As well as a qualitative assessment of teacher competency and lesson delivery, with space for notes on subject knowledge, classroom management, inclusion, and learning outcomes.
Community members	58	Community Group Observation Guide	Complementary to the CGD guide, this tool provided insight into community members' roles and cohesion. It aimed to capture group dynamics, procedures, consensus, and inclusivity.	Researchers rated (on a five-point scale) group representativeness, equal participation, mutual respect, consensus, and validation. Each rating was substantiated by written notes.

3.1.1.1 Evaluation sample

The evaluation tools were deployed in a sample of schools across the five states of PLANE operations. The midline school sample is derived from BE following the longitudinal approach to data collection and analysis. **All five states** engaged with PLANE were re-visited at Midline. At state level, the BE selected LGAs proportional to Windows' level of engagement in that state: one in Yobe; two in Borno; and three each in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa (12 in total). At Midline, this sample was retained in Borno and Yobe and reduced to two each in Kano and Jigawa for programmatic, practical and security reasons, giving a **total sample at Midline of nine LGAs**. This is described in the Midline Design (DELVE, 2025a, section 2.3) and summarised in Table 6:

Table 6: LGA sample Baseline-Midline

State	Baseline LGAs by Window	Midline LGAs	Rationale
Kano	Bunkure (W1); Minijibir (W1&3); Makoda (W3)	Bunkure & Minijibir	Programmatic shift to ABEP and reduction of W3 communities
Kaduna	Kaduna South (W1), Soba (W1&3), Kauru (W3)	Kaduna South & Soba	Conflict in Kauru; Exit of W3 from state
Jigawa	Dutse (W1), Malam Madori (W1&3), Babura (W3)	Dutse & Malam Madori	Programmatic shift to ABEP and reduction of W3 communities
Borno	Maiduguri Metropolitan City (MMC); Jere	Maiduguri Metropolitan City (MMC); Jere	-
Yobe	Damaturu	Damaturu	-

In all five states and nine LGAs, all **53 visited** schools followed the baseline sample: in Kaduna and Jigawa states all 24 re-visited schools have been supported by PLANE's foundational learning approach and package for maths and literacy (Hausa and English). In Kano state, six schools follow the foundational package and five have been supported through accelerated learning (one baseline non-state Tsangaya school could not be re-evaluated at midline due to the non-availability of staff and students).² In Borno and Yobe states, the same 18 schools were accessed, including eight schools implementing TaRL; seven schools implementing KARI; and two ABEP sites.

In advance of data gathering, BE schools were verified through triangulation with Windows' staff located in the states, school databases, the Midline evaluation's field experts, and state and local education authorities (SUBEBs and LGEA Education Secretaries, ESSs), including their own databases used for ASC reporting. The results of this

² The school compound appeared not to be in use, and the HT could not be contacted. The site could not be confirmed by W1 in advance.

process verified all sites, except that in Bunkure that was neither verified in advance nor in situ. Table 7 provides a summary of schools visited by type and state.

Table 7: Sampled schools by type and state

State	School type				
	Total	Public	IQTE	Private	Nomadic
Borno	12	6	6	0	0
Yobe	6	6	0	0	0
Kano	11	6	4	0	1
Kaduna	12	9	1	1	1
Jigawa	12	6	2	1	3
MIDLINE		33	13	2	5
	53	62%	25%	4%	9%
BASELINE		29	12	4	6
	53	55%	23%	8%	11%
Difference		4	1	-2	-1
	0	8%	2%	-4%	-2%

Data analysis and findings only examine changes over time in **matched LGA and school samples** between base-midline – i.e. the **nine LGAs and 53 schools** that are longitudinally consistent (see also section 3.5 for limitations). One formerly nomadic school in Minijibir, Kano, now self-reports as a public school.

At individual level, the midline sampled individuals present in schools, local and state government agencies with the same role (job title) as at BE. Many of these individuals were different to those interviewed at BE due to staff changes and transfers, but undertaking the same, or similar roles. Thus, at school level, the head teacher plus two core skills teachers were interviewed; at LGA level, the ES was interviewed; and at state level, officials from SUBEB, the State MoE, and mass, nomadic or Islamic education authorities were also interviewed. Table 8 shows the individual participants by state and agency at Midline, including proportions for each respondent type by sex.

Table 8: Midline participants at state and local level

Midline Participants at State and Local Level																	
Participants / States	HT		Teachers		Students		Community Members		LGA ES		State Gov Official		Federal Gov Officials		W3 Community Members		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Borno	11	1	7	15	72	72	36	24	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	242
Yobe	6	0	4	8	36	36	24	14	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	133
Kano	11	0	20	1	67	59	53	17	2	0	3	1	0	0	16	8	258
Kaduna	5	7	7	13	55	53	41	30	2	0	1	2	0	0	16	8	240
Jigawa	12	0	13	3	60	54	53	14	2	0	2	1	0	0	9	13	236
FCT													6	7			
Total (by sex)	45	8	51	40	290	274	207	99	9	0	11	5	6	7	41	29	1,122
Total	53		91		564		306		9		16		13		70		1122
Midline % female	15%		44%		49%		32%		0%		31%		54%		41%		41%
Baseline % female	18%		33%		52%		35%		0%		17%						

In total, across five states, the Midline gathered data from **1,122 individuals** engaged with the PLANE programme. These primary data – complemented and triangulated with data from other sources – provide a critical component of the Midline findings and recommendations.

3.1.2 Secondary data gathering

Secondary data collection and analysis comprised (i) an extensive literature review of documents within and outside of the PLANE programme, (ii) programme MEL data review, including Window logframes, student learning assessments, and impact evaluation reports; and (iii) external education data review, including states' Annual School Census reports. The document review component included the creation of an annotated bibliographic database to organise the literature and facilitate sharing resources across the team to gather findings for the EQs and change pathways.

Literature is cited where relevant in section 5, and full references provided in Annex H. The bibliographic database contains over 150 annotated and categorised documents that were reviewed and analysed for the Midline. Documents were requested and shared by the PLANE Windows, by government and non-government evaluation participants, and through Boolean searches online.

Window 1 and Window 2's impact evaluation studies both provide data and reporting on student learning assessments in literacy and numeracy, comparing PLANE schools with non-PLANE schools. W1's impact evaluation uses a Spatial Design Discontinuity approach whereby selected PLANE and non-PLANE schools are situated either side of a geographic LGA border but otherwise sharing similar characteristics for comparison. Window 2 has outsourced operational research to conduct student learning assessments in PLANE schools that variously teach using KARI, TaRL and/or ABEP approaches, and compare maths and reading results with a random sample of non-PLANE sites. These data importantly complement logframe monitoring data and primary evaluation data to enhance the scope of DELVe's evaluation of the contribution of PLANE to improving student learning outcomes. The data are reported and discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.4.

Table 9 provides an overview of the documents reviewed by type, and Table 10 lists the Annual School Census (ASC) reports obtained and analysed for the evaluation by state and school year. Weak capacity, poor coordination, funding constraints and security challenges have all affected the timeliness of ASC data gathering, analysis and publication (especially in Borno state).

Table 9: Document review by type

Author / publisher	#	Document types
Federal governments	34	Policies, plans, tools, reports, presentations, data
State governments (PLANE focal states)	79	Plans, strategies, data/surveys, budget and planning documents, guidelines, policies, reports (incl. ASC reports)
Donor, INGO, bi- or multilateral organisation	20	Reports, evaluations, briefs and articles
PLANE	50+	FCDO: Annual Reviews Windows: Student learning assessments, M&E reports, logframe and progress data, quarterly reports, other reports and publications, social media posts. W1 specific: Impact evaluation Spatial Discontinuity Design study W2 specific: Operational Research: case-control learning assessment study

Table 10: Reviewed Annual School Census Reports

State / AY	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Kano		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Kaduna			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jigawa	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Borno		✓	✓	✓			
Yobe		✓	✓	✓	✓		

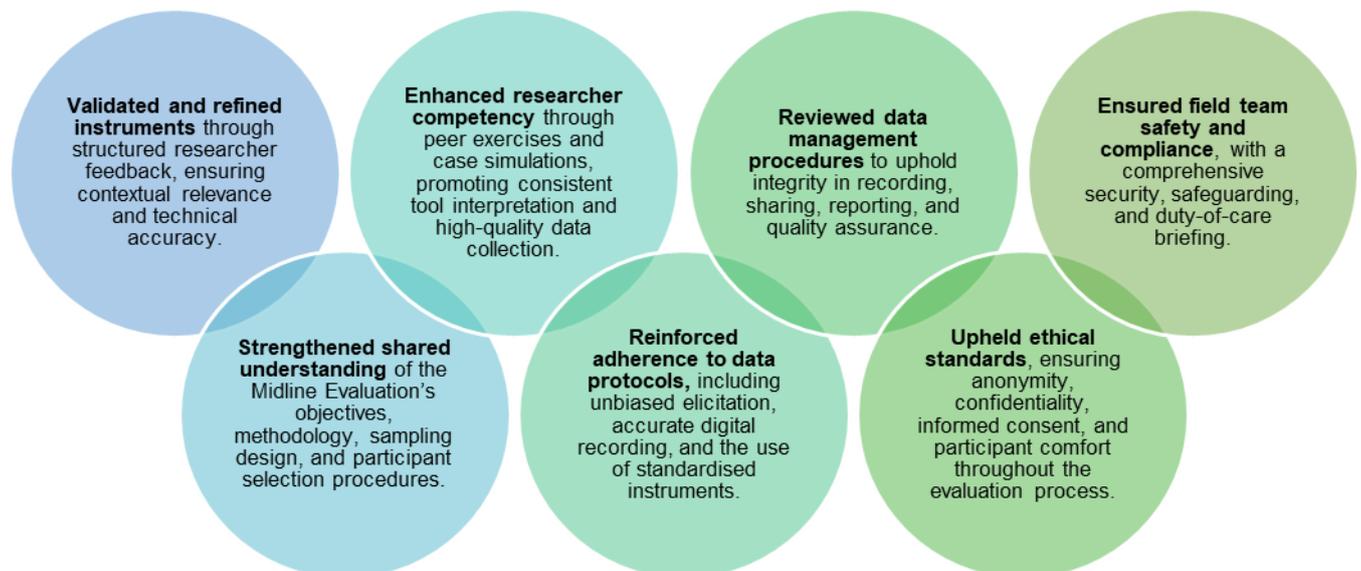
3.2 Pre-fieldwork activities: tool validation and researcher training

Following the completion of draft tools, DELVe disseminated all materials to researchers for review and feedback, enabling refinement of tools and finalisation of data collection protocols. All researchers, except one, also participated in the baseline evaluation, thereby ensuring continuity and bringing prior understanding and knowledge of the programme, its scope, and the tools used. A one-day national workshop was convened on 16 June 2025, with full participation from all researchers.

Informed by a rapid learning needs assessment, the workshop focused on reviewing, validating, and practicing the school and community tools. It provided an interactive platform for state teams to strengthen familiarity with the tools, harmonise fieldwork plans, and ensure methodological consistency across states.

As the Midline tools mirrored those used during BE, which had undergone comprehensive pre-testing, no additional pre-testing was required. However, national experts reviewed all tools, particularly translations, to ensure contextual accuracy and clarity. Researchers practiced administering tools during the workshop, enhancing standardisation and field readiness. Figure 6 summarises the objectives and outcomes of the pre-fieldwork phase.

Figure 6. Objectives and outcomes of the pre-fieldwork phase



Pre-fieldwork activities ensured that all research teams were fully equipped – technically, ethically, and operationally – to conduct the Midline Evaluation with rigour, consistency, and participant protection in all states.

3.3 Data cleaning and analysis

The iterative and collaborative approach to data handling and cleaning ensured multiple checks and balances on data quality, completeness and consistency. This means that there is a high level of confidence in the quality and robustness of the data. State researchers checked field notes and data daily, and prepared activity reports at the end of each week for sharing with the Education Evaluation Manager (EEM). The SSEs were responsible for overseeing the translation of any data gathered and/or recorded in local languages into English and checking all data for quality, completeness and consistency. In addition, each SSE was required to complete an LGA summary form, providing a summary of LGA-level findings with evidence (i.e. data extracts) against seven key questions. These forms provided an insight into their perceptions of the data and supported co-creation of evaluation findings.

To streamline data collection, checks and cleaning processes, completed LGA-level datasets were uploaded onto DELVe's storage and management system (SharePoint), and checked and cleaned during the fieldwork by the EEM and EEL (Figure 7). Any data issues were relayed and discussed while research teams were in the states,

facilitating any further need for site-level checks. Data cleaning done by SSEs, the EEM and EEL, during and after the completion of fieldwork, comprised the following core checks:

Figure 7: Data cleaning core checks



Once data were checked and cleaned, files were uploaded to MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software for coding and analysis. Although MaxQDA includes integrated AI-assisted analysis features, these were not utilised by the evaluation team (see Section 4). The BE codebook was adapted for the Midline guided by the Midline Evaluation Framework and the portfolio ToC CPs. This codebook structured coding nodes in MaxQDA and provided the team with a standardised approach to coding all data.³ The School Document Checklist, Community Observations and Classroom Observations were entered and analysed in Excel as primarily quantitative data.

Lastly, evidence gathered and collated for each CP, and each step of the CP were reviewed by the team and scored. The scoring metric (1-4) is a combined score summarising both the contribution of PLANE to progress along each step and along the overall CP, and strength of evidence of this contribution. These scores are shown throughout the Findings (section 5).

3.4 Data validation

Preliminary data analysis and draft findings were shared and validated with all PLANE Windows, FCDO, and a range of government and CSO stakeholders during a one-day in-person workshop in Abuja on 15th October 2025 (Annex E). This workshop provided an opportunity for participants to comment on draft findings and recommendations, and discuss utilisation of the evaluation within and beyond PLANE. The objectives of this workshop were to:

- i. Provide an overview of the purpose, objectives, methodology and sample of the Midline evaluation.
- ii. Share draft findings for each CP of the PLANE ToC and the Evaluation Questions for feedback and discussion to validate and enrich analysis and reporting.
- iii. Develop ownership of the evaluation among stakeholders and discuss utilising the findings within and beyond PLANE in the context of Nigerian education priorities and ODA cuts.

Before the validation workshop, Windows were engaged in discussions with DELVe for data analysis, especially on student learning assessments. After the workshop, stakeholders within and external to PLANE were invited to share further written reflections and insights via email or call with the DELVe team. These iterative feedback loops have been central to the evaluation process, particularly to interpreting different rounds and presentations of learning assessment data, and to better understanding the complex contexts of interventions, and were incorporated into this report.

³ Data were standardised in presentation to correct for spelling or grammatical errors in speech and/or transcription, without loss to substance or meaning.

3.5 Limitations

The limitations and mitigation strategies of the Midline Evaluation are set out in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Limitations and Mitigation Measures

Limitation	Mitigation measure
Methodology and methods	
The evaluation design is not experimental; there is no evaluation counterfactual.	<p>PLANE’s approach is systemic at LGA level; it is not possible to establish treatment and control sites as Windows cover all schools. The PE Design (DELVe, 2022) rejected experimental designs due to fundamental differences between LGAs, isolation challenges due to the complexity of the education system and structures, ethical considerations, and costliness. Instead, theory-based Contribution Analysis builds an evidence-based narrative for how the intervention has plausibly contributed to its intended outcomes using mixed methods for triangulation and explanation.</p> <p>The Midline does utilise programme partners’ (W1 and W2) quasi-experimental studies of student learning outcomes to assess PLANE’s intended outcomes and impact.</p>
The sampling approach is not statistically representative.	The sample repeats the BE’s purposive sample to provide longitudinal data for 53 schools across 9 LGAs and enable the evaluations to explore different elements of PLANE.
The sample was reduced from 3 LGAs per state at baseline to 2 LGAs per state in the North West, lessening the geographic and programmatic coverage, especially of Window 3. This was due to programmatic shifts, insecurity, and for resource efficiency.	To ensure coverage of W3s intervention from 2023-2025, the evaluation added CGDs with W3-supported communities within an accessible distance from W1-supported sampled schools (section 3.1).
Reduction in non-state school sample at midline due to LGA reduction and formalisation of non-state into the state system.	Evidence for W1’s work on non-state schools (section 5.2) is drawn more greatly from triangulated secondary sources, including W1 data and reports, government data and reports, and external literature. The non-state sector is only 10% of the W1 budget.
No independent student learning assessments undertaken by the evaluation	Learning assessments did not comprise the original approved design (PE Design, DELVe, 2022). Windows 1 and 2 produce twice-yearly data for student learning in literacy and numeracy at different grades in PLANE schools and non-PLANE schools (section 5). Learning assessments are resource-intensive, time-consuming, and burdensome for students. The Midline instead uses assessments as a secondary data source, verifying and triangulating results with qualitative and secondary quantitative data.
Secondary data	
Limited value for money and cost effectiveness analysis for Windows 2 and 3 due to the paucity of available data.	The evaluation drew on all available data for Windows 2 and 3 – usually in summary form – and utilised DELVe’s research on ABEP and Policy Influencing with any VfM analyses.
Primary data	
Only seven known children living with disabilities participated in school-based group discussions (three in Jigawa and two in each of Borno and Yobe states; i.e. <3%/state). This under-representation limits insights into their views and experiences of school and learning.	<p>The evaluation team proactively reached out to known CLWD for student group discussions, but some children were unable or unwilling to join. There were also few visible CLWD in schools. This resonates with literature on exclusion and the challenges that the PLANE programme has had in reaching and including CLWD.</p> <p>Perceptions of CLWD’s experiences were systematically discussed in head teacher and teacher interviews and CGDs. All provided some background information on the number and type of CLWD in schools/communities and their access to schooling.</p>
Few female school leaders in data collected due to absence on the day of visit and systemic low numbers in schools.	Proactive seeking out of any female Head Teachers, including in their homes, and female teachers to contribute to the study.

4.0 Ethics and Safeguarding

DELVe's approach to ethics and safeguarding is provided in detail in the PE Design (DELVe, 2022) and Midline Evaluation Design (DELVe, 2025a). The design and delivery of the Midline Evaluation have been guided throughout by the following documents:

- ▶ Ethical Guidance for Research, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (FCDO, 2019)
- ▶ AI Playbook for the UK Government (UK Government Digital Service, 2025)
- ▶ FCDO Nigeria's Approach to Fraud, Aid Diversion and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment and associated policies and guidance (FCDO Nigeria, 2024)

Our ethics and safeguarding approach and procedures were based on the following standards, in line with the FCDO's ethical and safeguarding standards:

- i. **Evaluation is useful and necessary:** The evaluation aims to provide a robust, evidence-based assessment of PLANE's progress, outputs, and outcomes, particularly in light of FCDO budget cuts from March 2026, making it highly relevant for decision-making. DELVe adhered to data minimisation principles, collecting personally identifiable information only from participants directly affected by the project. Ethical approval was obtained at two levels: internally from the Ecorys Research Ethics Committee and externally from the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), with both approval letters provided in Annex G.
- ii. **Cultural, socio-economic, environmental, and political contexts sensitivities:** A utilisation-focused, gender-sensitive, inclusive, interdisciplinary, and participatory approach guided the design and delivery of the evaluation (section 2.1). All tools and methods applied these principles and considerations (section 3).
- iii. **Minimisation of harm and maximisation of benefits:** Given DELVe's work with children, safeguarding and child protection are central to all activities. Ecorys holds overall contractual responsibility, while Preston Associates ensures rigorous due diligence and background checks for all researchers. The DELVe Safeguarding and Photo Policy (2023), aligned with FCDO, UK Government, and Ecorys UK standards, outlines key procedures on recruitment, research ethics, privacy, consent, working with vulnerable groups, reporting abuse, and photography. All team members completed background checks and refresher safeguarding training before fieldwork. In addition, the DELVe Safety and Security Plan (2023) guided a comprehensive fieldwork risk assessment and mitigation plan, integrated into DELVe's overall Risk Register, which includes a dedicated safeguarding section. No child protection or safeguarding incidents were reported during the evaluation.
- iv. **Protection of identity and confidentiality, and data security:** The DELVe Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) guides all data protection, storage, privacy, and access standards across project activities, ensuring compliance with the EU/UK GDPR and Nigeria's NDPA. The Project Manager, also serving as the Safeguarding and Data Protection Officer, oversees adherence to these requirements. Data flow procedures were designed around the principle of minimisation, ensuring that access was limited to authorised personnel and data transfers were kept to the absolute minimum. All sensitive personal data – such as age, gender, school, and disability status – were anonymised promptly, with participant confidentiality rigorously maintained through coded identifiers and secure storage. Participants were informed of their privacy rights, including access, correction, deletion, and data portability, in line with informed consent and ethical research standards.
- v. **Participation based on informed consent:** SSEs ensured that all participants and stakeholders received a Project Information Sheet and Confidentiality and Consent form, detailing the purpose of the Midline Evaluation, participant expectations, feedback mechanisms, procedures for raising concerns, and the right to withdraw at any time. Participation was voluntary, and for children, adolescents (under 18), and vulnerable adults, consent from parents, guardians, or caregivers was obtained before engagement. Where such consent was not possible, ethical advisors appointed a responsible adult to act in loco parentis, and participants were provided age-appropriate explanations and asked for their assent using adapted child-friendly forms. Materials were translated into English, Hausa, and Kanuri and delivered in written and verbal formats to ensure accessibility and understanding. For illiterate or semi-literate participants, information was explained verbally, and a third party could be invited to confirm understanding. Consent was obtained using methods appropriate to the research activity and was reaffirmed before each subsequent data collection cycle. In classroom observations where children were

not directly approached, consent was sought from an adult acting in loco parentis, such as a teacher or headteacher.

- vi. **Respect of rights and dignity, and equitable participation:** Gender equality, social inclusion, and power dynamics were integrated across all stages of the evaluation, including design, sampling, researcher recruitment and training, data collection, ethics, analysis, and reporting. An intersectional approach considered multiple dimensions of marginalisation – beyond sex and disability – including type of disability, location, religion, family composition, and household wealth, analysing these where data allowed. A utilisation-focused, participatory approach fostered stakeholder engagement, including an in-country Validation Workshop and accessible outputs, with translations into Hausa where needed. Participants were provided with clear feedback channels, with field researchers as primary contacts and additional contact details included in consent forms to address questions or concerns.
- vii. **Dissemination of findings to intended beneficiaries and appropriate use:** refer to Section 5.7.

Furthermore, **digital and AI tools** used in the evaluation included:

- ▶ The Sonix software for automating transcription. Sonix was selected due to its relatively good recognition of non-British and non-American accents (compared to other similar tools), which was particularly relevant as most interviews were conducted with Nigerian participants. As a mitigation measure against transcription errors, the team manually reviewed recordings to verify accuracy – especially in cases where the transcribed text was unclear or where key statements and quotes required confirmation to ensure correct interpretation.
- ▶ Digital tools for remote meetings and interviews (Microsoft Teams).
- ▶ Copilot (large language model AI tool) for proofreading and improving language accessibility. Copilot was employed as a support tool during report development, not for initial drafting. Their use included: summarising human-written text to improve conciseness; re-drafting sections for clarity and brevity; and identifying or classifying patterns in text to strengthen consistency. Copilot outputs were never adopted uncritically – every section was reviewed, edited, and quality assured by the authoring team. Human oversight was maintained at all stages to ensure accuracy and integrity (see Annex G for further details).
- ▶ Document management and data analysis tools, including Microsoft Excel for quantitative analysis and MaxQDA for qualitative analysis. Although MaxQDA includes integrated AI-assisted analysis features, these were not utilised by the evaluation team.

All AI and digital tools used in the evaluation were pre-checked and cleared to ensure compliance with data protection and ethical standards. They were applied safely and responsibly, with clear guidance provided to the team to maintain consistent standards in line with the AI Playbook for the UK Government guidance and FCDO Digital Strategy.

Annex G provides further detail on the operationalisation of these ethical and safeguarding principles and procedures.

5.0 Findings

Each ToC Change Pathway channels into one PLANE outcome:

'More inclusive and effective education systems deliver foundational skills, whereby state and non-state basic education providers enable better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children' (PLANE portfolio ToC, 2023).

This section assesses the contribution of PLANE to each of the six Change Pathways that lead to this intended outcome. The evaluation assumes that PLANE – through its three implementation Windows – should have made considerable progress towards its intended outcome by mid-2025; it critically assesses this assumption for each Window and Change Pathway.

The development of the contribution story for PLANE, and the findings against each Change Pathway, are informed by the findings and recommendations of the Baseline Evaluation in 2022 as well as the data gathered specifically for the Midline. Baseline comparisons and primary data extracts from the Midline are therefore made throughout this section to exemplify and illustrate findings. The Evaluation Questions (section 2.2) guide the analysis of findings and are signposted throughout.

Every Change Pathway has a component on generating, communicating and using evidence to inform improved engagement, service delivery and education sector performance. As this is a shared aspect of all PLANE's work, it is assessed separately across the whole portfolio in Section 5.7.

Lastly, a four-point scale is applied to assess the extent, quality, and strength of evidence for the contribution of PLANE to each step in each CP (Figure 8). This scale provides a clear and structured approach to summarising the evidence. It is adopted and adapted from the scale used for the Governance Assessment Framework (Midline Design, DELVe, 2025a, p.18-19). However, the scale necessarily simplifies the findings and should be read alongside the narrative assessment.

Figure 8: Four-point scale evidence rating



This section begins with a summary of the extent, quality and strength of PLANE's contribution to each step in each CP, in Table 12. Findings for Window 1, through Change Pathways 1 and 2 are subsequently presented; followed by Window 2's contributions through Change Pathways 3 and 4; and finally, Window 3, through Change Pathways 5 and 6.

Table 12: Summary of the extent, quality and strength of PLANE’s contribution to each step in each CP

CHANGE PATHWAY 1, WINDOW 1 School governance, teaching and learning outcomes		
Change Pathway	Rating	
1A: If schools use evidence-based teaching and learning approaches and materials and		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
Schools are better managed, more inclusive and safer and		
1B: If there is effective generation and communication of evidence (including under PLANE as a whole) and then this evidence is used to inform citizen-state engagement and improved service delivery then improvements in education sector performance will take place. And		
1C: If there are also improvements in the governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems Then		
1D: Teaching and learning become more effective, safer and inclusive for all		
OUTCOME: And then state and non-state basic education providers will enable better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children.		
CHANGE PATHWAY 2, WINDOW 1 Non-state sector engagement, management and performance		
2A: If the engagement, management and performance of the non-state sector in delivering foundational skills is improved		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
and there are planning, personnel management and public financial management improvements within the state sector.		
Then 2C: Improvements in the governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems will take place and then		
2C: There will be improvements in the inclusivity and effectiveness with which education systems in Nigeria deliver foundational skills.		
CHANGE PATHWAY 3, WINDOW 2 Child protection, teaching and learning in conflict-affected states		
3A: If the well-being, protection and safeguarding of conflict-affected children is improved (in particular girls and children with disabilities)		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
and more children complete primary and transition to junior secondary education		
and the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of teaching and learning is improved in formal and non-formal settings.		
And 3C: If there is also progress in the recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria.		
Then 3D: There will be improvements in the safe access to quality learning for children affected by conflict in the region (particularly for girls)		
CHANGE PATHWAY 4, WINDOW 2 Education system recovery through improved governance		
4A: If there is increased capacity of governments and communities to plan, finance and implement education in emergency contexts then the planning, financing and implementation of education will be in line with evidence and best practices.		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
And 4B: If evidence generated by PLANE is used by PLANE implementors, for decision making and learning.		
Then 4C: There will be progress in the recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria		
and then there will be improvements in the inclusivity and effectiveness with which education systems in Nigeria deliver foundational skills.		
CHANGE PATHWAY 5, WINDOW 3 Inclusive learning for all		
5A: If girls and boys with disabilities are identified in and out of school and supported by their communities then they will be referred to services that provide individual support/ preparatory services for enrolling in school		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
And 5C: If community-based learning interventions are delivered for girls and boys		
And 5D: If there is Increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education		
Then 5E: There will be improvements in the well-being and life skills of children completing community-based learning interventions (including those living with disability) and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children.		
CHANGE PATHWAY 6, WINDOW 3 Community attitudes and behaviours for inclusive education		
6A: If Social and Behaviour change communication activities are undertaken and If community capacities are strengthened to engage in collective action on access to safe, quality and inclusive education and to prevent and respond to child protection issues		<p>and then state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children. </p>
Then 6C: Positive changes in knowledge, norms, attitudes and practices will take place.		
Then 6D: There will be increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education and increased advocacy of children’s rights within an enabling environment.		

5.1 School governance, teaching and learning outcomes – Window 1

CHANGE PATHWAY 1, WINDOW 1

1A: If schools use evidence-based teaching and learning approaches and materials **and** Schools are better managed, more inclusive and safer.

And

1B: If there is effective generation and communication of evidence (including under PLANE as a whole) **and then** this evidence is used to inform citizen-state engagement and improved service delivery **then** improvements in education sector performance will take place.

And

1C: If there are also improvements in the governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems

Then

1D: Teaching and learning become more effective, safer and inclusive for all

OUTCOME: And then state and non-state basic education providers will enable better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children.

Window 1 has a total allocation of £95 million over seven years from 2021-2028 covering inception, four intervention output areas, operations and human resources. Across its four output areas, Window 1's total actual expenditure over the first three years of implementation (2022-23; 2023-24; 2024-25) is £29.76 million. This is lower than would be expected for a proportional spend against the overall budget (by -£11m).

Change Pathway 1 is primarily linked to Window 1's Output 1 workstream. Over the three years of implementation to December 2025, Output 1 actual expenditure stands at £12.18 million. Change Pathway 1 is designed and intended as the most significant contributory pathway to improving learning outcomes across Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa states. It works both at state and federal levels. This analysis considers the strengths, weaknesses and challenges evidenced for each step change, how and how far those steps have contributed towards the outcome, and what is the evidence for that outcome.

5.1.1 Using evidence-based teaching and learning in schools

Overall, evidence on PLANE schools using evidence-based teaching and learning approaches is robust and positive with strong examples of positive contributions since the baseline evaluation, especially through its relevant and effective Foundational Skills Package.

Rating:



Window 1 has designed and delivered a structured and combined package of in-service teacher training plus teaching and learning materials (TLMs) for all PLANE schools in KKJ, known as the '**Foundational Skills Package**'. The package comprises mother tongue (Hausa) instruction for foundational Maths and Hausa in lower primary grades, P1-P4. The dual approach – of teacher training with teacher and learner materials *in Hausa* - is based on evidence from academic and programme literature within and beyond Nigeria as well as the evaluated strengths and weaknesses of prior models from GEP3, the Teacher Development Programme (TDP), RANA, and ESSPIN. Evaluations of these prior models for teaching and learning improvements highlighted the significance of combined and complementary interventions and, especially, the significance of mother tongue instruction to learning outcomes at primary level. These evaluations, learning and research are shown (e.g. in PLANE KPIs and background documents) to have been relatively well reviewed and considered by PLANE to inform the current approach.

Alongside curriculum-based teacher textbooks in Maths and Hausa, the package provides teacher guides in Hausa (called *Jagoran Malami*), which provide step-by-step structured lesson plans for teachers with accompanying visual aids, while a package of exercise books, pencils, sharpeners and erasers are given to schools for lower grade students.

A competitive procurement process enabled W1 to keep costs relatively economical for printing: learner textbooks have been printed at £1.28 per book, equivalent to or lower than average costs in comparable countries (W1 VfM Annex C, 2025). These books are intended to be re-used, enhancing sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

Selected teachers in all PLANE schools should have received some training since the baseline, with specific grade teachers from P2-P4 targeted over successive years 2022 to 2025. According to W1 logframe data, over two-thirds (71%) of teachers trained on these guides and foundational learning package are working in public, integrated IQTE or nomadic schools, while a minority (29%) teach in Accelerated Learning (AL) centres. The highest proportion (47%) of teachers trained to date are in Kano followed by Kaduna (32%) and Jigawa (21%). These proportions align with contextual data: Jigawa has the fewest registered public primary school teachers of the three states; Kano is the largest state by population and where all AL teachers work. Table 13 presents W1's logframe cumulative targets and actual achievements for teacher training and materials provision. **To August 2025, W1 have exceed all core logframe targets for teaching and learning activities.**

Table 13: Window 1 Output 1, 2022-2025

Indicator 1.1	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Schools reached with Foundational Skills Package	2,525	2,562	+1.5%
Teachers trained (in- & pre-service)	11,500	12,018	+4.5%
Teacher recipients of TLM package	11,500	12,018	+4.5%
Student recipients of learning materials package	980,000	1,400,413	+30%

The evaluation verifies that reported attainment for training and TLMs align, proving consistency in reporting – all trained teachers received a TLM package during training. Midline KIIs consolidate quantitative data: teachers and head teachers agree that the teaching and learning package has been received and is useful for teachers to improve lesson delivery:

“Here are the Learning Materials given to the school by PLANE: on 19th May 2025 – 4 cartons of exercise books, 4 packs of eraser, 4 packs of pencils. Four cartons of hundred in each of textbooks were also collected last year 2024” (Head Teacher, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

“PLANE has trained me on how to teach literacy and numeracy using Hausa as the language of instruction. The training equipped me with strategies to make learning easier to understand” (P4 Teacher, public school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

“PLANE has done excellently in its endeavours of training teachers to adopt the best methodologies, utilize the best instructional materials, and engage with pupils with up-to-date learning materials” (P4 Teacher, Islamic school, Minijibir, Kano)

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

Three issues are challenges to PLANE's contribution to change in this area:

- ▶ **Coverage of teacher training:** there is some uneven distribution of training between schools and among targeted teachers:

“PLANE programs are taking place in some schools... they have not come to this school yet” (CGD, public school, Soba, Kaduna)

“Some of those around have not received training” (Head Teacher, public school, Bunkure, Kano)

- ▶ **Teacher status reporting:** W1's logframe target for teacher training does not disaggregate by pre-service or in-service teacher status. However, quarterly reports state that 94% of teachers trained are in-service. W1 is not tracking teacher retention, redeployment or retirement so has no data on trained teachers' continuation in PLANE schools or the broader education system. This is a limitation to the contribution story of teacher training and learning outcomes (see section 5.2.5).
- ▶ **Disability inclusive materials:** Logframe targets for the distribution of learning materials include 7,000 learners with a disability. To date, 669 learners with disabilities – less than 10% of the target – have received materials. This is due to a combination of factors: (i) insufficient numbers of children in-school with known

disabilities; (ii) an over-estimated target; and, critically, (iii) materials not designed to accommodate learners with disabilities or special educational needs of any kind.

5.1.2 School management, inclusion and safety

Overall, evidence on PLANE schools' management, inclusivity and safety is broadly positive with several good examples of contributions to change, especially in instructional leadership, SBMCs, attitudes towards inclusion, and child safeguarding.

Rating:



Manuals and guidelines developed by prior programmes (notably ESSPIN) and by UBEC for supportive and inclusive school management and leadership are critical building blocks for PLANE's approach and are much in evidence in PLANE W1's initiatives, outputs and contributions to this step in the change pathway. The evaluation examines whether and how PLANE W1 has contributed to better managed, more inclusive and safer schools through **four key leadership domains**, summarised and synthesised from other programmatic and GoN documents (ESSPIN, 2013) and (UBEC, 2016):

1. **Instructional leadership and teacher management** – guiding teaching and learning, including monitoring staff and observing lessons, for improved student learning.
2. **School Management and administration** – managing resources, facilities and operations.
3. **Community engagement** – relationships between schools, caregivers and communities, parents, such as through SBMCs and PTAs.
4. **Student support and the learning environment** – creating safe and inclusive school conditions.

PLANE's commitment to leadership development is exemplified in its technical and financial support and collaboration with the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to create the 2023 Professional Standards for School Leadership in Nigeria for Basic and Secondary Education (TRCN and FME, 2023). These standards define an 'exemplary school leader' and five domains of leadership, which largely repeat established domains (above).

The evaluation reviews the role and effectiveness of different personnel and structures, who are engaged across the domains, namely: Head Teachers, SBMCs, School Support Officers (SSOs), and the LGA Education Secretary. W1 has delivered training on school management, safe and inclusive education for all these personnel since 2022.

Head teachers have been trained as part of SMBC training, teacher training (they may also be core subject teachers) and as school leaders, making them the most trained of all school-related personnel:

"I have been actively involved with PLANE by attending four different trainings focused on school improvement and leadership" (Head Teacher, nomadic school, Dutse, Jigawa).

There is **consistent evidence of the positive contribution of head teacher training to instructional leadership**:

"PLANE taught us lesson observation, now I go round to observe teachers as they deliver lessons to correct, train and support teachers" (Head Teacher, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

"I am responsible for all aspects of school management. This includes monitoring teacher attendance, ensuring effective lesson delivery, and managing administrative activities. I also conduct regular lesson observations and provide feedback to teachers" (Head Teacher, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

PLANE's focus on the role and importance of head teachers in driving school-level improvements is shared by other agencies and organisations that have offered management training during the same period. This has included training on record keeping and data gathering by SUBEBs to support ASC data collection as well as disability training by Sightsavers, as part of W1's consortium.

At both baseline and midline, all head teachers sampled had high qualifications and over ten years' leadership experience; as a group, they were articulated about their role and responsibilities. These factors make it harder to attribute improvements in school management, leadership, and learning solely to PLANE. They highlight the need to consider the broader context and conditions that shape how management and leadership practices influence student learning outcomes.

SBMCs were operating in all sampled schools. SBMCs are mandatory in all public schools following national policy (FME, 2005) that has been domesticated in KJ states, with the UBEC and SUBEBs responsible for monitoring their existence and functioning. SBMCs are intended to provide a bridge between schools and communities, ensuring that schools are effectively managed and responding to local needs. They are a critical structure of community engagement. Head teachers act as SBMC Secretaries and have thus received training under PLANE's SBMC activities.

Community members generally reported strong and cohesive SBMCs in their communities (especially in the urban/peri-urban LGAs of Kaduna South and Malam Madori) with effective linkages to school staff and community-wide encouragement to understand and support the school's needs, especially in **managing resources and facilities**:

"The establishment and development of this school was a direct result of community contributions. From land donations to labour and local materials, it all happened through the SBMC's coordination and involvement" (CGD, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

"The community are in good terms with SBMC, if SBMC call for meeting, the community attends with pleasure / We relate well and the community supports both in kind and in cash / Community members respect all SMBC members, we are like one family (CGD, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

W1's reported SBMC training – including school and student monitoring – is more than double its target (Table 17 below); this extensive coverage is well-evidenced by community members across all three states:

"We the members of SBMC and community leaders observe, monitor and advise the school and the students" (CGD, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

"We, the SMBC members, noticed absenteeism and low turnout of children in our school. So, we organize enrolment campaigns to raise awareness and encourage parents to register their children. / We visit families directly to convince them about the importance of education / During campaigns, we involve community leaders and use local gatherings to spread the message. This helps us reach more families and reduce absenteeism" (CGD, Malam Madori, Islamic school, Jigawa)

While SBMCs conduct teacher and student monitoring and outreach to get children to attend school, 40% (14/35) of SBMC reported actions are for school repairs in response to inadequate learning environments (see below 'Safety'):

"SBMC does 2 major activities here, they mobilise children to school as you have seen today and help with some renovation of our temporary shelter. Last time our shelter collapsed it was SBMC that repaired it" (P4 Teacher, nomadic school, Malam Madori Jigawa)

"SBMC provide minor repairs of roofs, welding of doors and provision of chalk, cardboard register" (Head Teacher, public school no.2, Minijibir, Kano)

"We repair tables, chairs, doors, roofs, provide padlocks for the doors. If no chalk and no fund, [SBMC] chairman goes round the community to source funds for chalk" (CGD, public school, Soba, Kaduna)

SSOs have been trained and supported by PLANE, although this is not part of the logframe. The end of Year 3 report states that: 'cumulatively, a critical mass of 265 (59 Kano, 97 Kaduna, 109 Jigawa) SSOs who have been trained by PLANE [on school support, coaching and mentoring] have made school support visits to 95% of PLANE-supported FL schools.'

"The SSO who was also trained by PLANE is always in school to observe lessons at least once a week" (Trained Head Teacher, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

In an indication of W1's positive influence for increased attention to the role, and improvement in the capacity of SSOs, Kano State government has provided government-funded training for 440 SSOs. W1 2025 quarter 3 report indicates that these SSOs have so far provided support visits to 789 schools across 36 LGAs.

Creating inclusive school conditions have been central to, and intensively resourced by, PLANE. Head teachers, teachers and SMBCs have been trained on understanding and practising inclusive education. Compared to the largely ambivalent or negative attitudes in PLANE schools at baseline, the Midline finds that school-level awareness, attitudes, rhetoric and practices on inclusion and safeguarding have improved.

Positive shifts towards inclusivity were particularly evident for children living with disabilities attending PLANE schools and in PLANE-supported communities; these children were generally better identified, encouraged

to attend school, and supported to learn compared to baseline. Practical efforts included seating CLWD at the front of class, pairing them with ‘buddies’, and monitoring their learning:

“As teachers, we’re mindful of these categories of learners. I make sure these learners are seated at the front so they can engage fully with the lesson. I also use gestures, facial expressions, and movement intentionally while teaching, which helps them follow along more easily” (P4 Teacher, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

“Each is given same opportunity including those with special needs because we pair them into groups for them to be aided by others, we support them by going round or bringing them close to us” (P4 Teacher, public school, Minijibir, Kano)

“Those with eye problem or hearing problem we sit them in front of class and keep observing them” (Head Teacher, public school, Soba, Kaduna)

Safeguarding and child protection training has been delivered to head teachers and SMBC members in PLANE schools, to SUBEB officials and to gender desk officers at state levels. Safeguarding is concerned with creating policies and plans to protect children from harm and respond to incidents of abuse. Some interviewed school staff can talk about safeguarding, but implementation is patchy:

“Safeguarding plan clearly defines pathways to report and resolve any form of abuse. It is meant to create a safe and secure learning environment for children at school” (P4 Teacher, Dutse, Jigawa)

Table 14 presents data against core GESI indicators generated and compiled by the evaluation for schools visited at baseline (2022) and again at midline (2025), including the change in the number of schools with each feature by state between baseline and midline. Note that these data are indicative only and based on the LGAs and schools visited by the evaluation only. They are also not triangulated with EMIS data as this is either unavailable or misaligned by indicator. Schools sampled in LGAs in Kano and Jigawa have very similar positive GESI features, but in Kaduna indicators have declined over time, suggesting a weakening of GESI features at those schools.

Table 14: GESI indicators in Midline schools

State	Student GPI (mean/school)	Teacher GPI (mean/school)	Separate Toilets	Handwashing with soap	Safeguarding plan
Jigawa (n=12)	0.95 (-0.28)	0.35 (+0.07)	25% (0)	0% (-1)	100% (+12)
Kano (n=11)	0.89 (-0.00)	0.20 (-0.02)	55% (0)	0% (-1)	82% (+5)
Kaduna (n=12)	1.11 (-0.13)	3.59 (-0.41)	33% (-7)	8% (-10)	92% (0)

Establishing safer schools has had some notable and other weaker results, partly due to the design and investment decisions of PLANE, and partly due to persistent structural challenges.

At systems level, PLANE has made a notable contribution to school safety at state policy level through support to states’ adoption of the National Policy on Safety, Security and Violence Free Schools (FME, 2021; Policy Influencing Study, DELVe, 2025d). School safety comprises adequate safeguarding and inclusion for children but further pertains to physical and environmental security associated with infrastructure, the material environment and climate and conflict emergencies. W1 – by design – provided neither direct financial or technical assistance to school renovation, refurbishment or any infrastructure, nor to climate and conflict prevention, resilience or response. However, to assess ‘improved safety’ at local level the evaluation tracked changes in safe learning environments between baseline and midline using indicators gathered through School Document Checklists (Table 15) complemented by interviews with school and community participants.

Table 15: Safety indicators in Midline schools

State	Perimeter fence	Classroom doors	Flood risk (reported)
Jigawa (n=12)	0% (-1)	25% (-4)	25%
Kano (n=11)	9% (0)	45% (0)	45%
Kaduna (n=12)	0% (-4)	17% (-8)	17%

In Kaduna state, worsening safety features are recorded in both LGAs and consolidated by interviews:

“There is no safety. There are hoodlums that come and disturb studies. We need fence and security guards because they don’t respect the teachers. If the school is fenced, we can regulate the trespassers” (CGD, public school, Soba, Kaduna)

“Our major priorities include addressing the challenge of insecurity in schools such as vandalization, windows stolen/broken, insufficient security personnel” (LGEA Secretary, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

“We have so many schools that are closed. Teachers cannot go to school, to work, even though learners are on ground” (SUBEB Official, Kaduna)

In Jigawa and Kano, safety concerns centre on infrastructural degradation – especially in nomadic and Islamic schools – rather than incidents of insecurity:

“We need chairs and desks like other schools. Right now, we are all sitting on the floor” (Student Group Discussion, nomadic school, Dutse, Jigawa)

“Lack of ceiling causes some birds presence to seek shelter, and it is not conducive because of their faeces in the class, it smells” (Student Group Discussion, Islamic school, Minijibir, Kano)

“The condition of this school requires urgent fast steps in preventing the total collapse of the school and the complete withdrawal of pupils by their parents due to dissatisfaction” (Head teacher, nomadic school, Bunkure, Jigawa)

A quarter (9/35) of sampled schools report very heavy rainfall and/or flooding as a major concern for school safety and accessibility:

“The school structures and land are facing the challenge of erosion and flooding as such we need support for drainage to avert the calamity” (CGD, public school, Dutse, Jigawa)

“The school is not safe for learning because all the building structures have collapsed” (CGD, nomadic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

“When it rains, the school becomes waterlogged for many days. We the neighbours normally come together to evacuate children from school during rainfall” (CGD, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

“Storm removed the school roof. We replaced the zincs but still need more support. This is the fourth time the storm is blowing the zinc away” (CGD, nomadic school, Soba, Kaduna)

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

▶ **Variable SBMC functionality and effectiveness:**

there is weak participation in SMBCs by young people, and inadequate funding and support from some local governments. The functionality and effectiveness of SBMCs can be shown by proxy indicators: the presentation of SBMC minutes and school development plans by the head teacher (SBMC Secretary). Results for the midline (Table 16) indicate that the availability of these core documents has stayed the same or worsened since baseline.

▶ **Insufficient female management and leadership:**

the percentage of headteachers in the sample has slightly declined over time from 18% at baseline to 15% at midline.⁴ In Kaduna, 58% (7/12) head teachers were female. Only 41% of community group members – those in the community who were either part of the SBMC, PTA or other school-support groups – were female. Similarly, no Education Secretaries in any of the six LGAs sampled were female. There are systemically few women in management, leadership and school support roles.

Table 16: Proportion of Midline schools with core school management documents¹

	School Development Plan		SBMC Minutes	
	% schools	% change	% schools	% change
Jigawa (n=12)	25%	-42%	33%	-25%
Kano (n=11)	36%	None	55%	-9%
Kaduna (n=12)	92%	-8%	83%	None

⁴ Kano had no headteachers in the sample at either baseline or midline. Borno had one at both points. Jigawa and Yobe each had one at baseline but none at midline. Kaduna had by far the highest number of headteachers, although this declined over time—from nine at baseline to seven at midline.

- ▶ **The absence of the role of SSOs in PLANE's portfolio ToC and logframe** (although W1 does report on SSOs in quarterly and annual reporting) means that interventions in this area are not systematically reported or tracked. This is a limitation of PLANE given the emerging importance of SSOs to mediate between local government and schools and provide direct school support.
- ▶ **Lack of inclusive infrastructure and facilities:** fewer than half of sampled schools have separate toilets for boys, girls and/or male and female teachers.
- ▶ **Weak breadth of support for educational inclusion in poorly resourced locations**

"Many schools still lack the necessary inclusive facilities, specialized teachers, and learning materials to fully support these groups, making access and participation difficult for some learners" (Dutse LGEA)

- ▶ **School-age girls' marriages** in some rural communities in some LGAs, especially Bunkure and Minijibir in Kano state, and Soba in Kaduna state:

"Girls are not having equal opportunities because of the perception about girl child education, most are married out after P6" (P6 Teacher, public school, Bunkure, Kano)

"Marriage barriers; in this community girls do not continue school after marriage" (P6 Teacher, nomadic school, Soba, Kaduna)

Table 17: Window 1, Indicator 1.3 School management training

Indicator 1.3	Cumulative target (2022-2025)	Actual reported (2025)	Change (%)
SBMC members trained	2,500	5,121	
Head Teachers trained	[included above]	11,396	
Total	2,500	16,517	+560%

5.1.3 Education systems' governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability

This aspect of PLANE Window 1 concerns education system improvements at individual and organisational levels. This output (Output 2) comprises an additional investment of approximately 20-30% of W1's budget by design. Over the three years of implementation to date, Output 2 total expenditure to December 2025 is £3.45 million.

Overall, evidence on PLANE's contributions to state education system reform in the North West region is robust, plentiful, and positive, especially in policy reform and participation. Some contributions to change cannot be clearly allocated to PLANE due to the operations of many other stakeholders and partners in improving state education systems.

Rating:

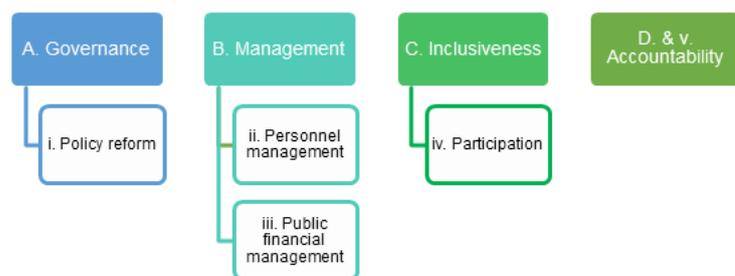

Table 18 presents a summary of the progress of W1 against its targets for improved governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems in KKJ. These data indicate that PLANE has met or exceeded its targets to date as articulated in the portfolio logframe.

Table 18: Window 1 Systems strengthening indicators (Outputs 1 & 2)

Indicator	Cumulative target (2022-25)	Actual achieved to August 2025	Difference
1.6 # LGEA and state officials' demonstrating knowledge and use of education dashboards	90	91	+1
2.1 # evidence-informed policies and plans	4 new or revised	4 new policies approved 5 revised policies approved 4 new laws for improved sector governance in Jigawa	+5 policies
2.2 # key stakeholder meetings on TLMs	6 biannual education reform meetings	6 biannual education reform meetings	At target
2.3 # trained on budget processes	105 individuals trained	118 individuals trained	+13
2.4 # initiatives to improve accountability mechanisms on monitoring	3 accountability forums 6 initiatives launched	3 accountability forums 7 initiatives launched	+1 initiative
2.5 Progress on state roadmaps to increase teacher recruitment	5% activities in TRDPs / roadmaps implemented		

To develop understanding of PLANE's contributions to change in this step, the evaluation draws on a Governance Assessment Framework and Capacity Development Framework. These frameworks support an assessment of the changing capacities and relationships of relevant state education MDAs – specifically SUBEBs, SMEs, and LGEAs – that are supposed to connect schools to formal education structures and systems. The frameworks help to build the contribution story of capacity development and systems strengthening at individual, organisational and institutional levels through five key domains (i-v), assessed under each of the four specified elements of this step change as follows (A-D in Figure 9).

Figure 9: Governance Assessment and Capacity Development Frameworks



5.1.3.1 Governance: Policy reform

W1 has made multiple, identifiable and positive contributions to improved education governance in the three states via significant interventions for education policy reforms. Notable policy contributions have been to gender and girls' policies and plans in Kano, and teacher policies in Jigawa. These reforms now require operationalisation.

Rating:



It has made justifiable strategic choices in the policies it has supported and pushed forwards, latching onto pre-existing traction within state education MDAs and among individual authorities. The policy gains to which W1 has evidently contributed are:⁵

- ▶ In Kano, the Gender Policy (new); Kano Girls Education Policy (revised) and Unit (new); a Gender-Responsive Education Budgeting Framework (new); and the Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention policy (approved and operationalised).
- ▶ In Jigawa, the Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention (TRDR) policy (approved and operationalised); the Jigawa School Safety, Security and Violence Free Policy (domesticated from Federal level).
- ▶ In Kaduna, the School Safety, Security and Violence Free Policy (domesticated from Federal level).

⁵ This section uses and summarises evidence gathered under DELVe's 2025 Policy Influencing Study, which focussed on W1's contributions to policy influencing and ways forward in KKJ states.

All these reforms made progress along the eight-stage reform value chain: the TRDR policies in Jigawa and Kano have both reached stage 7 (budget execution), with evidence of operationalisation through teacher recruitment drives and new agency procedures. The Girls Education Policy (stage 6) in Kano did not exist as a document of practical use, but it has now been approved (along with Teacher Recruitment Policy), with some of its elements already in use PI Study (DELVE, 2025d, section 4.2). W1’s recent Cost Benefit Analysis report (October 2025) points towards the ‘high returns of policy measures in Kano yielding a high IRR of 43%’ (p.5).

Not only have more policies been drafted and approved, but evidence indicates that PLANE’s support has contributed to these policies being of better quality than previously: *‘In Jigawa, government officials credited PLANE’s technical support for improving the quality of policy drafts and building consensus’* (ibid, section 4.4.4).

For **girls**, there is evidence that existing, new and revised state policies – and programmes including AGILE and ROOSC – are working to raise inclusive rhetoric, encourage and improve girls’ enrolment, attendance, participation and outcomes in primary school:

“We follow the girl’s education policy to ensure equal access” (SME Official, Jigawa)

“We have policies and programs for them [girls] covered by inclusive education” (SUBEB Official, Kaduna)

“In Basic Education law, access and equity should be for all, including children with disabilities, orphans and any person. Kano has policies such as the inclusive education policy, gender policy and girls’ education policy” (SUBEB Official, Kano)

However, gender and girl-focussed reforms have faced elite resistance requiring careful political navigations, such as reframing policy language to emphasise inclusivity, equity, and benefits for all learners – rather than using terminology perceived as contentious such as ‘gender equality’ (ibid).

These state reforms show political will and commitment to improving education access and quality, which should have positive effects lower down the system and into schools and student learning outcomes. Reforms are evidence that roles, authorities and resources are being operationalised for better learning outcomes.

Additional effort is required to translate institutional reforms into local improvements. Presently, most new or revised policies and plans are unknown beyond state MDAs, including at local government and certainly at school level.

“There is need for the PLANE to ensure that policies that are developed are implemented. As well to ensure collaboration with stakeholders to identify areas of weaknesses” (SUBEB Official, Kano)

Policy implementation tracking is absent; this would and should trace downwards accountability of policies and plans and strengthen feedback loops between different tiers of governance and management. The assumption that embedding reforms in laws and budgets will enable sustainability in educational improvements, or indeed the realisation of sustained improvement at school-level, is still insufficiently evidenced.

5.1.3.2 Management: Personnel and Public Financial Management

PLANE has delivered individual capacity building with technical support for state education agency staff, many of whom are highly qualified and experienced in education. Some areas of reform have increased budgetary provisions. However, staff attrition is high at all levels of education personnel and institutional financial stability is challenging.

Rating:


W1 has delivered training for over 300 government officials and civil society actors to improve their ability to manage and implement reforms, and use learning assessment data and education dashboards. Individual and organisational capacity development increases the sustainability of those reforms:

‘One of PLANE’s major contributions to sustainability was its emphasis on capacity building. By transferring skills in stakeholder analysis, reform management, and policy implementation to government actors and civil society, the programme enabled actors to continue reform efforts independently’ (PI Study, 2025d, Executive Summary)

Evidence gathered by DELVE’s PI Study (2025d) are reflected in those garnered during the Midline, such as:

“PLANE is improving the system because they did not bring outsiders to do their work for them. It is the structure in the state that they are using for the project. So that even when they are not there, one day what they have inculcated into the structure will remain” (SUBEB Official, Kaduna)

Beyond MDA personnel, the TRDR policies in Jigawa and Kano addressed teacher recruitment and deployment, with evidence of new procedures for teacher personnel management. However, both the PI Study and evidence from the Midline indicate that the longer-term outcomes of personnel management reforms are speculative, as political turnover and patronage remain risks at all levels. Individual staff capacity building is not sufficient to overcome entrenched political systems within the education sector.

Addressing teacher shortages through recruitment efforts is critical, but there remain discursive and actual gaps in addressing issues of teacher absenteeism, transfers, early retirements, and deployment:

“We face a high rate of teacher retirements and attrition, and current recruitment is not keeping pace with the gaps created, which affects teaching capacity” (SUBEB, Jigawa)

In terms of PFM, some PLANE-supported reforms have led to creation of dedicated budget lines (e.g., Girls’ Education Unit in Kano), while others (e.g., TRDR policies) are leading to increased budget allocations and execution. Indirect effects of PLANE’s support are also signalled by other initiatives of state government not directly supported by PLANE. For example, in Kaduna, the 2025 education budget captured school construction and renovation (with some direct support from the ROOSC project); in July 2025, Kano state approved N484 million for the renovation of schools across the state. These exemplify political traction into non-PLANE priority areas for educational improvements, though partially supported by other development stakeholders.

Nevertheless, **basic education financing and PFM remain challenging**: there are known blockages in drawing down UBEC funding; multiple competing and resource-intensive demands (e.g. infrastructure and teacher salaries); and an over-reliance on donor support (PLANE, 2025). Governance and management reforms are also at risk if they are not embedded in systems, including through transparent budgeting, co-ownership, and downwards accountability. Lastly, there are major persistent concerns with salary amounts and timely payments across all tiers of the education sector, from teachers through to state government officials:

“I am not paid the minimum wage yet. I only saw N2,000 Naira increment added to my salary, and I saw those receiving N70,000 before being upgraded to my own level of salary. It is discouraging, it causes lack of commitment to work” (SUBEB, Kaduna)

“I always face problem receiving my salaries which discourages most staff” (P4 Teacher, public school, Bunkure, Kano)⁶

“The salary is so meagre and not paid on time” (Head Teacher, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

5.1.3.3 Inclusiveness: Participation

Participation and co-creation have been at the heart of PLANE’s approach to governance and management improvements. PLANE has enabled and facilitated many cross-agency working groups, coalitions and events aimed at bridging and building knowledge and communities of practice. The non-formal sector remains relatively under-represented, however.

Rating:



PLANE’s contributions have come about through a focus on co-creation: encouraging and leading multi-stakeholder forums and coalitions that are long-term rather than one-off, that have a core vision and agenda, and that intend to support cohesive, aspirational, and financed reforms. For example, PLANE facilitated Technical Working Groups, reform coalitions, and inter-agency committees for nearly every reform identified above, and was proactively inclusive in stakeholder engagement, including government, civil society, religious leaders, and traditional authorities, especially in Kano and Jigawa. Participatory processes have largely increased the diversity of voices in policy dialogues:

“I coordinate closely with the programme, monitor activities and contribute to create an enabling policy environment... serve as a member of the Technical Working Group” (Director Donor SME, Jigawa)

⁶ Teacher monthly salary is ~50,000 Naira or £30GBP.

It is clear to the evaluation that this participatory and inclusive effort is bolstered by a high level of knowledge, expertise and skills among current state education officials (interviewed) who have a robust understanding of federal legislation and policy, of their state operating environment, and of the multi-agency roles and responsibilities for basic education. Many have worked in education governance and management for over ten years, with tertiary degrees, and strong networks:

“We do not have issue of capacity limitations, we have a structured management team, structured system in place, except for the quality of people’s work [...] all that is needed is commitment to duty because all of us here, have certificates, if you put us to test, we deliver” (SUBEB Official, Kaduna)

The major gap and weakness in PLANE W1’s contribution to inclusive systems has been the underrepresentation and gap in engagement with the non-formal education sector, including non-integrated Islamic Quranic Schools (IQS), nomadic, mass literacy, and accelerated or out-of-school programmes and centres (see also 5.2.2). Part of this has included weaknesses in internal coherence and collaboration between Window 1 and Window 3, including in the latter’s work with community-based accelerated learning centres (section 5.5). The participation and influence of this sector appear limited and poorly documented.

5.1.3.4 Accountability

PLANE has focussed support for accountability through quality assurance agencies at state level, in all three states. Kano state also has a new Accountability Forum, to which PLANE has contributed. However, there are no metrics to monitor accountability actions and results, and the responsiveness of the education system to local needs remains weak.

Rating:



PLANE has supported the creation of accountability frameworks (e.g., Kano State Accountability Forum on Education, K-SAFE) aimed at supporting improved management and monitoring in basic education. In collaboration with state governments, W1 have adopted a Track and Trace system to monitor the delivery, use and availability of TLMs.

In Jigawa and Kaduna states, Quality Assurance Agency Bills have been supported with quality assurance agencies being established and strengthened, supporting better accountability to, and quality checks on, schools. These agencies are also contributing to improvements in understanding among local education staff of communications channels for concerns requests at midline compared to baseline:

“When the community raises concerns through the SBMC, our organization promptly reviews these requests and takes action to address them. For example, infrastructural needs are prioritized for repair or construction, and teacher requests are assessed to ensure recruitment or capacity-building support. This approach ensures stakeholders issues are heard and effectively responded to” (KII SME, Jigawa)

Engagement with PLANE has improved awareness and capacity, though bureaucratic delays and inadequate resourcing persist. Engagement with LGEA and SUBEB exists but is inconsistent. Teachers report submitting complaints and requests, but responses are often delayed or absent, for example:

“We write to local government, submit evidence but the process is slow or stagnant” (Head Teacher, public school, Soba, Kaduna)

The effectiveness and impact of new accountability mechanisms are yet unknown; there are no current systematic metrics (e.g., case resolution, sanction rates) for accountability outcomes. A robust monitoring mechanism and deeper involvement of community members in systems strengthening for transparency, ownership, and long-term impact are required.

Overall, the evidence for W1’s positive and significant contribution to improvements in the governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems – especially via technical assistance and convening power – is credible. Nevertheless, states’ political context, donor alignment, and other development partners play a role; and the gaps and weaknesses highlighted remain areas for concern.

5.1.4 More effective, safer and inclusive teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning in PLANE-supported schools appears to be more effective, safer and more inclusive compared to data gathered at baseline. Cascading effective teaching, maintaining materials supply, and addressing languages for inclusive instruction remain key challenges.

Rating:



Evidence on W1's Foundational Skills Package is strongly positive overall, indicating proof of concept for a combined approach to improving teaching and learning of maths and literacy using curriculum-based mother tongue maths and reading materials and in-service teacher training in complementarity. There is clear and well-evidence progression along the change pathway towards more effective teaching and learning of core subjects in PLANE-supported schools. Contributions to progress comprise four key elements:

- ▶ Teacher management reforms at state policy level
- ▶ In-service core subject teacher training
- ▶ School leaders and managers' training (HTs and SBMCs)
- ▶ Distribution of Maths and Hausa TLMs to schools.

Teachers' confidence and competency to deliver effective lessons is associated with the training delivered by PLANE, and are expressed among teachers as well as students and community members:

"These series of engagement with PLANE have made me feel more confident in my professional duty of teaching" (P4 Teacher, public school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

"I used to like Maths more then, but I love it even more now because it is taught in Hausa and we sing to solve problems using real world scenarios" (P6 boy, age 10, Student Group Discussion, public school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

"Teachers are friendly, respectful, and playful in a way to carry us along" (Student Group Discussion, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

TLMs have not only contributed to reports of improved teaching and learning experiences, but also to students' interest and participation in school:

[They] *"have helped improve pupils' interest and participation in class"* (Head Teacher, nomadic school, Dutse, Jigawa)

The structured pedagogy package that PLANE has designed and deployed in supported schools, using mother tongue instruction with guides, visual aids, local material and play-based activities is clearly having a positive effect on students' perceptions and experiences of maths and Hausa classes, and of parents and community members' attitudes towards learning and, therefore, school quality and the importance of education:

'Learning is easier in Hausa' (Students, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

"It was difficult before, but we understand better now due to the translation" (Students, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

"They [PLANE] introduced a special way of learning in English and Hausa that is doing magic to learning outcomes" (CGD, public school, Kaduna South, Kaduna)

"I have a daughter in P3 in this school. She can now read and write sentences unlike before where a child in P6 struggles to write or read" (CGD, public school, Dutse, Jigawa)

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

The effectiveness of teaching and learning is hindered by the following concerns, shared among multiple evaluation stakeholders from partner to school level:

A. Teaching and Learning materials

- ▶ Practical wear and tear: materials get worn out through use; they do not reach all teachers; some kept 'safely' in cupboards.

- ▶ Practical availability to all eligible students in targeted classes:

“Out of a total enrolment of 932 pupils, the school received fewer than 50 pieces of learning materials, which is far from adequate. (Head Teacher, public school, Dutse, Jigawa)

- ▶ Sustainability of TLM production & distribution.

These points pertain to W1’s TLM package and are broader systemic issues of TLM sustainability.

B. Cascading teacher training and learning

W1 did not deliberately plan or resource for trained teachers to cascade their training to other teachers in their school. The Midline finds that this has been a significant weakness in the teacher training approach. It has engendered frustration among non-trained teachers and a silo effect within schools of trained/untrained teaching staff. While training focussed on core subject teachers at targeted grades linked to maths and literacy learning outcomes focus of the portfolio outcome, the unintended effects – siloes, resentments - are detrimental to PLANE schools:

“For teachers like me that are not part of PLANE intervention class, we struggle to deliver our lessons because we do not have the required materials as other PLANE supported grades do. We have to find all the resources by ourselves unlike our colleagues in P1, P2, P3 and P4” (P6 Teacher, public school, Dutse, Jigawa)

“PLANE supported us with materials for Maths and Hausa, which has been helpful, but we teach 8 subjects including Basic Science and PHE etc. The materials we have are not enough to cover all subjects effectively” (Head Teacher, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa).

Individual teachers are also prone to retirement, redeployment/transfer, and other issues that remove them from PLANE schools temporarily or permanently. This creates gaps for PLANE schools that cannot be filled due to a lack of sharing of the content of training among teachers, which would be relatively resource-efficient to address.

C. Language of instruction inclusivity

Effectiveness and inclusivity are affected by language of instruction. There is robust evidence that Hausa-based instruction has positive effects on teaching and learning. However, some students and teachers do not speak Hausa, so reliance on this as the sole mother tongue language may create gaps to inclusivity and effectiveness of materials in such contexts. In rural areas and those with Fulani populations across KKJ, Fulfude is more likely to be a useful complementary language of instruction, especially in lower grades and in nomadic schools in those locations. English also becomes more important to migrant communities and those whose first language may not be Hausa, and at upper primary grades. The 2022 National Language Policy adjusted the guidance of the previous National Policy on Education (FME, 2013) to apply mother tongue teaching for the first six years of primary schooling.

This guidance and evidence of the Midline impress the importance of Hausa-led teaching – with some code-switching to alternative main languages. This approach has happened concurrently with PLANE’s learning assessments, which show improvements in student learning outcomes over time (section 5.2.5):

“This year we do little tricky problems, but the teacher uses Hausa language which makes it easier” (P4 maths student, public school, Dutse, Jigawa)

“Learning is easier in Hausa” (P6 Boy, Islamic school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

However, the federal government has since reversed its language policy, reaffirming English as the medium of instruction in primary schools (November 2025). This creates a new challenge for mother-tongue instruction and the teaching and learning approach driven by PLANE that will likely require pragmatic, locally grounded approaches.

5.1.5 State education providers enable better learning outcomes

Learning outcomes have improved in both Hausa literacy and mathematics among P2 and P4 learners in PLANE schools over time: at the latest assessment at the end of the 2025

Rating:

academic year, 55.6% of P4 students had basic literacy and 84.0% achieved basic numeracy. The majority of learners continue to progress up learning levels. However, state and local education providers have little capacity to monitor student learning outcomes independently and feed those results back into system improvement.



Literacy and Maths competencies have improved among P2 and P4 students at PLANE schools over 3 years since the baseline evaluation. Improvements are observed across different academic years, assessment methodologies and analytical approaches. No comparative data were available at the time of the Baseline Evaluation, but the Midline evaluation is confident that these improvements are accurate and robust overall, with some important features and caveats, namely differences by state. This section will consider each type of learning assessment data in turn and then look across different types to examine patterns and differences.

W1’s logframe reports on learning assessment data collected from a sample of students in grades 2 and 4 at the beginning and end of each academic year (October and July annually). Learning data are gathered using tailored EGRA and EGMA assessments for Maths, Hausa and English (core subjects). The content of those assessments (tasks and items) does not change over time. The results are then banded into levels (10 levels for Hausa, 5 for English and Maths). The sample of schools where assessments are done is representative of PLANE schools at the state level and thus generalisable to PLANE schools at state level.

Between 2022 and 2025, W1 has changed how it reports improvements in student learning outcomes (Outcome Indicator 1) from a continuous variable of the ‘percentage of children in targeted schools who demonstrate at least one level increase or higher in the assessed subject’ to a binary variable indicator of children who have a basic level of Hausa, English and maths, with a target of 50% for P4 learners. W1’s intention is to expand the target to 75% of P6 with basic level competencies in core subjects by 2028. In all rounds, W1 used adapted EGRA (literacy) and EGMA (mathematics) tools and, despite the reporting shift, continued to collect data for P2 and P4 students and analyse data internally by level.

Table 19 summarises results for 2022-2024. These combine learners in grades P2, P4 and P6 in 2023, plus P3 in 2024. Over a third of students in both rounds increased a level in maths and Hausa. The rate of increase is low or negative partially due to it being harder to increase a level the higher up the level scales a student progresses. Overall, these results show reasonable progress in the first two years of W1’s programming.

Table 19: W1 results for student learning outcomes, 2022-2024

Indicator	Achieved August 2023	Achieved August 2024	Rate of increase
Percentage of learners who demonstrate at least one level increase in core subjects	Hausa: 36.4% increased a level	Hausa: 40.2% increased a level	Hausa: +3.8%
	Maths: 47.1% increased a level	Maths: 44.6% increased a level	Maths: -2.5%

In Year 3 (2024-25), the PLANE W1 logframe target was ‘50% of P4 children have basic literacy and 50% have basic numeracy skills.’ Basic competencies were defined using global Minimum Proficiency Levels (MPL). The sampling design was to test the same P4 students in literacy and numeracy at the beginning and end of the academic year in a sample of schools. Results of 2025 end-of-year assessments (for Foundational Learning sites only, i.e. not accelerated or other sites) show that **55.6% of P4 students had basic literacy (+5.6% above target) and 84.0% achieved basic numeracy (+34% above target)**⁷. The results for literacy were slightly higher for boys than girls overall (+1.8%) and higher for girls than boys overall in numeracy (+3.2%) but it is not known whether these differences are statistically significant.

In interpreting the results, it is important to note that the number (N) of students with matched beginning and end of year assessments and therefore used for this dataset varies by state and by subject; these variations were largely due to student attrition. Nevertheless, data (Table 20) indicate:

- (i) consistently higher results among students in Kaduna and consistently lower in Kano for both literacy and numeracy compared to other states.

⁷ The P4 literacy rate was found to be 60% if a threshold of Oral Reading Fluency speed of over 10 words per minute was used. However the 55.6% result reported was based upon a requirement of an ORF speed of over 6 wpm and an additional familiar word test to provide additional reassurance.

(ii) fewer than 50% of students attained a basic level of literacy in Kano and Jigawa.

Table 20: W1 results for P4 student learning outcomes, 2025

Total / State	% P4 learners attaining basic literacy (number assessed)	% P4 learners attaining basic numeracy (number assessed)
Overall	55.6% (n=414)	84.0% (n=626)
Kano	45.5% (n=112)	69.5% (n=171)
Kaduna	69.3% (n=190)	91.2% (n=250)
Jigawa (n=112)	49.8% (n=112)	91.1% (n=205)

W1 also provided the evaluation team with assessment data for P2 and P4 students for beginning and end of year Hausa, maths and English assessments in 2024-25. This data has been analysed to present a complementary and more detailed picture of changes in student learning outcomes over time. While reaching 'basic' or foundational literacy and numeracy is critical, understanding level changes indicate progress over time and any issues arising with sustaining improvements.

Looking at overall P4 student results disaggregated by learning level (as in earlier implementation years), 2025 data show that students continue to progress up the learning levels: in maths, 60.5% of P4 learners attained full numeracy; in Hausa, 17.8% are at 'Reader' level and an additional 42% are 'Progressing' beyond basic competencies.

The data also show learning level change over time by subject for P2 and P4 learners, disaggregated by state and student gender, between two assessment points: 2023 end-of-year (Year 1 of implementation) and 2025 end-of-year (Year 3 of implementation).

Figures 10 and 11 present the percent of P2 and P4 students improving a level of more disaggregated by state and subject; graphs show a 50% target proportion as a benchmark. Figure 11 shows that in all states and for all subjects, over 50% of P4 students (N=489-494) improved by at least one level in all three core subjects. The highest proportion of students to improve their competencies in all subjects were in Jigawa.

Figure 10 shows that, while over half of P2 students (N=365-369) in Kaduna and Jigawa did improve at least one level in all subjects, this is not true in Kano, where less than half of P2 students improved a level in core subjects, especially in English and Hausa (only 6.5% and 21.3% improvement, respectively).⁸ Given that these data are designed to be representative of PLANE schools at state level, this implies that **P2 students in Kano are improving at a lower rate than students in Jigawa and Kaduna and, also, at a lower rate than their P4 peers.** This analysis usefully indicates possible progression challenges specifically among P2 learners in Kano during the 2024-25 academic year.

Boys and girls have improved similarly across all assessments at both grades: P2 girls improved slightly more than boys in maths (7.8% more girls improved a level than boys) and literacy (5.5% more girls); at P4 results show marginally bigger improvements for boys in literacy (+0.85%) and marginally better for girls in maths (+0.6%), but at P4 these differences are unlikely to be practically significant.⁹

⁸ Note: the number (N) of students assessed in 2025 is similar across states (+/-31 for P2 and +/-64 for P4) and while not independently checked for statistical significance, would not seem practically significant. Indeed, the differences are observed for Jigawa (fewest students assessed) rather than between Kano and Kaduna.

⁹ Note: fewer girls were assessed than boys in P2 and P4 grades. Tests for statistical significance are not available, but differences are minimal at P2 (-9-13) and slightly more at P4 (-46-49).

Figure 10: Percentage of P2 students improving one level or more in AY 2024-25, by subject and state

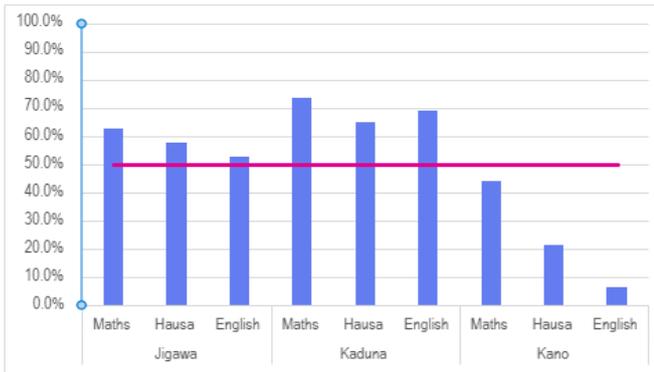
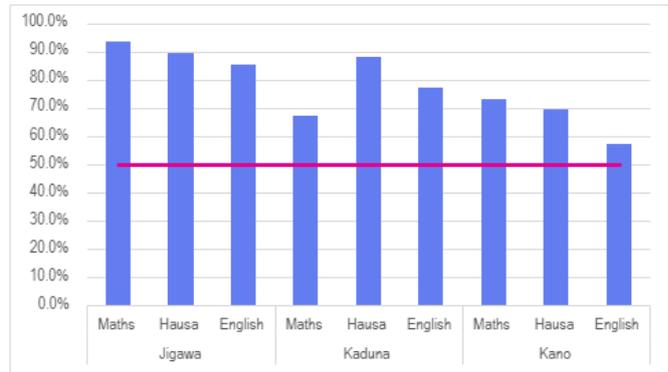


Figure 11: Percentage of P4 students improving one level or more in AY 2024-25, by subject and state



To probe the lower rate of improvement in Kano at P2 and – to a lesser extent P4 – and assess changes over the duration of the programme (2022-2025) the evaluation compiled all available comparable data over three academic years, by subject, state and grade (Table 21).¹⁰ Data indicate that:

- ▶ In all three states, the proportion of P4 students improving at least a level in all subjects has improved between 2023 and 2025, indicating students’ continuous progression along literacy and numeracy proficiency scales;
- ▶ P4 students in Jigawa show the greatest rate of improvement between 2023 and 2025 for all three subjects (63% more students improved a level in Hausa in 2025 compared to 2023, 52% in maths, and 49% in English);
- ▶ At grade P2, the proportion of students improving at least a level has also increased over time overall;
- ▶ In Kano, the proportion of P2 students improving at least a level has declined between 2024 and 2025 – especially in literacy – indicating that the rate of improvement is not to the same level as for Kaduna and Jigawa. This implies that P2 Kano students are improving at a slower and less consistent rate than in other states.

Table 21: P2 and P4 students in PLANE schools improving at least one level in Maths, Hausa and English within academic years¹¹

	2023		2024		2025		Change
Maths							
P2 Maths	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	%
Jigawa	22.5%	71	35.9%	103	62.8%	137	40.2%
Kaduna	50.9%	212	49.5%	186	73.4%	109	22.5%
Kano	33.3%	108	44.1%	179	43.9%	123	10.6%
P4 Maths	Mean	N			Mean	N	%
Jigawa	41.7%	103			93.5%	123	51.7%
Kaduna	50.3%	197			67.2%	186	17.0%
Kano	49.1%	116			73.0%	185	23.8%
Hausa							
P2 Hausa	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	%
Jigawa	17.1%	70	19.6%	102	57.7%	137	40.5%
Kaduna	35.1%	211	37.8%	185	65.1%	106	30.0%
Kano	10.6%	104	32.0%	178	21.3%	122	10.7%

¹⁰ Note that data are cross-sectional and do not follow the same students (or teachers) over time.

¹¹ Gaps in the table indicate missing data.

P4 Hausa	Mean	N	Mean	N	%
Jigawa	26.2%	103	89.4%	123	63.2%
Kaduna	36.5%	197	87.9%	182	51.4%
Kano	31.9%	116	69.6%	184	37.7%
English					
P2 English	Mean	N	Mean	N	%
Jigawa	3.9%	103	52.6%	137	48.7%
Kaduna	42.2%	185	68.8%	109	26.6%
Kano	16.3%	178	6.5%	123	-9.8%
P4 English	Mean	N	Mean	N	%
Jigawa	7.8%	102	85.1%	121	77.3%
Kaduna	30.1%	196	77.2%	184	47.1%
Kano	24.1%	116	57.3%	185	33.2%

Midline classroom observations scored lessons against criteria for school quality, including student learning. Lessons were observed in P4 and P6 classes for maths, Hausa and/or English. Table 22 summarises the percentage of classes observed that were scored as Excellent or Very Good for student learning, with the definition of the criteria given.¹² These data indicate improvements in all three states, especially in Jigawa. This:

Table 22: Midline Classroom Observations for Student Learning

State	Baseline	Midline	Change (%)
Students show understanding, critical thinking and learning achievement on the lesson / task			
Jigawa (n=20)	5%	50%	+45%
Kaduna (n=23)	38%	50%	+12%
Kano (n=21)	56%	86%	+30%

- ▶ Mirrors the positive assessment results above for Jigawa state but draws attention the fact that sampled students and schools in Jigawa had the lowest baseline data (2022-23) for learning across quantitative and qualitative indicators and therefore the greatest room for improvement.
- ▶ Counterbalances the subject learning assessment results for Kano (above) with more positive assessments of classroom learning from direct observations.
- ▶ Complements the overall picture of steady and consistent improvement in Kaduna state.

Discussions with students and teachers consolidate the positive perceptions of improved student learning, again, notably in Jigawa and for maths:

“We dedicate the first 10 minutes of each lesson to focused literacy and numeracy drills. [This has] started yielding desired and unprecedented results. (P6 Teacher, public school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)

R1: *“Math is better now. I prefer addition more*

R2: *I like math. The teacher uses objects to explain like top bottle and stones*

R3: *I enjoy maths this year more than before” (P4 students, public school, Malam Madori, Jigawa)*

There is less evidence of positive appreciation among students of their lessons in Kano, while in Kaduna students appreciate Hausa and maths for their ability to use this learning in work – hawking or in shops.

Examining PLANE schools, data from W1 and Midline classroom observations strongly indicate overall improvements in student learning performance in these schools that have had PLANE intervention. The

¹² The Midline school sample, and therefore classroom observations, are purposively not the same as the schools assessed and observed for PLANE’s regular monitoring and evaluation activities.

Midline is confident that these results are not by chance and are highly likely to be a contribution of PLANE's interventions, notably the Foundational Learning Package (section 5.1.1) as well as Head Teacher and SBMC training, SSO training and monitoring visits, and community learning and advocacy initiatives.

To ascertain better the contribution of PLANE to student learning outcomes, W1 has conducted a cross-sectional impact evaluation in two academic years (2023-24 and 2024-25) applying a Spatial Discontinuity Approach whereby 120 PLANE schools along KJ state borders are matched with 124 non-PLANE schools along that same border with shared characteristics (W1, Year 3 Outcome Summary, 2025).¹³ This has enabled PLANE to ascertain the contribution of PLANE to learning outcomes at P2 only (again, using EGRA and EGMA) by comparison with schools that are not supported by PLANE.

In two successive years, impact evaluation data indicate that P2 students at PLANE schools perform statistically better than P2 students at non-PLANE schools in Maths and Hausa. This means that students reading and maths scores increase more among PLANE students than non-PLANE students between October and July of an academic year and these differences are positive and statistically significant (Table 23). Effect size estimates for both years are statistically significant.

Table 23: Impact evaluation results by subject

Effect size (standard deviation)		
Subject	2024	2025
Hausa	0.17	0.305
Maths	0.36	0.22
Significance (p value)	p<0.05	p<0.01

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Student learning assessment results in Kano indicate lower and less consistent rates of improvement and actual attainment than for other states.** This suggests that elements of the PLANE intervention in Kano are not having the same outcomes as in Jigawa and Kaduna. Kano is the largest state by size and population; it has the most schools, teachers and students, so scale may be a negative contributory factor. Additionally, compared to other states, fewer SSOs have been trained by PLANE; schools struggle with poor physical infrastructure and there is a high prevalence of girls' early marriage (section 5.1.2). On the other hand, there are indications of strong systems reform and political will in Kano. The contribution story of PLANE in Kano is therefore mixed and complex, and more so compared to Jigawa and Kaduna.
- ▶ **Children living with disabilities:** Data are available for students with and without a disability, but the numbers assessed with a known disability are too few (<20 for P2 and P4) for meaningful interpretation. There are complementary issues here: (i) poor access to state primary schooling among children with disabilities;(ii) inadequate identification of learners with any disabilities and by type in school; (iii) absence of learning and assessment materials tailored to students with disabilities that excludes their participation (see STEP 1A).
- ▶ **School type:** data are disaggregated neither by school type (public, IQTE, nomadic) nor by school population, both of which the Midline finds evidence of links to school quality and potentially learning outcomes.
- ▶ **Learning assessment methodology:**
 - ▷ Sample bias: student sample is bolstered with replacements if the same students are not located within assessment rounds. Replacement students at endline are likely to score higher as lower performers tend to have lower attendance, especially at the end of Term 3.
 - ▷ Change in indicator focus and reporting over time: this has affected longitudinal analysis and reporting and limits conclusions on progress over time. Window 1 has data on learning levels in 2025 compared to previous years; these data are not reported but provide insight into trends, clusters and potential sticking points in core skill acquisition (e.g. moving from phonetic awareness to emergent reader).
 - ▷ Qualitative comparisons with other learning assessment results within PLANE; with other EGRA/EGMA assessment results over time in Nigeria; and/or across the region, are not made but would offer uses comparisons on rates of improvement and actual attainment among primary grade learners.

¹³ Window 1's impact evaluation methodology is explained in detail in the cited documents.

5.2 Non-state sector engagement, management and performance – Window 1

CHANGE PATHWAY 2, WINDOW 1

2A: If the engagement, management and performance of the non-state sector in delivering foundational skills is improved and there are planning, personnel management and public financial management improvements within the state sector.

And

2B: If there is effective generation and communication of evidence (including under PLANE as a whole) and then this evidence is used to inform citizen-state engagement and improved service delivery then improvements in education sector performance will take place.

Then

2C: Improvements in the governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability of education systems will take place and then

2C: There will be improvements in the inclusivity and effectiveness with which education systems in Nigeria deliver foundational skills.

Change Pathway 2 is associated with Window 1's Output 3 workstream, which by design comprises 10% of the PLANE Window 1 portfolio investment. The total actual expenditure of Output 3 over the three implementation years to 2025 is £2.13 million. The planned proportion and actual spend against this change pathway are thus significantly less than for change pathway 1. This is largely because there is no direct service delivery planned or realised against this pathway; instead, the focus has been on engagement, capacity development, and system strengthening. Nevertheless, PLANE's attention to non-state education systems and schools is a central to a holistic and integrated approach to addressing quality primary schooling for all children in the North West region. DELVe sampled three non-state schools at midline and baseline: one in each of Jigawa (Malam Madori LGA, private school), Kaduna (Soba LGA, private school) and Kano (Bunkure LGA, Tsangaya school). However, only the two private schools were visited and engaged due to the opening hours and non-availability of teachers and students at the Tsangaya school in Bunkure (see below). These data are utilised only to illustrate other evidence gathered for the evaluation.

This section examines what W1 has been able to achieve against the steps defined in the ToC and what it has made to education system performance and quality schooling across private, non-integrated IQS and other non-state schools.

5.2.1 Engagement, management and performance of the non-state sector

PLANE has contributed to engaging the non-state sector in the delivery of quality basic education. The performance of the sector appears to be improving, although the evidence for performance varies by state and MDA. The new non-state school grading system, increasing regulation, and innovation hubs all contribute to improved engagement and performance.

Rating:



Supporting the non-state education sector is a discrete but unique and significant workstream of PLANE's goal to improve foundational learning across the basic education system. The non-state sector includes a range of schools and learning centres, including low-cost private schools, non-integrated IQS, and non-formal Tsangaya schools. PLANE's mandate is inter-Ministerial, broad and sizeable: there are, for example, over 13,000 non-state Tsangaya, Quranic and Islamic schools in Kano alone, two-thirds of which are not formalised.

Engaging the non-state sector in basic education improvements is complex and challenging due to the splintering of federal and state agencies and responsibilities. Nevertheless, evidence is robust in indicating that PLANE W1 has made important contributions to improving the engagement and performance of the non-state sector since 2023, including:

- ▶ Strengthening the system of grading non-state schools for quality assurance and school improvement: to September 2024, W1 supported the grading of 2,902 non-state schools across the states. Kaduna state and the Federal Quality Assurance Authority have since adopted this non-state school grading system developed by PLANE.

- ▶ Increasing the number of non-state schools that meet required regulations – the baseline evaluation recommended that W1 focus on non-state school regulation, which has done notably since 2023, slightly exceeding its target with 70% of its non-state schools meeting regulations in 2025 (Table 24).
- ▶ Delivering teacher training for non-state teachers with state teachers on foundational pedagogies, safeguarding and, for school leaders, on record keeping build the capacity of school leaders to gather school data and share it to LGAs, and to supervise teaching and learning in their schools. Adopting PLANE’s approach, the Kano state government has itself trained Tsangaya facilitators in 2025.
- ▶ Establishing Innovation Hubs to model inclusive foundational literacy and numeracy teaching methodologies to non-state schools.

Table 24: Window 1, Output 3, 2022-2025

Output 3 indicators	Cumulative target (2022-2025)	Actual reported (2025)	Difference (%)
3.1 Percentage of non-state schools that meet the required policy and regulatory requirements for private education delivery	State policy guidelines on non-state schools finalised and endorsed 61% of non-state schools meet policy and regulatory requirements	See section 5.2.3 70% of non-state meet policy and regulatory requirements	+9%
3.2 Number of innovation hubs pilots launched in PLANE supported IQS and private schools to integrate learning in IQS and support institutional strengthening.	2 innovation hubs Innovation hubs modelled and replicated by one Government and Private Schools Board	3 innovation hubs 3 PPP Forums established	+1 See below

Improving performance has involved raising awareness of expectations and standards in non-state schools across all levels of management and delivery. The focus of attention at federal and state levels on out-of-school children – emphasised in the federal government’s 2025 NESRI framework (FME, 2025) – has introduced a more direct emphasis on non-state schools, accelerated learning, and community-based learning. PLANE W1 plans, in response, to pivot towards introducing ABEP into non-state Islamic schools from AY2025-26, deeming that this approach is more suitable for these schools to integrate quality teaching and learning on foundational literacy and numeracy. This seems appropriate given the fact that many of these schools are multi-grade, with few teachers and few resources.

There remains less emphasis from PLANE and local and state governments on low-cost private schools because they tend to be more aligned with the formal system and structures, have more resources and more teachers. However, those visited for the midline requested more attention, training and resources.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Resources and facilities:** Non-state religious schools face teacher shortages, lack training and capacity building, resulting in, overall, lower-quality instruction compared to public schools. Some non-state Islamic schools do not have enough teachers to enable formalisation and the inclusion of core subjects (W1, Output 2 Lead KII). The lack of learning materials for core subjects is more severe in religious non-state schools in general: PLANE provide their Foundational Skills Package but this is much less suited to these environments, which tend to be multi-grade (mixed age and ability) rather than grade-specific (for which the package is designed).
- ▶ **Variable engagement in the non-state system and service delivery among different LGAs:** some are engaged and attentive, others much less so:

"We are more focused on public schools than private as we only provide little assistance to them, less attention on Islamiyah schools, except with high enrolment" (LGEA Official, Minijibir, Kano)
- ▶ **Resistance** to non-state regulation among some non-state actors, especially among Quranic leaders at state level. This tends to lengthen and problematise efforts to improve non-state school quality.

5.2.2 Improving planning, personnel and public financial management

PLANE has made some contributions to improving planning and coordination among non-state education stakeholders and supported personnel management via trainings for non-state school teachers and leaders. Funding and financial management remain difficult to assess with low evidence of PLANE's contributions.

Rating:



PLANE has supported a database of non-state schools and students at state levels feeding its own non-state school tracking sheet into those systems as well as using these for logframe reporting. Improvements in data on non-state schools means that students enrolled in any type of non-state school are not mistakenly counted in out-of-school children numbers and that they are correctly identified and counted for resource allocations and planning purposes. Improvements in planning have also been supported by PLANE's coordination of non-state stakeholders in state-level meetings and working groups (see also below).

Teacher training interventions contribute to personnel capacity building at school level, which is also bolstered by management training (of malams, or school leaders) on supervision and monitoring.

Financing and funds to the sector are difficult to channel in practice through government systems. PLANE has engaged with the federal Almajiri Commission to support resources for non-state schools and directly supporting the state Commissions to leverage funding from UBEC. However, non-formal education receives limited attention in funding frameworks.

PLANE's logframe monitors the number of affordable loans and financial products issued to schools (indicator 4). Achievements reported vary from milestone targets (due to the programme adapting to needs and state government priorities). To date, PLANE has supported financial institutions to provide four products (e-wallets for students, financial literacy for low-cost schools, health insurance packages, and digital training) while over 1,000 non-state schools have accessed school improvement loans to meet government regulation requirements, with PLANE providing technical assistance to the National Coalition of Non-State Schools for inclusive loan access. The evaluation could not independently verify these reported results.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Non-state school data** are not currently captured in state Annual School Census reports, meaning that data are not easily tracked alongside formal public schools' data¹⁴
- ▶ **No evidenced capacity building for staff** at state government agencies responsible for non-state education, such as officials in the state agencies for mass education or private, Almajiri, or Quranic school boards.
- ▶ **Limited attention to financing and funding** for the non-state sector.

5.2.3 Improving governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability

There are new policies on non-state schools in all three states since the baseline, as well as guidelines and standards. At federal level, PLANE has also championed the new National Non-State School Policy (FME, 2024). Relationships between the non-state and state sectors have improved but are partial. There is also limited accountability of the non-state sector overall.

Rating:



PLANE W1's approach during 2022-2024 was to focus on local non-state schools and at LGA level. The strategic pivot across PLANE to policy influencing since the end of 2024 has altered the focus of this work to focus more on policy development and system strengthening, including sustainable financing. The evaluation considers non-state

¹⁴ Information received in February 2026 from Window 1 indicates that private school data is being integrated into routine data systems and ASC in Kaduna state with support from PLANE.

governance, management, inclusiveness and accountability through the lens of the Governance Assessment Framework – also utilised in the previous section.

5.2.3.1 Policy reform

There are more policy dialogues on non-state schools since the baseline. At baseline, researchers did not gather much data on non-state schools or the non-state system – this is markedly different at midline. PLANE has directly contributed to the development of:

- ▶ The first non-state school policies in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa, and the subsequent finalisation of the National Non-State School Policy approved by the National Council on Education in October 2024. PLANE provided notable technical assistance to the Federal Minister of Education for this important national policy, which is also being domesticated and trickled down to states in the South West including Lagos.
- ▶ Private School Guidelines.
- ▶ Approval of the National Policy on Almajiri at federal level (2025) and domestication of this policy in Kaduna – at early stage but progressing.
- ▶ School leadership standards for non-state schools.

5.2.3.2 Participation

PLANE understands that the inclusiveness of the education system depends on effective engagement with the non-state sector. This, in turn, however, depends on the assumption of positive relations between state and non-state actors to improve overall education standards. The evaluation finds that this assumption only partially holds and remains fragile in all three states where PLANE works.

There is a broad spectrum of multiple government agencies involved in non-state reforms at state and federal levels that goes beyond UBEC, SUBEBs and quality assurance agencies. These include:

- ▶ Almajiri Commissions at federal level, in Kano and Jigawa;
- ▶ The Mass Education Commission and Nomadic Education Commission at federal level;
- ▶ The Quranic Board in Kano; the Tsangaya Education Board in Jigawa; and the Interfaith Board in Kaduna;
- ▶ The Departments of Private Education at state ministries in Jigawa and Kano.

Different states include different stakeholders to non-state education. PLANE has engaged across multiple agencies at federal and state levels, sharing data and reports to influence reforms. This has increased cross-agency collaborations and information sharing, and improved participation in governance of the sector. The ecosystem of the non-state system also goes beyond education to include state and land revenue services, revenue boards and corporate affairs – PLANE has also engaged and collaborated with these organisations to strengthen systemic reforms:

“My engagement with PLANE has focused on policy development and system strengthening. I have been involved in developing the Public-Private Partnership policy, contributing to the State Safe School Policy, SBMC policy, and supporting the development and review of the Medium-Term Sector Strategy. These efforts aim to improve school safety, planning, governance, and overall education delivery” (SANE Official, Jigawa)

PLANE has been unique in giving notable attention to the non-state sector in its approach to system reform. According to this representation of the state Islamic, Quranic and Non-State schools Board – which has oversight of non-state school registration and integration):

“PLANE involved the non-state schools unlike others and that is what brought the inclusion of my organisation which they have helped in the development of the policy of the non-state schools (SME IQSMB Kano).

The non-state schools’ coalition – comprising over 20 different agencies nationally – are also represented by PLANE and meet to discuss and share ideas and experiences.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Systemic bias towards formal education:** to the detriment of the participation and reform of the non-state sector. There is a systemic splintering of federal and state agencies for formal and non-formal education, such as NMEC and separate state non-formal agencies, which inhibits collaborations and coordination. Non-state agency officials report feeling excluded from education system discussions, plans and processes. This can contribute to policy blind spots and perceptions of exclusion and isolation. This finding is mirrored in the PI report (DELVE, 2025d) which finds that ‘Non-formal education stakeholders were largely absent from major reforms, despite the critical role the sector plays’:

"SAME is lacking attention; we need support to enable us train facilitators and buy learning materials"
(SAME Official, Kaduna)

- ▶ **Communication of policy content** to schools, and communication by schools to government of their needs, seems more limited among non-formal schools, including those that having recently formalised:

"As a teacher in Tsangaya, we are handicapped in presenting our vision to the appropriate authority for consideration" (P4 Teacher, Tsangaya integrated school, Soba, Kaduna)

- ▶ **There is very limited evidence of PLANE's contribution** to improved accountability of the non-state sector. PLANE does raise awareness and capacity among Quality Assurance agencies in states to also provide quality assurance technical support and oversight for non-state schools, but the operationalisation of non-state quality assurance and accountability is unknown and likely weak.

5.2.4 Improving the inclusivity and effectiveness of system delivery of foundational skills

There is weak evidence of the contribution of PLANE's significant efforts in non-state sector engagement translating into improved delivery of foundational skills in non-state schools. Non-state school types vary and they grapple with different conditions to state schools, which requires an adapted approach for effective and inclusive core subject teaching.

Rating:



This section considers evidence for the role of the non-state sector in improving teaching and learning of foundational skills. PLANE's provides its Foundational Skills Package to some non-state schools but, as noted previously, the effectiveness of this package is lower in schools affected by multi-grade teaching and fewer (or no) qualified teachers. PLANE is therefore looking to pivot towards an accelerated learning package in Islamic non-state schools in its operational LGAs.

Beyond PLANE, other partners have provided training support to non-state teachers and facilitators:

"We were able to integrate 120 schools and train about 240 facilitators in non-state schools through inclusion of literacy and numeracy into their curriculum" (SME DPRS IQSMB, Kano)

This effort indicates PLANE's potential influence but also is connected to prior non-state programming in Kano through ESSPIN and GEP3.

Data from the two private schools visited by the baseline indicate that private schools struggle less with teaching staff compared to other non-state institutions. The pupil-classroom ratios were 32:1 and 12:1 respectively in the private schools in Soba, Kaduna, and Malam Madori, Jigawa state, significantly lower than in rural public schools. However, neither of these two schools had handwashing facilities; a playground; or a perimeter fence, again indicating persistent issues with funding and infrastructure noted elsewhere.

Non-state schools may be mixed or single sex by design, and many children also attend other religious learning centres in addition to their non-state – or state public – school. Many children in sampled state schools in Malam Madori (Jigawa), Bunkure and Minijibir (Kano) also attend Islamiyya schools in the evenings, weekends, and at other times on weekdays.

In non-formal Tsangaya, boys and girls may attend; in some, boys' enrolment may be higher:

“In Tsangaya the pupils’ participation is normally boys since it is (Karatun Allo) Qu’ranic recitation using slate as instrument” (Teacher, Integrated Islamic school, Soba, Kaduna)

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **Poor learning environments** have remained since baseline; lack of trained teachers and few resources – however, sampled non-state schools are also in rural LGAs, which tend to be less well-resourced than urban counterparts anyway.
- ▶ **PLANE training does not include Arabic teachers** at state or non-state schools. Given their significance in the curriculum and community socio-religious norms in many of PLANE’s focal LGAs, their engagement may be useful, as suggested by one LGEA official:

“Arabic teachers and Arabic SSOs are often excluded from trainings, and I strongly feel they should be included to promote inclusive capacity building across all school types” (LGEA Official, Dutse, Jigawa).

5.2.5 PLANE Window 1: Summary of Findings

The overall findings of the Midline evaluation for W1's programme at federal level and in the North West states of Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa, as part of the PLANE portfolio programme, indicate well-evidenced, positive, and a largely significant contribution to change towards the intended outcomes of PLANE.



Key contributions to change

Evidence strongly indicates the contributions of PLANE W1 for improvements since the BE in these areas in particular:

- ▶ School and community-level awareness, attitudes, rhetoric and practices on inclusion and safeguarding have improved thanks to targeted, high-quality training and ongoing support on inclusion and safeguarding for over 11,000 Head Teachers, 5,000 SBMC members and 265 School Support Officers (SSOs).
- ▶ Effective, structured, child-centred pedagogies and practices among maths and literacy teachers in PLANE schools, especially in grades P2-P4, combined with better motivation and greater resourcefulness of these teachers, principally thanks to in-service teacher training reaching over 12,000 teachers and the Foundational Skills Package.
- ▶ Designing and deploying a structured pedagogy package (the Foundational Skills Package) based on mother tongue (Hausa) instruction with guides, visual aids, local material and play-based activities – there is robust evidence that this package is contributing to improved learning outcomes in PLANE schools, including compared to non-PLANE schools.
- ▶ Instructional leadership improvement among head teachers including to monitor and support teachers and school oversight and resource (materials, infrastructure) support by SBMCs.
- ▶ Student learning outcomes in maths and Hausa at P2 and P4 have improved over time. At the end of the 2025 academic year, 55.6% of P4 students had basic literacy and 84.0% achieved basic numeracy. The majority of learners continue to progress up learning levels. These improvements are associated with the Foundational Skills Package and improved teacher competence and motivation in PLANE schools.
- ▶ Education governance improvements in the three states via significant interventions for education policy reforms, notably for teacher recruitment and deployment, and for non-state schools, including through an approach to co-creation, leading multi-stakeholder forums, coalitions and cross-agency engagements at state levels.
- ▶ Good overall value for money: economy, equity and efficiency reports indicate robust value for money; W1's latest Cost Benefit report states that 'for every £1 spent, the project yields a benefit of £3.77' (p.8).



Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ Identifying, including and engaging systematically with children of school-age living with disabilities.
- ▶ Generating systemic improvements in teacher competencies, practices and retention that go beyond individual trained teachers to address weaknesses associated with system norms (retirement, re-deployment / transfer), in-service training, and silos of trained/untrained teachers within and across schools. This includes tracking the realisation of teacher policy reforms and addressing continuing gaps or weaknesses.
- ▶ Consistency and sustainability of student learning improvements: learning gains among P2 students in Kano reduced over the last academic year; these students did not sustain the previous year's gains. This indicates some inconsistent learning progress over time, suggesting that learning gains during programme implementation may not be sustained longer-term, beyond PLANE.
- ▶ Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) are currently procured and distributed through PLANE for core subjects in PLANE schools. Moves towards government-led and financed TLM provision raise concerns about sustainability of these packages to schools, and therefore the sustainability of improved teaching and learning outcomes.
- ▶ Non-formal state education agencies are not consistently engaged in education system reforms led by PLANE. They have expertise that can make important contributions to improving learning outcomes across the system. However, officials at these agencies report exclusion from forums and working groups. Their participation is not systematically documented, and their influence seems partial and inadequate, especially in view of the prioritisation of the Out of School Children (OOSC), including in the government's 2025 NESRI agenda, that requires non-formal sector engagement. This summary is reflected further in sections 6 and 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations.

5.3 Child protection, teaching and learning in conflict-affected states – Window 2

CHANGE PATHWAY 3, WINDOW 2

3A: If the well-being, protection and safeguarding of conflict-affected children is improved (in particular girls and children with disabilities) **and** more children complete primary and transition to junior secondary education (in particular girls and children with disabilities) **and** the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of teaching and learning is improved in formal and non-formal settings.

And

3B: If evidence generated under PLANE is used by PLANE implementors, for decision making and learning.

And

3C: If there is also progress in the recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria.

Then

3D: There will be improvements in the safe access to quality learning for children affected by conflict in the region (particularly for girls) **and then** state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children.

Change Pathway 3 (and 4) is delivered by UNICEF and its implementing partner Plan International as PLANE Window 2. W2's allocated funding is £13.88 million over six years (2021-2027¹⁵). Actual overall programme expenditure to September 2025 is £12.73 million (91% of budget). W2 is implemented in Jere, Konduga, and Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMA) LGAs in Borno State; and Damaturu, Nguru, and Potiskum LGAs in Yobe State. None of these LGAs have experienced conflict or disruption to learning as a result of insecurity, which means that it can only have a limited impact on the most vulnerable populations and on overall education system recovery.

This and the following section (5.3 and 5.4) examine the progress of W2 along the steps defined in the two change pathways associated with its intervention in the portfolio ToC and overall contribution to education system improvement and better learning outcomes in the North East states of Borno and Yobe.

5.3.1 Well-being, protection and safeguarding of conflict-affected children

Teachers and children report feeling safer in PLANE-supported schools than previously. Safeguarding has been institutionalised in many schools through teacher training and infrastructure improvements. However, a lack of psychosocial metrics mean it is difficult to quantify the contribution of PLANE to perceived and/or actual well-being and protection.

Rating:



Across Borno and Yobe States, PLANE W2 has made progress in improving the protection and well-being of conflict-affected children, particularly girls and children with disabilities, through a holistic approach that has combined:

- ▶ psychosocial support training for teachers and students
- ▶ safe school practices,
- ▶ gender-responsive teacher training, and
- ▶ community engagement.

Teachers and SBMCs have been at the forefront of this improvement: over 6,000 teachers have received psychosocial support through mentoring sessions and positive discipline training delivered by PLANE-supported mentoring and coaching structures (mentors, LGEA-level supervisors, master trainers, and quality assurance

¹⁵ W2 agreed a one-year no-cost extension with FCDO from end-2026 to end-2027.

officers). This has contributed to more nurturing classroom environments where children feel safer and more supported:

“They [teachers] are wonderful people; we thank them for all the support and guidance they are giving us. We pray to Allah to bless them. We like them” (Students, public school, Jere, Borno)

“They [teachers] are good people, they like us and advise us to do better in our schooling” (Students, public school, Damaturu, Yobe)

“Children now come to school more freely because they see that teachers care about them and the school is fenced. Before, some were scared or stayed at home” (Head Teacher, public school, Maiduguri, Borno)

W2 recorded strong outcomes in school protection and safeguarding in Yobe state, as SBMCs demonstrated high functionality, with 80% reportedly operationalising safe school minimum standards through gender-responsive and disability-inclusive Conflict Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR) plans.

The establishment of 434 WASH clubs with emphasis on girls’ menstrual hygiene management are likely to have helped reduce absenteeism among adolescent girls. Over 9,500 parents and community members were sensitised on the importance of girls’ education and the protection of children with disabilities. Such combined efforts contributed to improvements in perceptions of safety and inclusiveness in PLANE-supported schools, compared to baseline data.

Safeguarding has been institutionalised in many schools through training and community action. W2 delivered large-scale training for teachers, headteachers, SBMC members and community members on safe-school standards, positive discipline and inclusive pedagogy. It also supported practical protective measures in many centres (fenced compounds, promoted community patrols, security guards, WASH repairs, and safe school declaration (SSD)/minimum standard for safe school (MSSS) trainings for SBMCs). Many stakeholders mentioned the engagement of watchmen, school gates, SBMC involvement and establishment of safeguarding committees. KPIs show SBMCs trained and operationalising safe-school standards (Table 25):

“We have a rule to protect children against abuse and bullying. There’s a committee to handle child protection issues” (Teacher, public school, Maiduguri, Borno)

“We have a safeguarding plan. Days ago, they trained us about it, we sat with SBMC and clarified issues about the safeguarding plan” (Head Teacher, public school, Damaturu, Yobe)

Table 25: Window 2 Output 3, 2022-2025

Indicator	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
3.1 Teachers who received psychosocial support	5,290	6,790	+28%
3.2 S/CBMC trained on protection and safeguarding	2,691	3,035	+12.8%
3.4 Teachers trained on positive discipline	4,755	6,790	+42.8%

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **Sustaining attendance** among older girls, particularly in communities affected by insecurity and poverty, is a major challenge.
- ▶ **Safety and safeguarding are uneven and improvements may not be sustained.** W2 data indicate that SBMCs have been trained and 80% are operationalising safe school minimum standards but the evaluation found only 8 out of 18 (44%) sampled schools had a safeguarding plan. This difference echoes some stakeholder comments that safeguarding is informal or absent in some schools, which creates further risks to the sustainability of safety and safeguarding improvements.
- ▶ **W2 has no psychosocial, safeguarding or safety incident metrics.** The assessments and reports did not collect standardised psychosocial outcome data or incident-based safety metrics, so wellbeing improvements are inferred from inputs/practices and/or qualitative data and not from measurable indicators.

5.3.2 Children complete primary and transition to junior secondary education

Supported improvements in school-level data and documentation has helped schools to track student enrolment, retention and transition through primary grades. However, beyond project assessment rounds, a learner tracking system has not been fully institutionalised.

Rating:



W2's work has contributed to strengthening the continuity of students' learning. Recognising that the P6 completion to JS transition gap often stems from weak foundational competencies and socio-economic barriers, the programme adopted a systemic approach that combined classroom-level interventions, community mobilisation, and institutional coordination.

Through foundational learning reforms and teacher professional development, W2 has contributed to improved literacy and numeracy outcomes at the upper primary level (P4-P6) creating a stronger base for learners to transition to junior secondary school. Between the end of P6 in July 2025 to the beginning of JS1 in September, 8,552 girls (92%) successfully transitioned to junior secondary school (W2 Quarterly Report, April-September 2025).

"Before PLANE, many children could not even read simple words. Now you see them reading and answering questions confidently" (Head Teacher, public school, Jere, Borno)

These data on girls' retention and transitions to JSS are likely to be strongly influenced by the AGILE project's concurrent supply-side activities including infrastructure development and conditional cash transfers to girls in the poorest families.

Beyond the classroom, PLANE's engagement with SBMCs, Mothers' Associations, and community coalitions address socio-cultural and gendered barriers to progression through primary grades and transition to JSS, particularly for girls. Awareness campaigns and dialogue sessions have helped shift attitudes toward girls' education and encourage parents to prioritise completion and transition. Additionally, W2's advocacy with state education agencies has contributed to greater policy attention toward tracking learner progression through Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and strengthening linkages between primary and junior secondary schools:

"We now have a register to follow pupils who complete primary six, to know how many move to junior secondary. The LGEA trained us on how to record that information, and it is helping us plan better" (Education Secretary, Damaturu, Yobe)

By promoting collaboration among education stakeholders (teachers, school leaders, communities, and policymakers) PLANE W2 has facilitated a more coordinated and responsive system that supports students' learning journeys. The introduction of performance monitoring mechanisms and school improvement planning further reinforced accountability, helping schools identify at-risk learners and implement early interventions to prevent dropout. Altogether, PLANE's systemic and community-driven strategies have helped reduce attrition at upper primary and increase the proportion of children transitioning to junior secondary school.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Sustaining transitions** remains constrained by household poverty, food insecurity, child labour, long distances to junior secondary schools, and inadequate JSS infrastructure – especially in rural areas.
- ▶ **Social norms that devalue girls' education** continue to influence parental decisions in some communities.
- ▶ **Weak data systems and inadequate coordination** by SUBEBs with other agencies hinder accurate tracking of transitions.
- ▶ **No verified transition data:** ABEP/TaRL/KARI assessment reports show learning gains and enrolment/retention but do not provide primary completion rates or transition to JSS because longitudinal learner tracking has not been institutionalised by W2 or EMIS.

5.3.3 Improving the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of teaching and learning in formal and non-formal settings

PLANE W2 has contributed considerably towards improving the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of teaching and learning in Borno and Yobe. Recognising that foundational learning deficits are rooted in uneven teaching quality and exclusionary classroom practices, W2 pursued a holistic approach that strengthened teacher capacity, curriculum delivery, and inclusive pedagogy while expanding learning opportunities for out-of-school and marginalised children.

Rating:



At the formal education level, PLANE’s investment in teacher professional development has been crucial. Through in-service training, structured lesson plans and coaching models, teachers have become better equipped to deliver competency-based lessons aligned with foundational literacy and numeracy standards. W2 has trained a cumulative total of 5,793 teachers on TaRL, 951 on KARI, and 1,198 on ABEP (to August 2025). At least half of all these teachers have been women.

The introduction of teacher reflection sessions and peer learning clusters has fostered a culture of professional collaboration and self-improvement. By integrating gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching techniques, PLANE also ensured that classrooms are more responsive to the needs of girls, learners with disabilities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In non-formal settings, PLANE’s support to Learning Facilitators and community-based education structures has enhanced teaching quality and learner participation. Through capacity-building workshops and ongoing mentoring, facilitators have improved lesson planning, classroom management, and the use of continuous assessment to tailor instruction. The integration of life skills and psychosocial support into non-formal curricula has strengthened learner engagement and retention, while building pathways for reintegration into the formal school system.

In Borno State, PLANE has supported the integration of 4,284 (2,570 girls) Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP) learners into formal schools to enable children previously learning in temporary, community-based settings to be placed into public schools. Teachers in these schools have received training on differentiated instruction, psychosocial support, and inclusive pedagogy to better manage mixed-age, multi-ability classes in a post-crisis context:

“Many of our ABEP learners have now moved into formal schools. The classrooms are still crowded, but it’s better than before because we repaired some blocks with support from PLANE” (Head Teacher, public school, Gujba, Yobe)

To improve teaching and learning quality, PLANE contributed to enhancing classroom delivery through structured lesson plans, regular coaching, and supervision systems. In both states, headteachers were trained to conduct classroom observations using standard tools - to improve feedback loops and accountability in instructional delivery. These improvements were complemented by community mobilisation through SBMCs who encouraged enrolment and retention, especially for girls and learners with disabilities.

Table 26 shows the number of teachers trained in different methodologies (ABEP, KARI and TaRL) who were observed to be implementing those approaches across both states in AY2024-2025; and the total number of head teachers and SBMCs who have been trained on inclusion to date. These data show success in reaching beyond targets for Head teacher, teacher and SBMC training on inclusion, and that targeted teacher pedagogical training is largely being observed in practice in classrooms, especially for KARI at lower grades.

Table 26: Implementation of ABEP, KARI and TaRL methodologies and inclusion training

Indicator	Cumulative target (to 2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Trained teachers who implemented TaRL approach	65%	77%	+12%
Trained teachers who implemented KARI approach	65%	93%	+28%
Trained teachers who implemented ABEP approach	65%	77%	+12%

Indicator	Cumulative target (to 2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Teachers and head teachers equipped with inclusive and gender-sensitive pedagogy	4,755	6,790	+43%
S/CBMCs trained on gender-responsive and disability-inclusive protection and safeguarding	2,691	3,036	+13%

Partnership with SUBEBs, State Ministries of Education, and teacher training institutions has supported the institutionalisation of quality improvement. Curriculum adaptation and the introduction of learning materials that emphasise local relevance and contextual understanding have helped make lessons more engaging and relatable for learners. This focus on relevance – using familiar contexts, examples, and languages – has particularly benefited learners in rural and low-literacy environments.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Systemic constraints negatively affect the sustainability and scalability of quality improvements.** Teacher transfers, high facilitator turnover, and inconsistent post-training follow-up sometimes erode gains achieved through capacity-building efforts. Limited instructional materials and overcrowded classrooms in some schools restrict effective application of learner-centred pedagogy. Moreover, non-formal education remains underfunded, leading to gaps in learning material supply and irregular facilitator remuneration. Institutionalisation of inclusive education practices also faces challenges due to weak policy enforcement and limited resources for adaptation of physical infrastructure and teaching aids.
- ▶ **TaRL and KARI methodologies have been well received, but the absence of sufficient teaching aids and learning corners constrain full implementation.** As one learning facilitator in Yobe state explained, “We are using our own money to buy charts and small boards because the ones given before are finished”. Inadequate supervision from LGEAs was cited as a barrier to maintaining teaching standards, particularly in hard-to-reach schools that education officers rarely visit. Mentors noted that some teachers, after initial enthusiasm, reverted to traditional rote teaching once monitoring declined.
- ▶ **The loss of trained teachers and facilitators through redeployment, retirement, or attrition to better-paying jobs.** “Some of our best facilitators left because they were volunteers and not paid regularly. When new ones come, we have to start the training again,” noted an ABEP leader in Borno. This turnover undermined continuity and quality of instruction.
- ▶ **Inclusion faces deep-seated cultural and structural barriers.** While W2’s recognition of, and effort to incorporate special schools into their focus schools continued, and awareness of disability inclusion has improved, both states struggle with the absence of accessible facilities and learning materials for children with disabilities. A mentor in Jere LGA noted, “We identify children who cannot see or hear well, but we have nothing to support them with; they sit and watch others learn”. Gender sensitivity training has not always translated into equitable classroom practice, as female teachers and mentors remain underrepresented particularly in rural areas where girls’ participation is lowest.

Overall, these constraints underscore the fragility of the progress achieved. Without consistent financing, institutional oversight, and incentives to retain trained educators, the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of teaching and learning will remain uneven across both formal and non-formal education settings.

5.3.4 Progress in the recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria

PLANE’s contribution to education system recovery in the North-East has been structural and operational, deliberately linking humanitarian response with long-term system strengthening and governance reforms. However, recovery is uneven, constrained by security challenges and climate-related disruptions; financing, scaling up, and sustainability are all uncertain.

Rating:



Using a systems approach aligned with the Governance and Accountability Framework (section 5.1.3), PLANE interventions in Borno and Yobe contributed to progressive rebuilding of the education system across the five key

domains: policy reform, personnel management, public financial management, participation and accountability, and service delivery.

5.3.4.1 Governance: Policy Reform

In Borno and Yobe States, policy engagement played a central role in aligning education recovery with long-term system reform priorities. In both states, the project provided technical assistance for the domestication and implementation of key national education policies, including the Non-State School Policy and the National Policy on Safety, Security, and Violence-Free Schools. These frameworks were contextualised to address the realities of post-conflict schooling, where security threats, school closures, and displacement disrupted learning continuity.

A notable policy milestone was the integration of the Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP) into the formal education framework of both states – a process that PLANE supported through evidence generation, advocacy, and coordination with State Ministries of Education and SUBEBs. This integration ensured that children excluded from the formal system due to displacement, insurgency, or over-age enrolment could be placed into appropriate grade levels within existing schools.

In Borno, PLANE also supported the operationalisation of the Education in Emergencies (EiE) policy and contributed to the revision of the Education Sector Plan (ESP) to better incorporate inclusive and conflict-sensitive education principles. In Yobe, the project worked with education authorities to strengthen the state's Basic Education Quality Assurance Framework, embedding minimum standards for school performance and learner welfare within recovery planning:

“Through PLANE’s support, we now have a framework for integrating the ABEP centres into formal schools. The Ministry and SUBEB agreed on clear guidelines that help us track and manage those learners properly” (SME Official, Borno)

“The policy review process helped Yobe align its education recovery plan with inclusive and safe school principles. Before this, non-formal learning wasn’t part of the official system” (SUBEB Official, Yobe)

5.3.4.2 Management: Personnel and Public Financial Management

PLANE W2’s contributions to personnel management improved the human resource base for education recovery and service continuity. In both states, years of insecurity had left significant gaps in teacher availability, distribution, and motivation. PLANE has supported SUBEBs and LGEAs to map teacher deployment patterns and identify underserved schools, particularly in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected LGAs.

Through targeted capacity-building initiatives, the project trained teachers, learning facilitators, and headteachers in learner-centred pedagogy, inclusive classroom management, and formative assessment techniques. In Borno, PLANE contributed to the Teacher Management Information System (TMIS) functionality, to allow real-time tracking of teacher postings, transfers, and training records – an important tool for improving transparency and equitable deployment (Table 27). In Yobe, PLANE facilitated the retraining and certification of ABEP facilitators, to improve instructional quality in non-formal settings and promoting better alignment between ABEP and formal school standards:

“Our facilitators in ABEP centres are now better supported. The training on lesson planning and learner assessment was very practical, though the challenge remains with paying their stipends regularly” (LGEA Official, Potiskum, Yobe)

“PLANE helped us to reduce temporary structures. Now, children learn in proper classrooms, and we can track their attendance through the TMIS dashboard” (SME Officer, Borno)

PLANE’s support has laid the groundwork for a more accountable and data-driven teacher management system capable of sustaining learning gains within fragile contexts, but systemic challenges persist, including high teacher turnover, irregular remuneration of non-formal facilitators, and limited post-training supervision due to fiscal and logistical constraints:

PLANE trained many of our teachers on how to handle large classes and deal with children who have experienced trauma. It has made a big difference, even though we still don’t have enough teachers. (Head Teacher, public school, Maiduguri, Borno)

With regards to public financial management, W2 has supported education authorities to strengthen planning and budgeting processes for recovery and resilience. W2 provided technical assistance for costing and prioritising recovery interventions, ensuring that state education budgets increasingly reflect needs related to school reconstruction, learning materials provision, and inclusion.

In Borno State, PLANE facilitated dialogue between the Ministry of Education, SUBEB, and Ministry of Finance, which enhanced understanding of the fiscal implications of integrating non-formal learners into formal schools. This engagement led to more consistent budget line allocations for ABEP centres and teacher training. In Yobe, the project worked with the State Planning and Budget Commission to integrate data from EMIS into annual budget cycles, fostering evidence-based allocation of resources to underserved LGAs.

Despite progress, both states face challenges of limited fiscal space and dependency on donor-funded interventions. Nonetheless, PLANE’s engagement has strengthened the linkages between evidence, planning, and financing, which should improve transparency and accountability in the use of scarce education funds within the recovery process.

“PLANE worked with us to review the education budget lines, so we could include provisions for non-formal learning materials. Before, those items were not captured in the budget at all” (Finance Officer, SME, Yobe)

“In Borno, the project encouraged better use of school grants by training headteachers on simple financial tracking. It has helped reduce wastage, even though funding is still very limited” (Education Secretary, Maiduguri, Borno)

5.3.4.3 Participation and Accountability

Community participation and accountability mechanisms were central to PLANE’s recovery and governance strategy in Borno and Yobe. The project revitalised SBMCs, Mothers’ Associations, and community education coalitions, enhancing their ability to oversee school improvement planning and monitor safe school implementation.

In Borno, SBMCs were supported to develop and operationalise Conflict and Disaster Risk Reduction plans, incorporating gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches aligned with the Safe School Minimum Standards. In Yobe, community structures were trained to track learner attendance and retention, particularly among girls and children affected by displacement, using simple monitoring tools introduced through PLANE’s community education sessions.

These structures became key channels for reporting teacher absenteeism, facility damage, and learner protection concerns, strengthening local accountability loops between communities, schools, and LGEAs. While the functionality of some committees fluctuated due to population mobility and limited incentives, PLANE’s approach ensured that participation and oversight were embedded in the recovery architecture, not merely treated as add-on humanitarian activities.

“SBMCs are now part of school improvement planning. We hold meetings to discuss safety issues, especially in schools that were reopened after attacks” (SBMC Chairperson, Borno)

“We involve the community more now in monitoring school repairs. Parents see where the money goes, and this has increased trust in education authorities” (Community Mentor, Jere, Borno)

Table 27: Indicators on Inclusive Sector Planning, Teacher Psychosocial Support, and TMIS Dashboard Functionality

Indicator	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Percentage of LGAs with improved conflict-responsive, disability & gender-inclusive education sector plans	100%	100%	0%
Teachers who received psychosocial support mentoring	7,942	6,790 ¹⁶	-14%

¹⁶ Low performance largely due to funding delays. Targets were achieved as reflected in the eighth biannual report.

Indicator	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
State level TMIS dashboards functioning	2	2	0%

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **Education systems recovery in the states remains uneven, constrained by security challenges and climate-related disruptions.** Stakeholders from both states report that floods have damaged schools, destroyed learning materials, and forced the movement and relocation of internally displaced persons (IDPs). These events continue to interrupt learning cycles and slow the pace of recovery.
- ▶ **Financing and sustainability are uncertain.** Stakeholders note that there are limited direct state budget allocations, with education recovery efforts often relying on in-kind support rather than recurrent financing. While the UBEC law and other fiscal reforms are viewed as promising frameworks, they remain largely aspirational and have yet to deliver a comprehensive, fully realised funding solution across all states.
- ▶ **Fragility of scale:** only limited verified adoption or budgetary mainstreaming has been observed in Borno and Yobe. The situation is compounded by significant infrastructure damage and displacement, with floods affecting numerous schools – UNICEF reports that 31 PLANE schools have been damaged or closed and 72 schools are currently occupied by IDPs – further undermining system recovery in affected LGAs.

5.3.5 Improving safe access to quality learning for children affected by conflict in the region

<p>The W2 programme has reached over 340,000 children to August 2025 through ABEP, KARI and TaRL interventions. Its multi-layered approach to improving access and quality has yielded foundational contributions by combining teacher training on inclusive pedagogy and safe schools, with psychosocial support for teachers and students. However, gains are unevenly distributed and largely localised.</p>	<p>Rating: </p>
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The total number of children reached by the W2 PLANE programme, across ABEP, TaRL, and KARI interventions, in Borno and Yobe is at least 340,000 children (53% girls). W2’s emphasis on inclusivity and safe school practices (supported by active SBMCs and WASH clubs) have reinforced learners’ confidence and attendance. Girls’ participation increased, contributed to by over 58,000 beneficiaries of life skills sessions designed to build confidence, leadership, and resilience. In both states, the integration of gender-sensitive pedagogical approaches also fostered more equitable participation and improved classroom interactions.

PLANE has contributed to enhancing the safety and inclusiveness of school environments. Supported schools recorded improvements in safe-school inputs such as perimeter fencing, presence of security guards, strengthened community vigilance systems, and repairs to WASH facilities. The operationalisation of Safe School Declaration (SSD) and Minimum Standards for Safe Schools (MSSS) frameworks also indicates growing institutional attention to learner protection. Nonetheless, the sustainability and consistency of these safety measures remain dependent on continued state commitment and community engagement.

PLANE has built an important foundation for improving safe access to quality learning, but the pathway to system-wide adoption depends on stronger government financing, integration of proven models into state teacher training and curriculum frameworks and sustained inter-agency coordination to maintain learning continuity for all children, including the most marginalised.

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **Learning continuity for children in hard-to-reach and newly resettled communities remains fragile.** While respondents did not explicitly reference security incidents, several accounts point to fear-related attendance barriers and a strong reliance on protective infrastructure, suggesting that access gains remain sensitive to the wider insecurity context of the North-East.. Nonetheless, PLANE’s work has laid a foundation for sustaining quality learning outcomes within a safer and more inclusive educational environment.

- ▶ **Gains in improving access to quality learning for conflict-affected children are uneven across Borno and Yobe.** Evidence from PLANE-supported centres shows improved teaching practices, stronger school–community collaboration, and enhanced inclusion efforts—particularly for girls and learners with functional challenges. The establishment of ABEP learning centres, integration of accelerated learning models within existing school systems, and increased community ownership through SBMCs have contributed to better access and retention for vulnerable learners. In both states, coordination between government agencies, PLANE, and UNICEF has supported the alignment of non-formal learning approaches with formal sector structures, laying the groundwork for a more coherent education response in emergency and recovery settings.
- ▶ **Progress is largely localised,** with documented improvements concentrated within PLANE-supported centres, while non-supported schools and facilitators continue to demonstrate weaker instructional practices and lower learning outcomes. The transition from project-led to government-owned implementation remains slow. While Yobe SUBEB has taken initial steps to incorporate TaRL and ABEP models into its teacher professional development framework, and Borno has expressed commitment through policy dialogues and inclusion of ABEP in its annual operational plans, these measures are yet to translate into budgetary allocations or full institutionalisation. Weak fiscal space and dependency on donor funding continue to constrain sustainability.
- ▶ **Further challenges include frequent teacher transfers that disrupt continuity of trained staff, irregular supervision due to insecurity, and limited integration of inclusion frameworks for children with disabilities.** Only 1% of children reached by the project were children with disabilities; inclusion targets have not been fully met, and reliable assessment data for learners with disabilities remain scarce. In several learning centres, inadequate instructional materials and intermittent facilitator stipends have affected morale and teaching quality. The broader system struggles with low school safety assurance in higher-risk LGAs, where community patrols and safe-school protocols are inconsistently applied.

5.3.6 State and non-state basic education providers enable better learning outcomes

There are encouraging improvements in foundational learning outcomes, particularly through TaRL and ABEP, and especially in maths. Teacher coaching and structured pedagogy have played an important role in these improvements. Improvements have the potential to be sustained through increased coordination and resilience of the education system.



PLANE’s interventions have strengthened government and school-level capacities to deliver improved learning outcomes, particularly for marginalised learners who were previously excluded or underserved. Through a combination of technical assistance, institutional strengthening, and evidence-based planning, PLANE has fostered a more coordinated and inclusive basic education ecosystem in Borno and Yobe States:

“The PLANE project has made visible improvements. We’ve seen children move from being unable to write their names to composing full sentences” (SUBEB Official, Borno).

PLANE’s monitoring data and endline assessments indicate encouraging improvements in foundational learning outcomes, especially in maths (Tables 28- 30).

For KARI learners assessed across 42 schools supported by W2, results indicate a reduction of beginners in reading and numeracy and a notable jump in attainment of full numeracy among learners (+50% in one academic year) (Table 28).

Table 28: KARI Learning Assessment Results 2025

Proficiency Level	Baseline (October 2024)	Endline (June 2025)	% Change
Reading		N=1,680	
Beginner	82%	34%	–48%
Pre Reader	7%	27%	+20%
Emergent Reader	5%	14%	+9%
Progressive Reader	4%	11%	+7%

Proficiency Level	Baseline (October 2024)	Endline (June 2025)	% Change
Reader	3%	15%	+12%
Maths			
Beginner	65%	21%	-44%
Pre-Numerate	5%	1%	-4%
Emergent Numerate	5%	3%	-2%
Progressive Numerate	4%	3%	-1%
Numerate	22%	72%	+50%

For TaRL learners assessed across 109 schools supported by W2, results similarly indicate a sizeable reduction of reading and maths beginners (-49% and -30% respectively) and increases in learners at emergent and progressive levels of attainment for both skills (Table 29).

Table 29: TARL Learning Assessment results 2025

Proficiency Level	Baseline (October 2024)	Endline (July 2025)	% Change
Reading	N=72,842	N=74,456	
Beginner	54%	5%	-49%
Pre Reader	28%	15%	-13%
Emergent Reader	11%	43%	+32%
Progressive Reader	4%	24%	+20%
Reader	3%	13%	+10%
Maths			
Beginner	32%	2%	-30%
Pre-Numerate	28%	7%	-21%
Emergent Numerate	33%	47%	+14%
Progressive Numerate	6%	29%	+23%
Numerate	1%	15%	+14%

For ABEP learners assessed across 69 ABEP centres supported by W2, results similarly indicate a sizeable reduction of reading and maths beginners (-46% and -35% respectively) and increases in learners at emergent and progressive levels of attainment for reading, and – like KARI – a notable jump in attainment of full numeracy within three months (+32%) (Table 30).

Table 30: ABEP Learning Assessment Results 2025

Proficiency Level	Baseline (September 2024)	Endline (January 2025)	% Change
Reading	N=12,552	N = 10,554	
Beginner	48%	2%	-46%
Pre Reader	19%	9%	-10%
Emergent Reader	21%	47%	+26%
Progressive Reader	3%	16%	+13%
Reader	9%	26%	+17%
Maths			
Beginner	38%	3%	-35%
Pre-Numerate	16%	3%	-13%
Emergent Numerate	25%	21%	-4%
Progressive Numerate	6%	27%	+21%
Numerate	15%	47%	+32%

Across all three assessments, improvements in maths are greater than for reading and many fewer children are beginners in either reading or maths after one year of an intervention. Data are not disaggregated by learners' gender, but in all assessments a reasonably equal number of boys and girls were assessed at the beginning and

end of each year. Note, learning levels have been harmonised across interventions to enable meaningful comparison. In addition, Window 2 has adopted the same approach across its three interventions, ensuring consistency and alignment in measurement. This implies results are better for KARI and ABEP in maths, and for TaRL and ABEP in reading.

For state education providers, PLANE worked closely with SUBEBs, LGEAs, and Ministries of Education to improve instructional quality and system responsiveness. By integrating data-driven approaches into education planning and supervision, state institutions are now more capable of identifying and addressing learning gaps. The project's emphasis on continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders has also had a positive multiplier effect – creating a cadre of educators who can mentor peers and sustain classroom improvements beyond the project's direct support.

A major contribution has been W2's role in institutionalising teacher coaching and structured pedagogy approaches. These have led to observable improvements in foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes. The alignment of teacher support systems with the National Reading Framework and the introduction of inclusive learning materials have made lessons more accessible to children with disabilities, girls, and those from disadvantaged households.

On the non-state side, PLANE has supported the integration of community-based learning providers into the state education system. Through partnerships with civil society organisations and community learning centres, the project expanded access to quality education for out-of-school children and adolescents in hard-to-reach areas. Training and mentoring of learning facilitators under the non-formal education framework have enhanced pedagogical quality, accountability, and learner retention. Furthermore, PLANE's facilitation of linkages between these non-state providers and government agencies has fostered better harmonisation of standards and reporting mechanisms, contributing to a more unified education delivery system.

Crucially, the programme's inclusive approach – embedding gender and disability sensitivity in most activities – have ensured that improvements in learning outcomes were not limited to mainstream learners. Specific interventions, such as adapted teaching aids, inclusive classroom layouts, and community sensitisation – to a large extent, helped remove barriers to participation for marginalised children. This has contributed to gradual shifts in community attitudes towards the education of girls and learners with disabilities. Again, this has been complemented by AGILE's work in the North-East.

Overall, PLANE's multi-layered engagement with state and non-state education providers has produced a more resilient and collaborative system capable of supporting sustained improvements in learning outcomes:

“Before PLANE, we didn't have this level of coordination with the non-formal centres. Now, even community facilitators report to LGEA officials and we plan together” (SUBEB Official, Yobe)

“Our teachers now use lesson plans and materials that make learning easier for all children, even those who struggle to read. You can see the difference in the classroom” (Head Teacher, Maiduguri, Borno)

“The linkage between government schools and our learning centres means children who finish here can now move into formal schools. That was not possible before” (Learning Facilitator, ABEP learning centre, Jere, Borno)

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Resource limitations** pose sustainability risks, including inadequate teaching materials, delayed teacher remuneration, and insufficient funding for community learning centres.
- ▶ **Coordination between state and non-state actors remains uneven** in some LGAs due to weak local capacity and bureaucratic bottlenecks. There are disparities in implementation capacity and ownership between states and between government and community providers
- ▶ **The fragile security situation periodically disrupts learning and supervision activities**, impeding the full consolidation of gains achieved through PLANE's interventions.

5.4 Education system recovery through improved governance – Window 2

CHANGE PATHWAY 4, WINDOW 2

4A: If there is increased capacity of governments and communities to plan, finance and implement education in emergency contexts **then** the planning, financing and implementation of education will be in line with evidence and best practices.

And

4B: If evidence generated by PLANE is used by PLANE implementors, for decision making and learning.

Then

4C: There will be progress in the recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria **and then** there will be improvements in the inclusivity and effectiveness with which education systems in Nigeria deliver foundational skills.

5.4.1 Increased capacity to plan, finance and implement education in emergency contexts

PLANE W2 has worked through existing education structures to embed inclusive, conflict-sensitive, and gender-responsive planning into routine processes. PLANE-supported initiatives have strengthened organisational capacity at state and local levels. However, recurrent funding shortfalls and bureaucratic bottlenecks limit the full operationalisation of plans

Rating:



Both states delivered conflict-responsive and disability-inclusive sector planning, a major milestone that reflects how deeply PLANE’s tools and approaches were institutionalised. In practical terms, both states have now incorporated conflict and inclusion indicators within their annual education workplans and budgets - marking a notable departure from earlier plans that lacked such provisions. For instance, the 2023/2024 SESOP review processes in both Borno and Yobe demonstrated full application of conflict and inclusion checklists developed under PLANE. Education officers and SBMCs were trained to integrate data on children with disabilities into their plans, ensuring targeted interventions. PLANE’s mentorship of local officials built their confidence to mobilise resources, coordinate with humanitarian partners, and prioritise education recovery in local budgets.

At the community level, School/Centre-Based Management Committees (S/CBMCs) became increasingly proactive in supporting schools through small-scale infrastructure repairs, monitoring teacher attendance, and managing conflict risk. These committees also led awareness sessions on child safety, inclusion, and gender equity, which improved collaboration between communities and schools.

Despite these gains, recurrent funding shortfalls and bureaucratic bottlenecks still limit the full operationalisation of plans. Also, while PLANE has contributed to strengthening institutional and community capacities for education service delivery under crisis conditions, it would be premature to conclude that the system is fully resilient. The programme’s investments – particularly in conflict-sensitive planning, community engagement, and workforce development – have laid important groundwork for resilience, but the education system in both Borno and Yobe remains vulnerable to persistent insecurity, funding constraints, and human resource turnover. These foundational gains, if sustained and scaled, could enhance the system’s ability to withstand and recover from future shocks over time.

However, the shutdown of USAID-supported Opportunities To Learn (OTL) centres created a strain on ABEP facilities, putting the continued access to education for thousands of vulnerable learners at risk. UNICEF has implemented mitigation measures to ensure learning continuity. With support from FCDO PLANE EIE and GPE Accelerated Funding, 18,889 affected learners were successfully integrated into ABEP centres. Of these, 4,077 completed their learning cycle, while 14,812 were newly enrolled, reflecting strong retention and sustained participation.

Organisational and individual capacity strengthening at the state and LGA levels has advanced through multiple initiatives. LESOP support has engaged 149 LGA team members, while capacity building in TMIS, TM dashboards, and EMIS has improved data management, with state dashboards now functioning and EMIS officers receiving targeted training. Additionally, 2,682 teachers have been trained in formative assessment practices.

Community engagement has also deepened through the training and mobilisation of 3,035 S/CBMCs. These groups, along with PTAs, have contributed actively to school improvement efforts – supporting fees, WASH initiatives, and minor infrastructure repairs.

“We rely on the Annual School Census and feedback from LGEAs, headteachers, and SBMCs” (SUBEB Official, Borno)

“When there are things the government did not provide, they [SBMC] will immediately try their best to provide them. Things like chalks, fixing broken windows, and other things like that” (Head Teacher, public school, Jere LGA, Borno)

Table 31: Progress on Inclusive LGA Education Plans and TMIS Dashboard Functionality

Indicator	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
LGAs with improved conflict-responsive, disability & gender-inclusive education sector plans	100%	100%	0%
TMIS dashboards functioning	2	2	0%

⚠ Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Data uptake and digital readiness remain uneven** across states, with Yobe achieving 100% data uploads compared to Borno’s 62%, reflecting varying capacities to generate timely evidence for planning and decision-making.
- ▶ **Fiscal constraints** further compound these challenges, as state budgets remain inconsistent. Some governments provide only in-kind support without direct funding – raising concerns about sustainability once donor assistance declines.
- ▶ **Community engagement varies widely**: while some communities, including PTAs and women’s associations, are active and contribute meaningfully to education initiatives, others show minimal participation.

5.4.2 Planning, financing and implementation of education in-line with evidence

Evidence generated by PLANE, especially through education dashboards, has informed decision making at state and local government levels on teacher deployment and resource allocations. However, systematising data-driven decision-making and retaining capacity to interpret and use data effectively are fragile.

Rating:



Technical assistance provided to SUBEBs and LGEAs facilitated structured and evidence-based education sector plans. A core contribution of PLANE on promoting evidence-based planning was its deliberate effort to ensure that evidence generated through the project directly informed decision-making at both state and LGA levels. The introduction of functional Teacher Management Information System (TMIS) dashboards in Borno and Yobe transformed the way education data was collected, analysed, and applied. Education managers now rely more on real-time data to guide teacher deployment, monitor school performance, track training outcomes, and guide resource allocations.

W2 strengthened feedback loops between implementers and decision-makers. For example, evidence from classroom observations and school monitoring was regularly discussed during joint review meetings, allowing rapid course corrections. These evidence-based review platforms have become valuable spaces for adaptive learning and planning.

In Yobe, education officers cited data-driven decision-making as one of PLANE’s most transformative legacies, with planning processes now more grounded in factual evidence than before. In Borno, where the education landscape is more fragmented due to conflict, PLANE’s role in harmonising data between humanitarian and government-led interventions helped bridge coordination gaps.

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **A transition from donor-driven evidence use to government-led learning cycles is evolving.** Sustaining the culture of data utilisation will require continued state-level ownership and technical maintenance of digital systems.
- ▶ **Finance remains weak and largely in-kind.** Interviews with stakeholders indicate that state government support is often limited to in-kind contributions, with few examples of recurrent fiscal allocations to sustain PLANE-style activities. Partners consistently highlight the absence of direct government funding for several recurrent functions such as continuous teacher coaching and supervision, maintenance of Teaching Management Information System (TMIS) dashboards, printing and distribution of structured lesson plans, and provision of teaching and learning materials to non-formal learning centres. However, a representative of one of the implementation partners interviewed expressed optimism on the coming of the World Bank HOPE-Edu programme.
- ▶ **Capacity gains are at risk** of being undermined by staff turnover and political transitions. Stakeholders note that when government administrations change, trained personnel are often reassigned, effectively resetting the capacity that had been built.

5.4.3 Recovery of the education system in North-East Nigeria

Strong collaborations at state level – and UNICEF’s leadership and reach – have produced more coherent education response strategies compared to programme inception. Teacher training and support to nearly 7,000 teachers contributed to resource stabilisation. Insecurity and infrastructure deficits remain entrenched challenges.

Rating:



PLANE has played an important role in advancing education system recovery in Borno and Yobe, particularly through interventions that blend emergency response with long-term system rebuilding. The programme has focused on restoring the functionality of learning spaces, re-establishing school governance systems, and strengthening institutional coordination across education agencies.

In both states, the recovery process was underpinned by strong collaboration between PLANE, UNICEF, and state authorities, leading to more coherent education response strategies. The leadership and reach of UNICEF has been a significant contributory factor:

“We used to have broken coordination between agencies and schools. PLANE helped us to plan together and respond to issues faster, especially on teacher posting and training” (SME Official, Borno)

The integration of ABEP centres into the state education framework ensured that displaced and out-of-school children could re-enter learning pathways, while the formal recognition of community learning centres expanded the reach of non-formal education.

The programme also supported the retraining and psychosocial recovery of teachers, contributing to human resource stabilisation within the education system. Over 6,790 teachers benefited from psychosocial mentoring and inclusive teaching support – helping to rebuild morale and professional commitment in a sector deeply affected by years of conflict.

“Our schools are recovering because PLANE and other partners are helping the teachers and head teachers cope with the trauma and stress from the crisis” (SUBEB Official, Borno)

“The psychosocial support training changed how we treat learners who have been through conflict. Now, our approach is more caring and less punitive” (Head Teacher, public school, Jere, Borno)

“Mentoring support has really helped us. Teachers feel valued again and are returning to the classrooms. Even parents are beginning to trust the schools” (Teacher Mentor, Maiduguri, Borno)

Although insecurity and infrastructure deficits remain persistent challenges, PLANE’s interventions have supported states on their journey to transition from short-term humanitarian assistance to more sustainable education system recovery.

Table 32: Indicators on Teacher Support, Safe Schools, Inclusive Planning, TMIS Functionality, and Learning Assessments

Indicator	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Number of teachers receiving psychosocial support through mentoring	5,290	6,790	+28%
Percentage of SBMCs operationalising Safe School Minimum Standards	68.5%	80%	+18.8%
Percentage of LGAs with improved conflict-responsive, gender, and disability-inclusive education sector plans	100%	100%	0%
Number of state-level TMIS dashboards functioning	2	2	0%
Number of state-level learning assessments conducted (disability-inclusive)	2	2	0%

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

Structural and contextual constraints hinder the recovery of the education system:

- ▶ **Persistent insecurity continues to disrupt access and learning** in remote and hard-to-reach LGAs, limiting teacher deployment and monitoring visits.
- ▶ **A high turnover of trained teachers and officials has undermined continuity**, particularly where newly posted staff have not benefited from PLANE’s capacity-building activities.
- ▶ **Resource constraints** – especially insufficient budgetary allocations for teacher welfare, school rehabilitation, and psychosocial support – pose a serious threat to sustaining gains achieved under PLANE. Coordination challenges remain across multiple implementing partners, occasionally resulting in duplication of efforts or uneven coverage between LGAs.
- ▶ **A continued reliance on donor-funded interventions for system recovery** highlights limited fiscal decentralisation and state ownership. Without institutionalised funding mechanisms, many of the rehabilitative and psychosocial initiatives risk losing momentum when external support phases out.

5.4.4 Improvements in the inclusivity and effectiveness with which education systems deliver foundational skills

Through its inclusive education framework, PLANE drove change in how education services are designed and delivered in Borno and Yobe towards better inclusivity. All targeted LGAs developed inclusive education sector plans that now guide their local programming. However, as with many of W2’s interventions sustainability hinges on adequate funding and financing, which remain fragile.

Rating:



Both states recorded measured improvements in inclusive education practices – particularly in teacher training, classroom management, and school governance. Over 6,700 teachers and head teachers were equipped with gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive pedagogy, contributing to improved classroom participation for children with disabilities and girls.

In Yobe, education officials emphasised the integration of disability data in sector planning, which has improved the allocation of learning materials and the tracking of vulnerable learners. Borno recorded similar progress, particularly in school safeguarding and SBMC-led oversight of safe learning spaces.

At system level, PLANE’s capacity-building interventions improved coordination among education agencies, ensuring that inclusivity became a central feature of programme design and implementation. Importantly, all targeted LGAs developed inclusive education sector plans that now guide their local programming.

While these results are commendable, ensuring continuity after PLANE's exit will depend on sustained state financing for inclusion, particularly for assistive learning tools and ongoing teacher refresher training. Without such reinforcement, some of these inclusive gains risk attrition.

“To very large extent, PLANE has really helped the sector to achieve more than it would have achieved if the Ministry was just waiting for its budgetary allocation” (W2 Implementing Partner).

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Verification of reports:** PLANE reports that over 660 schools are now sustained with government support, but it is not fully clear whether all these schools are directly benefiting from PLANE interventions, or if some are supported through other government or partner initiatives.
- ▶ **Sustainability continues to hinge on external funding**, with limited evidence of budgetary mainstreaming; long-term continuity depends heavily on state financial commitments and the ongoing presence of donor support. At the same time, capacity remains fragile - frequent transfers of trained teachers and political turnover risk eroding the gains achieved to date.

5.4.5 PLANE Window 2: Summary of Findings

The Midline Evaluation findings for PLANE W2 in Borno and Yobe demonstrate reasonably well-evidenced contributions to the portfolio Theory of Change, particularly in strengthening education access, safety, and system recovery in conflict-affected LGAs. Evidence shows progress against several steps towards the shared PLANE outcome, while also highlighting persistent and engrained structural, contextual, and sustainability challenges.



Key contributions to change

- ▶ Improved child protection, safety, and psychosocial wellbeing through large-scale training of teachers, headteachers and SBMCs, operationalisation of Safe School Minimum Standards, provision of psychosocial support, and strengthened school–community safeguarding structures. Schools reported improved perceptions of safety, more nurturing classroom environments, and increased attendance - especially for girls.
- ▶ Enhancement of teaching quality, inclusiveness and relevance in formal and non-formal settings. Structured lesson plans, coaching, inclusive pedagogy, gender-responsive approaches, and strengthened non-formal centres (e.g., Accelerated Basic Education Programme) improved instructional practices and learner engagement. W2 interventions equipped nearly 7,000 teachers with inclusive, learner-centred methodologies.
- ▶ Support to foundational learning and pathways to continuity of schooling. In 2025, 92% of girls in W2-supported schools transitioned from primary grade 6 to junior secondary school. W2 also contributed to improved literacy and numeracy at upper primary levels, strengthened community mobilisation for enrolment and retention, and introduced mechanisms for tracking learner progression through Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) tools.
- ▶ System recovery and governance strengthening across policy reform, personnel management, public financial management, participation, accountability and service delivery. W2 supported domestication of key education policies, integrating accelerated learning into formal systems, establishing functional Teacher Management Information Systems (TMIS) dashboards, improved teacher deployment data, strengthened SBMCs, and better coordination across state agencies.
- ▶ Increased state and community capacity for conflict-responsive, inclusive planning and emergency education delivery. Both states achieved conflict-responsive, gender- and disability-inclusive sector plans; LGA teams and EMIS/TMIS officers received targeted capacity building, and SBMC functionality improved through training and engagement.
- ▶ Improvements in inclusive education practices and safe access to quality learning. W2 supported over 261,000 learners through safe school measures, inclusive pedagogy, water and sanitation improvements, and accelerated basic education programmes, contributing to better learning experiences and emerging gains in foundational skills.



Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ Uneven safeguarding and lack of outcome-level data. While training coverage was high, only a portion of sampled schools had safeguarding plans, and psychosocial wellbeing improvements could not be verified due to absent standardised indicators.
- ▶ Sustainability and scale risks. High teacher and facilitator turnover, weak state financing, irregular remuneration, limited instructional materials, and inconsistent supervision threaten continuity of gains. Institutionalisation of W2 models remains partial (although the model is only applicable in urban/secure areas, which have seen large population influx).
- ▶ Fragile system recovery due to insecurity and climate shocks. Teacher deployment, school operations, and monitoring are frequently disrupted by conflict and flooding. Large volumes of IDPs are not in W2 LGAs, but significant infrastructure damage and IDP occupation of schools do slow recovery.
- ▶ Inclusion gaps. Despite progress, facilities, teaching aids and disability-specific supports remain limited. Reliable learning assessment data for children living with disabilities (CLWD) remain scarce, and gender-sensitive practices are uneven, especially in rural LGAs.
- ▶ Evidence and attribution limitations. Verified data on transitions into and out of primary school, system-wide adoption, and government mainstreaming remain limited; improvements are largely concentrated in PLANE-supported schools and centres.

5.5 Inclusive learning for all – Window 3

CHANGE PATHWAY 5, WINDOW 3

5A: If girls and boys with disabilities are identified in and out of school and supported by their communities **then** they will be referred to services that provide individual support/ preparatory services for enrolling in school

And

5B: If evidence generated under PLANE is used by PLANE implementors, for decision making and learning.

And

5C: If community-based learning interventions are delivered for girls and boys

And

5D: If there is Increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education

Then

5E: There will be improvements in the well-being and life skills of children completing community-based learning interventions (including those living with disability) **and then** state and non-state basic education providers will have enabled better learning outcomes, including for marginalised groups of children.

Change Pathways 5 and 6 are delivered by Save the Children International (SCI) with local implementing partners¹⁷ under PLANE Window 3. It is associated with portfolio Intermediate Outcome 5 – community support to learning – and portfolio output 6. Window 3 has a total fund allocation of £10 million over four years (October 2022- September 2026). W3’s actual programme expenditure to January 2025 (latest available data) was £3.50 million (35% of budget). The intervention has been active from 2023-24 in 20 communities and in 2024-25 in an additional 27 communities across KKKJ. This analysis considers the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of Window 3’s work, and how interventions have contributed towards the intended outcome.¹⁸ Note that very little baseline comparisons are made as Window 3 had not yet started implementation at the time of the baseline evaluation.

5.5.1 Identifying, supporting and referring children living with disabilities

PLANE W3 have made significant contributions to supporting individual children living with disabilities and their families through service referrals, assistive devices and support to learn at community-based centres. Positive attitudinal change among communities is also strongly evident. However, support to CLWD tends to be ad hoc and individualised, there are few trained professionals locally, and children with complex needs continue to be excluded.

Rating:



Children living with disabilities (CLWD) in communities where PLANE W3 works have been identified through systematic administration of the Washington Group Questions during their enrolment and registration into community-based Catch-Up Clubs (CuCs) or Literacy and Numeracy Boost (LNB) sessions (Step 5B). Local partners conduct outreach to encourage caregivers of out-of-school children to register their children in these community-based learning centres. Upon registration, all children are assessed for functional difficulties using the Washington Group questions; following assessment, those children identified as having specific disabilities may be referred to specialist services for further assessment and material support through, for example, the provision of assistive devices or medical treatments. This process is usually fully funded by PLANE W3.

The specific children who are most often identified and referred are those with sight, hearing or mobility impairments, according to community members and Save the Children:

¹⁷ As of August 2025, these partners are: Popular Theatre and Health Education (POTHE), Kishimi Shelter and Care Foundation (KSCF), Hope for Village Child Foundation (HVCF), Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) and Community Support and Development Initiative (CSADI)

¹⁸ In 2025-26, W3 continues through a no-cost extension to deliver ABEP in a reduced number of communities in Kano and Jigawa only. This phase is not part of the Midline, but we do consider the plans, opportunities and challenges associated with this strategic pivot.

“We have two children with disability. One is a boy with sight problem. [SCI] took him to hospital, and he was treated free of charge. There was also this child who was unable to walk. I introduced his case to Save the Children, they took him to hospital where he received walking sticks and medication” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“PLANE doesn’t handle all disabilities; Learning Inclusion Facilitators [are trained on] how to manage children with mild disabilities” (W3 Implementing Partner)

Children with ‘mild disabilities’ who enrol in community-learning centres are further supported through W3 with adapted learning materials and disability-trained learning facilitators to manage children with mild disabilities, ensuring they are placed in optimal positions to see and hear clearly and participate equitably in activities:

“The programme extended support to children with special needs by providing them with essential mobility aids like crutches and wheelchair, ensuring they can attend classes more comfortably (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

“They give children with disabilities special care with facilities” (CGD, Kunya, Kano)

This inclusive approach has contributed to increased enrolment of children with disabilities in both formal and informal settings, where they feel safe and without stigma:

“This program has helped our community especially as it incorporated people with special needs unlike before that they are made to feel inferior, now they feel included and important” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

All children, including CLWD, are encouraged to enrol in formal school after completing the community learning intervention. Re-entry is indeed the ultimate goal of the centres and clubs. Community members report some support for this re-entry, especially with monitoring and encouraging CLWD’s enrolment and attendance:

“We give them [CLWD] special attention and that makes them feel positive about education” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

This encouragement highlights another facet of PLANE W3’s contribution, which is to encourage and model positive attitudes towards marginalised groups of children including CLWD. Attitudinal change shows some fair evidence of improvement compared to baseline evidence:

“By including children with special needs, the programme promotes inclusivity and equal opportunity” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

“The project changed our thinking; children with disabilities also have the right to learn” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

Strategic partnerships were also developed with Sightsavers (as part of the W3 consortium) and with the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD). W3 have engaged particularly with JONAPWD in Kaduna state to identify CLWD who require assistive devices; for further support to schooling; and to coordinate the first Disability Summit in Kaduna state (February 2025). The Disability Summit led to the establishment of the state Disability Technical Working Group, a formal platform involving MDAs and organisations of persons with disabilities. W3 has engaged JONAPWD in all three states in core advocacy activities and learning support for target CLWD.

Table 33 compiles data from the portfolio and W3 logframes associated with support for children living with disabilities. Despite the support evidenced, these data show that the extent of this support is significantly below target. This is explained by the programmatic and systemic challenges identified by all partners in making progress towards targets for this step in the change pathway, discussed below.

Table 33: Window 3, Portfolio Output 6.2, 2023-2025

W3 Output 1.2 / Portfolio Output 6.2	Cumulative Target (2023-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
# girls and boys living with a disability referred to and/or provided with specialist disability support services	2,350	741 Boys - 394 Girls – 347 (47%)	-68%
# girls and boys living with a disability supported to enrol in school	1,187	597 Boys - 341 Girls – 256 (43%)	-50%

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Funding:** referrals and devices require significant funding which requires PLANE to balance individual support against community-wide activities and presents a major issue to sustainability for families, communities and schools, most of whom do not have the long-term resources to continue the provision established by the programme.
- ▶ **Skills:** there is a very low supply of trained and skilled professionals working locally on disability. This hinders accurate and timely identification of children with disabilities. It is also indicative of under-resourcing, lack of capacity and weaknesses at local and state government levels.
- ▶ **Subcontractors and partnerships:** W3 faced serious challenges with local disability subcontractors at the start of the programme (2023/24), including financial mismanagement, which contributed to delayed activities and missed targets. Partnerships have been fragile and more issue/event-led rather than systemic and continuous.
- ▶ **Breadth of support:** while W3's systematic approach to identifying children with functional difficulties at their point of contact with learning centres is productive, it is clear that only a minority of those children – with sight, hearing and mobility needs - receive further support. This maintains the exclusion of those children with cognitive, emotional, and/or more complex needs. It is not clear what W3 does, if anything, to meet those children's needs. Local services are highly limited.
- ▶ **Absence of system support:** support tends to be individual rather than systemic – while Safe School Referral Pathways and community referral pathways have been developed to manage safeguarding and child support, these are not generally well-known, not easy to access beyond PLANE's intervention and, even among state officials, the status quo of individual support was maintained:

“A girl was discovered with visual impairment, one of us sponsored the girl to hospital. [She] now sees clearer than before” (SUBEB Official, Kano)

PLANE overall emphasises its intention to mainstream support to marginalised children, including children living with disabilities, through disaggregated data, disability awareness, practical support and policy advocacy. This step in W3's intervention is an important part of that portfolio-wide intention. However, the challenges identified mirror the relative inadequacy of disability efforts across PLANE (sections 5.1.1, 5.3.3 and 5.4.5) and the state education systems.

5.5.2 Delivery of community-based learning interventions

Over 65,000 children have completed a community-based learning programme of accelerated literacy and numeracy supported by W3 since baseline. Community members provide positive feedback on community centres, their operations and contributions to improving marginalised children's learning outcomes.

Rating:



Community-based learning interventions comprise Catch-up Clubs (CuCs), Literacy and Numeracy Boost (LB/NB), and the Very Young Adolescents (VYA) Clubs.

CuCs and LB/NB have been set-up for children in primary grades (ages 6-8 for LB/NB and ages 9-13 for CuCs) who are out of school to make rapid progress in basic literacy and numeracy proficiency so that they can re-enrol in school. Learners are grouped according to their learning level rather using an adapted version of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) tool. Community-based learning centres are required by design to be safely

accessible for girls and children living with disabilities. Each W3-supported community has multiple learning centres that enrol 50 learners each on a three-month cycle, usually running four cycles in a year. Each centre consists of a Community Learning Facilitator and Community Learning Inclusion Facilitator. These are volunteers (minimum Diploma holders) who are recruited and trained by W3 by W3 to provide literacy and numeracy for each group of children through 4-5 flexibly timed sessions per week:

“Catch Up Club is running in our community with 6 active centres where children gather to learn” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

“In this community, 12 learning clusters have been established where children receive teaching and participate in structured learning session. These clubs meet 4 times a week and focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills enabling learners to close gaps in their education and catch up with their peers” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

In total, 67,610 children have completed a community-based programme established by W3 since baseline, which is substantial but below logframe targets. W3 evidence indicates that this is partly due to a relatively high turnover of local delivery partners, including centre facilitators, and the early closure of CuCs in 2025 (the last cycle was January to March 2025) due to budget uncertainty, the exit from Kaduna state and pivot to ABEP in remaining communities.

Table 34: Window 3, Portfolio Output 6.1, 2023-2025

W3 Output 1.1 / Portfolio Output 6.1	Cumulative Target (2023-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
# girls and boys enrolled in community-based learning interventions (CuC, LNB)	112,694	67,610 CUC - 58,869 LNB - 8,741	-40%
Attendance rate (mean) at community-based learning interventions (CuC, LNB)	70%	77% CUC – 79% LNB – 74%	+7%
# girls and boys enrolled in Very Young Adolescent (VYA) clubs	28,840	26,490	-8%

To support the learning centres, and as evidence of communities' commitment to the intervention, many reported establishing supporting amenities or structures for the centres, including water:

“The problem we had was portable water. The core group repaired some water wells and dug some wells to provide water” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

The centres incorporate inclusive child-centred pedagogies, and cluster-based learning for supervision:

“Identifying letters, reading words, sentences, stories, chanting under the shade. / Teachers are hardworking using play methods” (CGD, Kunya, Kano)

“[PLANE] recruited and trained learning facilitators to deliver lessons using child friendly and inclusive teaching methods” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

Community members consistently provided positive overall feedback on the community learning centres, their operations and learning outcomes:

“The children are now so much interested in reading and writing. They look forward to learning every day. / I have seen great improvement. My child can now read and write simple sentences, which he couldn't do before. / The clubs have helped improve confidence. My child is no longer shy when asked to read aloud or solve maths in class” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

“These activities have given children a second chance to learn. Many of them can now read, write and do basic math which is something they couldn't do before. The clubs have been very successful because the

children are more confident, more eager to come to class and prepare to join formal school” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

“Within a week, you notice improved learning outcomes as they can do so much ranging from word formation, letter identification, to the extent of reading even sentences” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

The average cost per child of a 3-month intensive CuC is £4.28.

Additionally, Very Young Adolescent Clubs have been established in the four phase 1 W3-supported communities. These clubs – for children aged 9-13 years, especially girls – aim to impart life skills and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge and skills. As with learning centres, facilitators are identified and trained by the programme using a VYA Manual that incorporates peer-to-peer learning. The Midline established very little evidence on VYA clubs but communities who did raise them were broadly positive:

“We have very young adolescent learning sessions which engage pupils in discussion on person hygiene and help them understand the menstrual cycle. The sessions are designed to raise awareness, promote healthy practices and build confidence among children especially girls” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa).

“Children used to hawk a lot in the street but Save the Children have taught them to come to school. The children now are hygienic, they trim their fingers, plait their hair, wash their clothes. It is giving quality to their life” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Sustaining support for children who return to school:** without support from PLANE, community members fear that lack of funds to purchase learning materials, household responsibilities for girls, lack of maintenance for assistive devices for children with disabilities, poor quality formal schooling, and the difference in teaching methodologies between child-centred learning centres and formal schools will be major barriers to re-enrolment and retention:

“Parents now understand the importance of education due to Catch-Up Clubs, but poverty still makes it hard for some to keep their children in school” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

- ▶ **Quality disjunction between centres and schools:**

“When they take them back to school, there are problems of teacher shortages, different teaching methodologies, so the students feel differently and want to come back to the centre” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano).

A disjuncture between the approach and environment of the learning centres and formal schools at local level is a problem for returning children as well as with the programme approach. W3 does not, by design, work with formal school settings or systems and therefore has little to no influence or activities to improve the quality of schooling locally. W3’s provision of tailored foundational teaching and learning – with small class sizes and participatory methods – is different from what children experience in most public schools that this seems to result in children’s and caregivers’ preference for community-based learning over formal schooling and a lowering of demand for formal education. The Midline also gathered evidence that some parents register children that are already in formal schools in CuCs because they are higher quality and deliver quick results in literacy and numeracy, even though the intervention is intended as a short-term acceleration for out-of-school children to transition back to formal school. A lowering of demand, coupled with a lack of intervention to improve formal school access and quality locally, means that children are receiving only short-term interventions that are not sustainable longer-term.

5.5.3 Demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education

There is reasonable evidence of increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education. Village Savings and Loans Associations have contributed to this increase demand and improvements in children’s enrolment and retention. However, increased demand confronts a generally poor quality supply of formal schooling.

Rating:



There is reasonable evidence of increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education within communities in which W3 works, which has contributed to increased awareness of and practical support to the re-entry of out-of-school learners. However, as identified above, systemic low quality of formal schooling presents a major barrier to demand and to the retention of re-enrolled children in school, especially when the intervention does not address this issue in complementarity to the provision of community-based learning.

One mechanism established by W3 to increase demand for quality schooling is community core groups. These comprise community leaders, religious leaders, members of SBMC and parents who meet to develop an action plan to address factors that keep children out of school in their communities:

“I serve as a member of the core group made up of 25 dedicated individuals. We meet every Saturday to discuss challenges in our education system and actively engage in finding and implementing solutions to improve it” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa).

In one community, core group members had supported 493 children to return to formal school through community sensitization and outreach, and purchasing uniforms, pencils, and books for these children:

“By the effort of the core group, they went door to door enlightening parents, they supported with uniform, pencils, books so all the 493 pupils have returned to school. Some of them introduced their younger ones for engagement” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“We support the school by providing water, well covers. To keep their water safe from foreign bodies and impurities” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna).

Other core groups have also provided awareness raising and material support to increase demand for schooling among parents, and themselves support the quality of formal schooling provision:

“As CCG [community core group], we go round, we meet parents in the school, parents have testified there is progress as it has reduced hawking especially with awareness creation” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

“You can see immense increase of children with disabilities especially in some Islamiyah primary because of this program since they feel safe and without stigma unlike before” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

“We bought bundles of books three times now” (CGD, Rahama, Kaduna)

“We now understand that both boys and girls deserve equal education” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa).

There is evidence that W3-established Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in communities are raising demand for primary schooling by enabling financial support for children to go to school. The baseline evaluation remarked on the potential of VSLAs to catalyse increased enrolment by addressing financial barriers to access. It seems to have had a positive effect. Since baseline, 64 VSLA groups have been established across W3’s LGAs. VSLAs are self-financing and sustaining structures that help vulnerable household members to save in groups and have access to short term loans to help with, for example, learning materials and uniforms:

“Members benefit from savings and loans. They are entitled to receive a short-term loan and pay back as provided” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“The VSLA helps savings and promotes schooling support for children” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

VSLAs are well regarded by community members as a mechanism for pooling funds and collaborating on shared priorities. Group members are trained on financial literacy. One of the successes of establishing the VSLAs is the low initial inputs required by the implementing organisation:

“Save the children gave us a book to enter our savings and loan transactions, they gave us cash box to save money. / If a member contributes N600, he is entitled to N1800 loan. She goes and turns the money over and returns the N1800 at a given time with interest of N100 for every N1000 borrowed. We the custodians of the fund also make interest from the transactions.” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“We appreciate the VSLA Project. Now we have investments, we can access and payback loans” (CGD, Kunya, Kano)

Table 35 summarises logframe reported attainments for core groups, VSLAs, and the outputs of child protection committees.

Table 35: Window 3, Portfolio Output 6.3 2022-2025

W3 Output 2.1 / Portfolio IO 5.3 + Output 6.3	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (Aug 2025)	% Difference
% of community core groups that have achieved at least 70% of their desired results as specified in their collective Action Plans by the end of each cycle	70%	84%	+20%
# VSLA groups established	96	88	-8%
# of girls and boys receiving case management support and/or referral to child support services	1,559 (47% girls)	2,240 (49% girls)	+44% (+2%)

 **Challenges, gaps and weaknesses**

- ▶ **Stigma:** Although attitudes and awareness of CLWD seems to have largely improved since the baseline, concerns of stigmatisation remain:

“Some parents consider disability to be a curse, so they don't believe anything good can come out of such a child” (SUBEB Official, Kaduna)

- ▶ **Improved but inadequate provision for CLWD:** Community-based learning centres can provide some positive and encouraging support and materials for some CLWD; formal schools usually lack basic enablers. There is a recognized need for improved formal school infrastructure tailored towards children with disabilities that addresses mobility impairments, lack of assistive materials, special care, and facilities as they transition from catch-up clubs to formal schools, but this need remains under-fulfilled:

“The main challenges to educational inclusion include a shortage of trained special education teachers, inadequate facilities and equipment to support learners with special needs and insufficient budgetary provisions to address these gaps. These issues limit the ability to provide quality, inclusive education for marginalized groups, girls, and children with disabilities” (SME Official, Jigawa).

- ▶ **Community core groups focus** tend not to be on holding local government to account for quality schooling or taking issues to LGEAs. This perpetuates the gap in access to *quality* schooling and contributes to issues of children’s retention in school.

5.5.4 Basic education providers enable better learning outcomes

Community-based learning interventions have improved enrolled children’s basic literacy and numeracy but not to the extent targeted by the programme. Qualitative evidence is more positive than student assessment results. Maths competencies have improved more than literacy, overall. There is no evidence that children supported by community learning transition to or remain in formal school.

Rating: 

Community-based learning interventions have improved enrolled children’s basic literacy and numeracy competencies and offered them a positive experience of learning that boosts morale, self-confidence and well-being.

Children enrolled in learning centres, including those who previously struggled and children with disabilities, complete the sessions being able to read simple sentences, identify letters and numbers, and solve basic arithmetic problems:

“It has helped 100% because I have a child with autism so I have suffered in getting him educated but with this intervention he is a beneficiary and can read and identify words even in puzzles” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

Some children even teach their younger siblings and peers at home, demonstrating a deeper understanding and retention of what they have learned:

“The clubs made learning fun and engaging. My child now uses songs and rhymes to remember what she learns. When children close from school, they coach their brothers and sisters who have not gone to school at home” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano)

Re-enrolments at primary and JSS are widely reported in the communities:

“Some children have returned to school after attending the Catch-Up Club. The learning helped them catch up with their peers. / A number of them have enrolled into JSS after graduating from the club. / Some are back in school, and we monitor to ensure they continue. The support from facilitators really helped” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa).

W3 has reported that it has mainstreamed a cumulative total of 29,000 learners from CuC and LB/NB back into formal schools in Kano, in collaboration with LGEAs and state education agencies.

An adapted ASER tool is used during learner’s enrolment for a baseline assessment at the beginning of each cycle. The tool is administered by trained learning facilitators. At the end of each cycle, the same tool is administered to learners as an endline assessment to gauge the learning outcomes of the learners. Table 36 shows the percentage of girls and boys who complete community-based interventions and achieve foundational competencies in literacy (Hausa for LB/NB and English for CuCs) and/or numeracy, as reported by W3.

Table 36: Window 3, Portfolio Outcome: Foundational literacy and numeracy, 2022-2025

Outcome 1	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
Catch Up Clubs - % demonstrating foundational literacy	50%	24%	-52%
Literacy Boost - % demonstrating foundational literacy	50%	20%	-60%
Numeracy Boost - % demonstrating foundational numeracy	50%	66%	+32%

The communication of an exit from some project communities have generated aspiration and actions among some communities to self-sustain CuCs, which is indicative of value and appreciation of the approach and outcomes of the centres:

“We discuss what will happen after the possible close-out of SCI. We have contributed and collected some funds in readiness for their [W3] leaving” (CGD, Kunya, Kano)

In Kaduna state, W3 have an exit strategy and sustainability plan to handover learning centres and facilitators to the government for continued implementation of the community-based interventions through an ABEP programme. A major new multi-development partner financed programme, Reaching Out of School Children (ROOSC) has also started in Kaduna, including UK co-finance via the Global Partnership for Education involving Save the Children. SCI’s exit from Kaduna therefore avoids duplication while providing a new channel for its efforts to improve children’s learning in the state through informal and formal initiatives. ROOSC offers a mechanism to revise community-based support to children out of school within a government-led approach.

In Kano and Jigawa states, W3 will pivot its activities to focus on ABEP in a sub-set of existing LGAs from September 2025. W3 has held stakeholder engagements at the local level to sensitize communities on the transition to ABEP. It intends to delegate 70% of existing trained facilitators and centres to ABEP and conduct an

ASER assessment of learners to ABEP to serve as baseline data. The decision to shift to ABEP was made in the context of lower-than-expected results from CuCs and Literacy Boost (Table 36), and to align with the federal government adoption of ABEP and growing focus on out-of-school children.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Learning improvements target setting:** targets designed by W3 for learners' improvements in foundational skills through CuCs and LB/NBs seem ambitious and not sufficiently evidence-based or differentiated by centre or child type. This may have contributed to the inadequate progress towards planned targets.
- ▶ **The population of children targeted by CuCs is a relatively small proportion of out-of-school children:** namely those who have dropped out within the last year and those who are currently in school but struggling. A targeted approach usefully means that the 'easiest to reach' children are supported to return to school; however, the hardest to reach remain beyond scope.
- ▶ **Institutionalising school returns poses a challenge** as there is no standardised process for the mainstreaming of children back to formal schools following graduation from the CBL interventions. Cohort data is supposed to be shared with HTs by core groups for enrolment in next available term with LGEA support but community reports that returns are ad hoc dependent on community support – i.e. it is localised not systematised.

“One challenge is the absence of a formal method to return children who graduate from the catch-up clubs into a regular school system. Establishing a clear pathway for integration would help ensure they continue their education” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

- ▶ **W3 has no formal monitoring mechanism to track children who complete community learning interventions** back to school, retention in school, or to other learning or work. W3 does not intervene in the formal system, including with EMIS data, and thus lacks a monitoring mechanism that would enable it to report beyond assessment results after centre completion to longer-term outcomes such as retention and P6 completion. There is no data on where completing children go and for how long they stay there; it is left for the communities to ensure that learners remain in school.
- ▶ **CLWD reintegration remains problematic.** Although they are identified and supported to participate in activities in learning centres, formal schools do not have facilities to support their learning and in some communities' distance to school is a barrier:

“Children with disabilities still struggle to access learning because there are no special facilities or support in the schools” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

“People with disabilities are really excluded and the system is not friendly” (CSACEFA)

- ▶ **ABEP shift:** The pivot to ABEP has been resource-intensive and disruptive at community level throughout 2025 and during the Midline period, as it involves the procurement of ABEP teacher resources and communities re-adapting to a new implementation structure and system. Additionally, ABEP enrolments were on hold through July-August 2025 due to funding bottlenecks with FCDO-N, which may affect the timely inception of ABEP in September 2025. While the evaluation appreciates the context for this strategic shift, it queries its timeliness (with one year of W3 programme remaining) and potential effectiveness given both operational and technical transition challenges.

5.6 Community attitudes and behaviours for inclusive education – Window 3

CHANGE PATHWAY 6, WINDOW 3

6A: If Social and Behaviour change communication activities are undertaken and If community capacities are strengthened to engage in collective action on access to safe, quality and inclusive education and to prevent and respond to child protection issues

And

6B: If evidence generated under PLANE is used by PLANE implementors, for decision making and learning.

Then

6C: Positive changes in knowledge, norms, attitudes and practices will take place.

Then

6D: There will be increased demand for safe and inclusive access to quality education **and** increased advocacy of children’s rights within an enabling environment.

5.6.1 Social and Behaviour Change Communication and collective action on safe, quality and inclusive education

Evidence on PLANE W3 Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities and strengthening community capacities to engage in action for education and respond to child protection issues is reasonable but limited by the closure of SBCC activities in 2024.

Rating:



W3’s SBCC activities included sensitization through radio jingles and dramas campaigning for children’s schooling. Table 37 summarises the reported achievements against this step change. SBCC activities were concluded in Year 2, Quarter 3 (i.e. in June 2024) due to budget cuts and reprioritisation of other W3 activities (W3 Y2 Q4 Report). Consequently, the Midline assessment of this change pathway is minimal.

Table 37: W3 Portfolio Output 6.4, 2022-2025

W3 Output 2.2 / Portfolio Output 6.4	Cumulative Target (2022-2025)	Actual Reported (August 2025)	% Difference
% of community core group members reporting change in knowledge, norms, attitudes and practices towards girls and inclusive education	70%	53%	-17%
% of households in supported communities reached by SBCC programs	50%	45%	-5%

W3 community members confirmed hearing radio jingles and programmes in their communities and that they informed them about girls’ education:

“Yara manyan gobe’ [‘Leaders of tomorrow’], I listened to the drama about two families. One family sends their daughter to hawk; the other family sends their daughter to school. At the end, the educated girl was successful in life” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“I have heard dramas with emphasis on girl’s child education [more than] twice” (CGD, Sarbi, Kano).

After hearing these radio productions, community members reported talking to elders and local leaders about sharing the messages more widely for collective action to encourage families to send their children to school. This indicates some local ownership and commitment to sustaining advocacy for inclusive education:

“We made Iman and Pastors to include such messages in their sermons” (CGD, Rahama, Kaduna)

W3-established Child Protection Committees (CPC) in communities have been trained on child protection and safeguarding. They serve as focal persons in communities responsible for case identification, management and referral to support service. CPCs existed in all the communities visited during the Midline:

“The caseworkers play an important role by visiting households to identify child protection issues. They pay special attention to children who are neglected or not well cared for by their parents and help uncover and report cases” (CGD, Kampala, Jigawa)

“We visit the schools to observe and talk with the teachers to instil love within the children. No bullying or maltreatment” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna).

CPCs have mapped out ways to ensure children are protected at home and in the community, including through collaboration and coordination with community learning facilitators and government social workers. Community caseworkers have reportedly been trained during 2025 on case identification, management, and formal referral pathways with tablets procured for every caseworker to transition from a paper-based to electronic case management system (W3 Year 2 Quarter 4 Report, 2025).

5.6.2 Positive changes in knowledge, norms, attitudes and practices

There is some evidence of positive attitudinal and behavioural change towards inclusivity and in support of girls and marginalised children’s education – especially when considered in combination with W3-wide evidence. However, change is slow, and evidence is largely anecdotal and insufficient to draw robust conclusions.

Rating:



SBCC have contributed somewhat to positive attitudinal change towards education, with some community members recognising education as a right and the importance of education for all - boys, girls, and children with disabilities:

“[The dramas] were enjoyable, gave useful info, and influenced my thinking” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa)

“The jingle made us put aside personal opinions” (CGD, Rahama, Kaduna)

Community members agreed that the awareness strategies such as sensitization campaigns, house-to-house visits, and advocating for education during religious sermons have contributed to raised awareness on the importance of girls’ education and a reduction in early marriage and child hawking:

“I used to marry my daughters out immediately after graduation. Understanding PLANE’s perspectives, I intend to allow my children to study up to university” (CGD, Hayin Mal Garba, Kaduna)

“Early marriage has reduced, and more girls are now in school / Young mothers are now returning to school and not left behind” (CGD, Garun Gabas, Jigawa).

Evidence on behavioural change has been minimal beyond the self-reports of community members. However, in June 2025, W3 undertook a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis in Jigawa and Kano to inform its pivot to effective and inclusive ABEP programming in 2026. This report indicates some, uneven positive changes in social norms (for example away from early marriage and towards dignity and inclusion for persons with disabilities), but an ongoing weakness in institutionalised inclusion.

5.6.3 Advocacy for safe and inclusive access to quality education

Advocacy activities have happened on international celebration days and by community core groups through outreach and localised campaigns to send children to schools or learning centres. However, communities are clear that more needs to be done.

Rating:



The achievements of community-based learning (section 5.5.2) have garnered enthusiasm and commitment for informal learning opportunities for children who are out-of-school or struggling at school. To sustain W3's gains through community-based learning, some communities reported having started collecting funds in readiness for the project's close-out, indicative of collective action to sustain children's learning gains. Community campaigns for education, including street campaigns on the Day of the Girl Child or Teachers Day in October, for example, have shown community members' support and advocacy for children's right to education and raised awareness among the broader community.

Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Minimal new evidence since the baseline** on this intervention area of PLANE due to the closure of SBCC activities in June 2024 and significant deliberate de-prioritisation of community-led advocacy for education linked to awareness-raising and information-sharing.
- ▶ **Many young mothers of school-age remain excluded** from primary schooling due to age, social norms, and lack of resources to create an enabling environment.
- ▶ **Communities acknowledge that more awareness-raising and advocacy for education and children's rights needs to be done** because not all members of the communities have improved attitudes towards girls' education due to cultural beliefs and social norms and household economic conditions.

5.6.4 PLANE Window 3: Summary of Findings

The Midline Evaluation findings for PLANE W3 in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa demonstrate variable contributions to the portfolio Theory of Change, from some key areas of strength to notable weaknesses. Evidence shows progress across multiple steps of W3's Change Pathways at output level, but weaker evidence and fewer contributions to sustainable change at outcome level.



Key contributions to change

- ▶ **Improving supported communities' overall attitudes** towards girls' education and learning opportunities for all children regardless of status and identity.
- ▶ **Identification and support of children living with disabilities**, including to access learning opportunities, has been significant at local and individual levels. In total, 741 children had been referred to specialist services and 597 supported to re-enrol in school.
- ▶ **Community-based learning centres, especially Catch-Up Clubs** (for which there is the most and strongest evidence), have increased enrolled children's literacy and numeracy skills over their duration. Attendance and completion rates are strong, quantitative indications show some learning improvements, value for money indicators are good, and qualitative data is also supportive of these improvements in children's learning.
- ▶ **VSLAs are well-evidenced** as raising demand for schooling by enabling financial support for children's education. Members and children of 88 VSLA groups have benefitted from this microfinancing initiative. The approach shows signs of sustainability after PLANE leaves with members expressing commitment and capacity to sustain the associations.



Challenges, gaps and weaknesses

- ▶ **Lack of availability of quantitative data on children's learning gains** from community-based learning centres. The evaluation did not have access to learning metrics (test scores) before and after the intervention, so cannot fully assess learning gains. Data that were available show learning improvements, but these improvements do not meet the programme's expected targets for CuCs or Literacy Boost interventions.
- ▶ **Programme funding and subcontractor management issues** both limited the duration and outcomes of specific activities including social behaviour change communication and support for CLWD. Overall actual support for CLWD was 50% less than the planned target.
- ▶ **Lack of consistent monitoring of children who complete accelerated community learning programmes**: there is no systemic monitoring mechanism to track children from community learning centres into formal schooling and formal school progression. While this is due to W3's focus on community learning, it has resulted in a gap in data on the programme's contribution to PLANE's outcome and impact.
- ▶ **Education and learning support for CLWD is not systemic**: outputs are commendable but individualised and unsustainable without PLANE funds and skills. Although advocating for more inclusive schooling, there is no evidenced contribution of PLANE towards improving the system of support for educating CLWD at LGA or state levels. This is partially associated with weaknesses in collaboration, both internal (with W1) and external (with state and non-state disability organisations).

5.7 Evidence generation, communication and use

The PLANE programme and each of the six ToC Change Pathways and components of the Window's work are underpinned by the effective generation, communication and utilisation of data and evidence to improve PLANE's delivery and learning and improve overall education sector performance. Each Window, the PLANE programme overall, and the FCDO-managed component led by DELVe, are responsible for contributing to producing, sharing and using evidence. This analysis considers the contributions and challenges of each Window, PLANE overall, and DELVe to this objective.

5.7.1 Evidence generation

Three key modes of internal evidence generation are used by all three PLANE Windows:

- ▶ **Quarterly logframe reporting:** milestone reporting for each Window's logframe require regular monitoring using a range of tools from lesson observations to student tracking sheets for accelerated learning activities. These quantitative data provide evidence of progress towards milestones.
- ▶ **Stories of Change:** qualitative narratives of activities and outputs from the schools and communities where Window's work. These are often at individual or local level, for example of a child supported by PLANE Window 3 to access hospital treatment and an assistive device for learning at a community-based centre.
- ▶ **Biannual student learning assessments:** quantitative data (at the beginning and end of each school year) on student test results in literacy and numeracy to measure progress in line with programme interventions and to share data with state education agencies (e.g. SUBEBs). Approaches to assessment differ between the Windows (EGRA/EGMA; TaRL; ASER) but are regularly provided.

Three additional modes of internal evidence generation are unique to different parts of PLANE:

- ▶ **Impact evaluation studies:** Using a Spatial Discontinuity Design, Window 1 has designed and delivered impact evaluation data over the last two successive years of the programme. This data compares student learning results and school observations between PLANE and non-PLANE schools along state borders. It has generated robust data on the differences between PLANE and control schools in specific LGAs that proves helpful in quantifying PLANE's value-added (section 5.2.5). Window 2 has also conducted quasi-experimental operational research on the learning gains of KARI and TaRL students against control schools; this showed (small) learning gains but importantly provides an evidence-based for learning and adaptation going forwards.
- ▶ **Ad hoc Window-led research studies:** mostly Window 1, for example, a 2025 report on 'Financing Flows to Basic Education in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa' (PLANE, 2025).
- ▶ **DELVE research and technical assistance:** comprising the baseline evaluation (DELVE, 2023a) as well as several research studies since 2024:
 - ▷ School Opening and Attendance Studies Phase 1 and 2 (May 2025).
 - ▷ Accelerated Basic Education Programme Scalability Study (April 2025).
 - ▷ Policy Influencing Study (September 2025).

Lastly, the PLANE programme relies on the generation of timely, high quality basic education data by state education agencies through the mechanisms of the Annual School Census (ASC). ASCs are intended to capture annual data on core indicators for teachers, students and schools across each state. ASC data are used by PLANE – and other education programmes – to tailor and target interventions, understand systemic gaps and weaknesses, and co-design with state governments appropriate interventions. However, as shown in Table 10 (section 3.1.2), state education agencies have been unable to provide this data, and this basic assumption of the programme ToC has barely held (Table 39).

The following recommendations emerge from PLANE's evidence generation work:

- e. Tighten programme monitoring metrics and data disaggregation, especially for disability, and safeguarding/psychosocial support.
- f. Adjust logframes in line with ToC adaptations and programmatic shifts for 2025-2026.
- g. Continue to resource and deliver impact evaluation studies (W1 and W2) for the academic year 2025-26 to offer a longer period of case-control tracking for PLANE's evidence base and wider learning about

interventions. Additionally, encourage uptake of PLANE good practices during 2026 and 2027 including to federal and state government agencies and through the World Bank HOPE-Edu programme.

- h. Continue to support state education agencies and institutions to strengthen, maintain and resource sustainable education data systems for regular data gathering against core education indicators.

5.7.2 Evidence communication

5.7.2.1 Internal

Three key modes of evidence communication have been adopted across PLANE for internal evidence communications within the programme:

- ▶ **Quarterly and annual reports:** by the Windows and DELVe for PLANE monitoring, learning and adaptation
- ▶ **Technical Learning Platform meetings:** where Windows share insights to specific technical issues and approaches, for example, on student learning assessments; these are ad hoc, needs-led and have not taken place in 2024-25.
- ▶ **Monthly DELVe-Window meetings** to share updates on programming, programme insights and learning.

5.7.2.2 External

Eight key modes of evidence communication have been adopted across PLANE for external evidence communications beyond the programme:

- ▶ **DELVe Performance Evaluation workshops:** in 2023 and 2025 to share findings and engage feedback and insights on evaluation processes and findings. These include PLANE and external stakeholders from government and non-government agencies.
- ▶ **PLANE social media posts:** the portfolio shares a PLANE website and posts (led by Window 1) regularly on programme activities and learning via the PLANE website, LinkedIn, and other blog sites.
- ▶ **PLANE academic engagement:** PLANE has been represented by various Window and DELVe staff at academic conferences in Nigeria, the UK, and US, including a consortium at the 2025 UK Education and Development Forum (UKFIET) conference.
- ▶ **Nigeria State Education Summits:** PLANE provided organisational, funding and coordination support to the Kano State Education Recovery Conference in 2024 and the Kaduna EduPACT International Summit in 2025. PLANE was prominent in these summits, sharing programme evidence and insights and supporting delegates learning about key factors affecting and improving basic education in the states.
- ▶ **State Working Groups and multi-stakeholder forums,** which meet regularly to address educational concerns at state level and comprise multiple agencies and organisations within and beyond PLANE.

Recommendations for improved evidence communications are:

1. Develop systematic monitoring and/or knowledge management of external communications via social media and academic engagements, to increase internal collaboration and consistency of evidence sharing and messaging about the programme.
2. Reinstate regular TLP meetings within PLANE to harness the expertise and insights of core programme staff for the remainder of PLANE and systematically document that knowledge.

As agreed with FCDO, the **findings, conclusions, and recommendations from this evaluation** will be disseminated in the following ways:

- ▶ As noted in Section 3.4, preliminary findings were shared during the Validation Workshop held in October 2025.

- ▶ Once finalised, the full report will be shared electronically with all relevant stakeholders, including PLANE partners; government stakeholders at federal, state, and local levels; and international and national education partners.
- ▶ The report will also be uploaded to the PLANE website and disseminated via a LinkedIn post.
- ▶ Slide decks will be developed and tailored to different audiences:
 - ▷ International education partners (such as World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO).
 - ▷ Federal government decision-makers, tailored for senior officials within the Nigerian government, UBEC, and NERDC. These will integrate key NESRI agenda items, including teachers, structured pedagogy, girls' education, and disability inclusion.
 - ▷ Window-specific and regional decks: Northwest (Windows 1 and 3) and Northeast (Window 2).
 - ▷ Regional and state-level actors, using simplified materials translated into Hausa.
- ▶ These slide decks will be used by DELVe during potential bespoke sessions with federal stakeholders, including key UBEC officials. They may also be used by FCDO for dissemination through other channels, including existing events such as conferences or summits, even after the DELVe contract comes to an end.

To ensure clarity and accessibility, the report's Executive Summary and all slide decks will be presented in a simple, concise, and visually engaging format.

Furthermore, additional dissemination opportunities will be explored as appropriate and as they arise.

5.7.3 Evidence use

Four key modes of evidence use have emerged from this evaluation:

- ▶ **Internal evidence sharing and discussions via workshops, TLPs and meetings inform reports and programming:** for example, validation workshops at baseline and midline have informed adaptations to the findings and recommendations of evaluation reports; TLP agreements on student learning assessments informed refinements to Window approaches.
- ▶ **Programme evidence has influenced policy reforms at state level:** support of, and evidence generated by, PLANE have facilitated policy reforms at state level, including for teacher recruitment, deployment and retention; girls' education; and contributed to new accountability mechanisms for quality education, such as K-SAFE in Kano (section 5.1.3.4).
- ▶ **DELVe's research has also influenced policy reforms and policy debates:** for example, findings of the SO2 study seem to have contributed to a reassessment of the effectiveness of the Kaduna 4-day week; the APEP Scalability study has informed policy discussions on scaling up ABEP across northern states.
- ▶ **Data driven initiatives for informed planning:** improvements in education dashboards with key quantitative data – supported by PLANE – seem to be used to the extent possible by development partners and state government agencies to inform planning and budgets. However, as noted in 5.7.1 above, there are major gaps and weaknesses in current data systems that restrict usage of government-generated education data.

Recommendations for improved evidence use are:

- ▶ **Portfolio-wide monitoring and producing robust case studies** evidencing trajectories from evidence generation to use, especially at state policy / systems level. For example, how research reports or impact evaluation studies have contributed to policy discussions and even reforms. Following the Policy Influencing Study (2025) this would enable PLANE to clearly signpost the contributions of its evidence to change.
- ▶ **Showcasing effective use of systemic education data** from state-led systems, to exemplify how education data can and should be used to improve education delivery; for example, using teacher absenteeism data in ASC reports to guide interventions to support teachers and improve attendance in specific LGAs.

5.8 Portfolio-wide findings against Evaluation Questions

Table 38: Findings by Evaluation Question

Module – OECD-DAC Criteria - EQ	Findings	Evidence strength	Confidence in evidence
Processes - Relevance How far and how well is the design of the programme consistent with the current political economy at state and Federal level?	<p>PLANE has adapted well to changes in the political economy since 2023. Alignment, and efforts to align, are visible and well-received by government.</p> <p>State-led reforms have been bolstered by PLANE’s contributions in the areas of teacher recruitment, deployment and retention; safe schools; and girls’ education. Co-creation via technical working groups and multi-stakeholder coalitions have been largely successful. PLANE is in a good position overall to continue to align with a support the federal NESRI agenda. However, national economic shocks (fuel subsidy removal, inflation, insecurity) and ODA budget uncertainty are material headwinds, which may negatively affect the continued relevance of PLANE to Nigeria.</p>	Green	Green
Processes - Coherence How far and how well do the three PLANE Windows align with each other and other relevant interventions to support a coherent approach to improving foundational skills?	<p>The three Windows work to a shared ToC and have complementary purposes across PLANE (foundational learning; EiE recovery; community engagement). However, collaboration and sharing are sporadic and requires improvement to sustain and share the gains made to date. Knowledge management could be improved, especially for sustaining and sharing learning from PLANE. Collaboration is particularly weak across regions and between W1 and W2. For example, there is an opportunity for cross-Window collaboration and evidence sharing on accelerated learning and ABEP in 2026.</p> <p>Evidence of alignment with external programmes include links to the AGILE and ROOSC projects. There is also an important workstream to engage with the World Bank on its HOPE-Edu programme over the coming year. More coordination with organisations such as Sightsavers would improve cross-Window efforts to address disability inclusion, for example. As external stakeholders to education shift, PLANE also needs to strategise for external coherence.</p>	Amber	Green
Systems - Effectiveness How, and to what extent, has PLANE contributed to improved and more inclusive education systems delivering foundational skills and learning outcomes through high quality teaching and learning?	<p>Overall, PLANE is making good progress towards its intended outcome with a sufficient quantity and quality of robust evidence to support its approaches and gains. This is especially true of PLANE in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa.</p> <p>Under Window 1, a Foundational Skills Package of a structured mother-tongue pedagogy plus teacher and head teacher training plus TLMs has improved teaching quality across the states. Classroom observation data at midline show improved teaching competencies and behaviours. These teaching improvements are aligned with quantified improvements in student learning in Maths and Hausa at P4 and, to a lesser extent, P2. Impact evaluation complements this showing statistically significant gains for students in PLANE vs non-PLANE schools.</p>	Green	Green

Module – OECD-DAC Criteria - EQ	Findings	Evidence strength	Confidence in evidence
	<p>PLANE W1 has also made substantial contributions to education policy reform (especially for teachers and girls) and inclusive approaches to education at all levels of the system from schools to state government agencies. Quality assurance and accountability mechanisms help to track the effects of reforms and address needs at local levels.</p> <p>W2 and W3 contributions are positive but more context-dependent and with some data gaps. Under UNICEF in the North East, W2’s large-scale teacher training on three learning packages – ABEP, TaRL and KARI - have mostly made improvements in instructional quality, inclusive practices and learning outcomes, especially under ABEP and KARI. ABEP has proven an effective pathway for improving foundational skills rapidly to enable returns to formal schooling, especially for girls. Some concerns persist around the use and assessment methodologies of TaRL, its effectiveness and sustainability. Safeguarding training and improvements in perceptions of safety have contributed to a sense of safer schools.</p> <p>Window 3’s community centres show good quality child-centred facilitation, short-cycle literacy/numeracy gains and high attendance, but have limited learning datasets, and re-entry to formal schools is not tracked. Community-based approaches – like W3’s and also ABEP – seem to be effective at generating local political will for education and sustaining, with the right mechanisms – longer-term improvements for children’s learning.</p> <p>Quality teaching and learning is negatively affected across all Window locations by inadequate school infrastructure – exacerbated by worse weather and climate events; – lack of disability-inclusive TLMs; weak cascading of teacher training; teacher attrition; and inadequate engagement between the state and non-state education sectors to deliver holistic reforms.</p>		
<p>Processes - Efficiency</p> <p>How well has PLANE used resources to deliver results?</p>	<p>Illustrative VfM signals: competitive printing cost for W1’s Hausa teacher guide (~£1.28/book); W1 has exceeded cumulative training and TLM targets to date, indicating cost effectiveness.</p> <p>W3 reports a low unit cost for the 3-month Catch-Up Club (~£4.28/child) with high attendance and reasonable learning outcomes, especially in maths.</p> <p>The costs of delivering ABEP remain unclear and variable.</p> <p>There are systemic risks to programme efficiency: the devaluation of the Naira / inflation; education system financing bottlenecks (salary delays, state funds); and sustainability risks associated with teacher turnover and materials’ procurement.</p> <p>W1 have the most economy and efficiency data of all Windows, and sufficient internally, with over-achievement against reach targets. However, it is difficult and complex to pull together efficiency data across the Windows, and therefore for the portfolio, due to differentiated quantity, type and quality of reporting. Cost data – especially for W2 and W3 - are often estimates and incomplete.</p>	Amber	Amber

Module – OECD-DAC Criteria - EQ	Findings	Evidence strength	Confidence in evidence
<p>Schools & Communities - Impact</p> <p>How, and to what extent, has PLANE enabled children and young people to acquire skills to transition to more productive life opportunities?</p>	<p>There are learning gains among students at upper primary. However, data on transitions to secondary school and into 'productive life opportunities' are very poor both among programme partners and system wide.</p> <p>Community mobilisation plausibly supports progression and retention, including of marginalised children; many communities report re-enrolments/JSS transitions anecdotally. However, tracking student progression is very weak/absent and structural barriers (poverty, infrastructure, gender norms) persist.</p> <p>The ToC did not adequately specify the meaning and intention of its impact statement, which has also affected the weak evidence against this EQ.</p>	Red	Amber
<p>Systems - Sustainability</p> <p>What steps have been taken to ensure the continuation of PLANE's positive effects?</p>	<p>All Windows have incorporated multiple sustainability mechanisms from state government institutions to individual level. Within the previous year especially, these moves have increased confidence that the effects and gains of PLANE may outlast the programme. Some examples of sustainable approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy reforms in Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa have, with co-creation, moved along the 8-stage process during PLANE, some moving to operationalisation and budget execution. This is a strong indication of sustainable change. - Improved digital education dashboards in Borno and Yobe are established for government ownership and management for sustainability, including to manage teacher deployment, a key issue for sustaining quality education. - Individual and organisational capacity building of state agency staff, teachers, SSOs, SBMCs, head teachers may continue to influence behaviours, practices and mitigate resource dependency longer-term - Improved attitudes and behaviours among community members and caregivers to inclusive access to education and learning <p>Sustainable plans and actions are undercut by: weak personnel and public financial management; limited policy implementation tracking; non-formal sector under-representation; uneven safeguarding; and climate/insecurity shocks.</p>	Amber	Amber

This conclusion summarises the evidence gathered by this midline evaluation against its four Modules and EQs as well as in regard to the four key objectives of the evaluation.

5.9 Review of ToC Assumptions

The PLANE portfolio ToC is underpinned by seven cross-cutting assumptions each linked to one of three levels of the ToC from output to outcome (Portfolio ToC Narrative pp.14-15). This section considers the extent to which these assumptions have held true since the ToC was finalised in March 2023 applying a three-point RAG scale:

- ▶ **Mostly held** – Green: Assumption remains valid with minimal and/or manageable risk
- ▶ **Partially held** – Amber: Assumption is under strain; some contextual and/or programme factors have shifted requiring mitigation or adaptation measures
- ▶ **Barely/Not held** – Red: Assumption has largely failed; significant implications for ToC logic and delivery requiring a strategic response.

Table 39 summarises the ratings for each assumption. The narrative below explains what evidence has been used to assign ratings and considers the implications for the ToC. Overall, the evaluation has **high to medium confidence** in all ratings based on the depth and breadth of evidence available from primary and secondary sources, referenced in the findings (section 5) and below. Some assumptions pertain to the programme and others to the external context. Those that are repeated (e.g. Covid-19) are assessed collectively. A summary table is provided in Annex D.

Table 39: Summative review of ToC Assumptions

Level of ToC	Assumption	Rating
Output - Intermediate Outcome	FCDO funding for PLANE is allocated and available as planned, overall and year on year.	Partially held
	Programme delivery and access is not restricted by intensified levels of insecurity and conflict.	Partially held
	Programme and education delivery is not hindered by Covid-19.	Mostly held
Intermediate Outcome - Outcome	Conflict and insecurity do not escalate to levels that further limit access.	Partially held
	PLANE Windows jointly enable effective linkages between supply & demand	Mostly held
Outcome - Impact	Continued political will of federal and state governments to prioritise education, poverty, gender and learning needs of marginalised children	Mostly held
	Wider political, macro-economic and security conditions remain stable to an extent that does not hinder delivery completely.	Partially held
	2023 (and 2028) elections remain orderly and peaceful and do not substantially undermine the delivery of education services, or the work of PLANE partners.	Mostly held
	Covid-19 situation remains sufficiently stable and schools remain open	Mostly held
	Data available from the MICS and ASC data are available on time and reasonably accurate	Barely held

5.9.1 Programme assumptions

▶ **FCDO funding for PLANE: Partially held**

Funding allocations for PLANE and each Window have been stable and predictable in terms of total annual amount of funding - including by Window - until the end of the academic year 2025. Within this period there have been some delays in disbursements to Windows linked to, for example, logframe reviews and/or reporting queries. There were significant delays to the disbursement of funds to Window 3 in 2025 due to a strategic shift to ABEP and the exit from Kaduna state, which put strain on W3 partners. Since the UK government announced cuts to ODA in February 2025, PLANE programme funding allocations and availability has been under review. This puts a strain on the programme and has ushered a new period of unpredictability and uncertainty post-April 2026. These fiscal changes indicate the need for a ToC review.

► **Enabling effective linkages between supply and demand: Partially held**

PLANE's initiatives have increased overall demand among parents and communities for access to quality primary schooling throughout its LGAs and states of operation. PLANE has also improved the standard of 'quality' schooling expected from teachers and head teachers through its support to SBMCs, SSOs, and head teachers; expectations for teacher and student attendance, school record keeping, SMBC meetings, and lesson delivery have all increased. Some of these elements, such as attendance monitoring, have also improved supply by encouraging teachers to come to school every day and on time. Other interventions have also worked to increase supply in line with demand: policy reform for teachers; institutionalising accelerated learning; use of education data to inform fund disbursements to schools; improved school management.

However, PLANE's deliberate non-intervention in school infrastructure means that it has not been able to directly address issues with school buildings and furniture. Resource-poor SBMCs and communities are not consistently able to meet these needs, especially with worsening infrastructural problems caused by conflict and /or climate. This is a gap in the programme's ability to link supply and demand. It is also a strong rationale for reviewing the ToC to consider this assumption in the light of climate/conflict issues.

5.9.2 External assumptions

► **Insecurity and conflict: Partially held**

The fragile national security situation periodically disrupts learning and supervision activities across a range of LGAs in all five states of PLANE, impeding the full consolidation of gains achieved through the programme. Insecurity and conflict lead to school closures, infrastructural problems, and communities' reluctance to continue to send children to school due to perceptions, and realisations, that schools are not safe.

► **Covid-19: Mostly held**

School closures due to Covid-19 have not occurred again since September 2020 and the height of the pandemic, when some children were out of school for up to six months. Covid-19 has therefore not directly hindered PLANE or education delivery during 2022-25. However, the residual effects of the pandemic are still evident in some teacher and caregiver attitudes and behaviours towards education – for example, non-commitment to daily, timely attendance, and fears about disease outbreaks. Nevertheless, the evaluation concludes that this assumption remains valid, with minimal risk to PLANE.

► **Political will for education, poverty, gender and learning needs of marginalised children: Mostly held**

Basic education remains at the forefront of the national and states' political agenda and rhetoric. Since the 2023 general election there has been a significant national prioritisation of improved quality basic education, led by the rhetoric and reforms of President Tinubu notably: the 2025 NESRI agenda: Education for Renewed Hope; curriculum reforms; teacher professional development reforms; and the expansion of the World Bank's AGILE programme. At state level, teacher reforms and girls' education policies evidence political will for improvements in education and learning for all.

However, political will is inconsistent and affected by short-term, political agenda-setting. Changes in Ministers at federal and state levels can change agendas and rewrite previous policy reforms (for example, the revision of the National Language Policy). Political will for gender equality is also low overall and very unstable: elite resistance and social norms present ongoing barriers to gender equality in education.

► **Political and macro-economic conditions, including election stability: Partially held**

. Overall, the stability of the context is broadly within expectations for the period 2022-2025. Elections and political transformations at federal and state levels have been largely peaceful with political will for basic education retained, even improved, since 2023 (above). PLANE has adapted well to change, and communities show resilience. Local partnerships with local government authorities, PLANE schools, and other non-state agencies have mitigated shocks, as has flexible budgeting within PLANE and in state education planning. However, the economy has undergone major macroeconomic change since 2023: the fuel subsidy removal and unifying the exchange rate have contributed to high inflation and increasing fuel and food poverty, and a cost-of-living crisis affecting all education stakeholders at state, local, school and community levels. The assumption of economic stability is therefore under considerable strain (as exemplified in teacher union strikes in 2024-25) and requires review in the PLANE ToC.

► **Availability of accurate education data: Barely held**

The timely availability and reliability of quantitative education data in Nigeria remains very weak for a variety of reasons including funding constraints, insecurity blockages to gathering census data, inadequate organisational capacity, and changing modalities of education delivery that do not continue to align with core data gathered. The last nationwide household Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) - led by UNICEF - was published in 2021; surveys are scheduled every five years, but the next survey has not yet been announced. The latest Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey – led by USAID with the National Population Commission in Nigeria – was published in 2024. For education data, government and non-government agencies rely on Annual School Census (ASC) reports. As shown in Table 10, ASC reports are not yet available for the last two academic years in all PLANE states (except Kaduna). Timely basic education data are not available for planning, monitoring, resource allocations, or responsive policy reform. Data that are available are unreliable and often incomplete, with inconsistencies, missing data, and a reliance on school self-reports. The failure of this assumption to date has significant implications for the appropriacy of the ToC logic and for programme delivery, including monitoring and logframe reporting that depends on up-to-date MICS or ASC data; responsive programme adaptations; and the ability of PLANE to benchmark progress against broader educational change.

6.0 Conclusions

PLANE has made substantial positive strides towards achieving its intended outcome through the interventions and gains of each of its three Windows. There is robust evidence, in which the evaluation has a high degree of confidence, that student learning outcomes in PLANE formal schools and non-formal learning centres (overall) have improved since the baseline evaluation thanks to PLANE's interventions in teaching, learning and inclusion.

PLANE has adapted well to changes in the political economy since 2023 and is managing more recent macroeconomic and education policy instability well. Alignment, and efforts to align, with federal and state government priorities – including the federal government's Nigeria Education Sector Renewal Initiative (NESRI) 2025 – are visible and well-received by government and non-government stakeholders alike. There is good evidence of alignment with external organisations and programmes such as Reaching Out of School Children (ROOSC) and the new World Bank HOPE-Edu programme. These demand further attention, evidence-sharing, and strengthening going forwards.

Federal and state education policy and governance reforms have been bolstered by PLANE's contributions in the areas of teacher recruitment, deployment and retention; safe schools; and girls' education. In the last two years, policy influencing and technical support to policy development has been a significant part of Window 1 and Window 2's work, providing space for sustainability of the programme and its gains. Quality assurance and accountability mechanisms are helping to track the institutionalisation, implementation and effects of reforms and address needs at local levels. However, many new and/or revised policies remain in the early stages of reform and continuous support is required to ensure that they are maintained, resourced and delivered effectively and sustainably.

In improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning, all Windows have made major contributions:

- ▶ Under Window 1, a Foundational Skills Package of a structured mother-tongue (Hausa) pedagogy plus teacher and head teacher training plus TLMs has improved teaching quality across the states. Classroom observation data at midline show improved teaching competencies and behaviours. These teaching improvements are aligned with quantified improvements in student learning in Maths and Hausa at P4 and, to a lesser extent, P2. Impact evaluation complements this, showing statistically significant foundational learning gains for students in PLANE vs non-PLANE schools.
- ▶ Window 2's large-scale teacher training on three learning packages – ABEP, TaRL and KARI – have mostly made improvements in instructional quality, inclusive practices and learning outcomes, especially under ABEP and KARI. KARI is another well-received, structured mother-tongue pedagogy package in Kanuri, while ABEP has proven an effective pathway for improving foundational skills rapidly to enable returns to formal schooling, especially for girls.
- ▶ Window 3's community learning centres show good quality child-centred facilitation, short-cycle literacy/numeracy gains and high attendance, but have limited longitudinal learning datasets, and weak tracking of re-entry to formal school. Community-based approaches – like learning centres and ABEP – seem to be effective at generating local political will for education and sustaining, with the right mechanisms (such as trained remunerated local facilitators and VSLAs), longer-term improvements for children's learning.

Some of these interventions show good signs of potential sustainability beyond PLANE, while risks in other areas need to be considered. Sustainability is promising, for example, in: i) policy reforms that institutionalise new approaches with plans and budgets; ii) individual and organisational training and capacity building that outlast programmes; and iii) improvements in overall attitudes towards and behaviours for inclusion and inclusive education and learning for all. However, other concentrated interventions, such as intensive teacher coaching and mentoring or assistive devices for individual CLWD, which require expertise and resources, are highly unlikely to be sustainable by government. In addition, assessing the impact of interventions depends on high quality, timely data from functioning education data systems – an aspect that remains a significant challenge in the sector and towards which PLANE has made minimal progress.

There are major contextual risks to education programmes, like PLANE, as well as to the stability and resourcing of national education policies and priorities. PLANE is now operating under reduced global funding conditions and social, economic, climatic and technological instability and change. The sustainability of progress and positive changes to which PLANE has contributed requires absorption over time into systems. PLANE

Windows 1 and 2 have two to three years remaining, under conditions of significant funding cuts from April 2026, to adapt and reprioritise to achieve this.

Nevertheless, there are opportunities:

- i. For technological advancements to drive much-needed improvements towards robust and sustainable education data systems through automation, predictive modelling and better communication;
- ii. For policy reforms to be delivered through efficient resources, partnerships and lasting commitment;
- iii. For teaching pedagogies to continue to improve with wider uptake and production of materials and guides.

Collaboration and cooperation with state and non-state agencies is critical.

In sum, **PLANE's lasting contributions will depend on accelerating progress now towards robust, institutionalised processes, frameworks and systems that can maintain, operationalise and realise quality basic education for all.**

7.0 Recommendations

DELVE's recommendations from this comprehensive Midline evaluation are made in the context of declining ODA resources in general and for PLANE, as well as strategic shifts on government priorities for basic education – currently aligned with the NESRI Agenda (section 5.2.1). The recommendations consider what the evidence indicates should remain core priorities of the PLANE programme over the following years; how newly financed programmes – specifically the World Bank's HOPE-EDU programme – could adopt and adapt, with PLANE's leadership, some of the core evidence-based achievements of PLANE – and in what intervention areas, and how, federal and state governments should aim to complement and sustain PLANE's progress and contributions longer-term.

The recommendations are thus divided into two areas. We make **eleven recommendations** overall, based on the evidence of the Midline, programme learning since 2021, and stakeholder feedback and insights during the October 2025 Midline Validation workshop. Given the evidence and priorities identified, any areas of work not listed here may be considered of lower priority or suitable for discontinuation.

- i. Recommendations for interventions that PLANE should aim to continue and prioritise, including with any adaptations/pivots – seven key recommendations
- ii. Recommendations for interventions that government and/or other financed programmes should sustain, adopt, and adapt from PLANE's successes – four key recommendations.

In addition to these recommendations, the evaluation strongly advises the PLANE programme partnership to revisit its portfolio Theory of Change as a matter of urgency in 2026. This reassessment should take contextual changes into consideration as well as learning from this evaluation.

1. PLANE should continue and prioritise:

1.1 Basic education policy influencing: using the 9-step framework developed by PLANE (Annex I) with three focus policies (below). Track policy movement to operationalisation with resources and implementation tracking. Much additional effort is required to track and support the realisation of institutional reforms – for teachers, safe schools, girls' education, and non-state schools – into local (LGA/school) improvements.

In addition, establish costs for policy reform along the 8-point scale to develop VfM indicators for this work for wider programme and donor influencing; continue to be a lead on co-creation – coordinating multi-stakeholder technical working groups and coalitions at state level to maximise shared ownership, state and non-state cross-agency communications, productivity and efficiency. This should be prioritised in alignment with state government priorities in the following three policy areas:

- ▶ **Teacher recruitment, deployment and retention:** continue to advocate and encourage government-led reforms and plans to address wider issues of deployment, transfers and attendance; unnecessary teacher transfers should be minimised to maintain continuity, build institutional capacity, and sustain the gains achieved through training and programme support.
- ▶ **Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools (SSVFS)** national policy domestication, operationalisation and implementation, to bolster advocacy and action (plans, budgets, expertise) for improved security and climate and conflict resilience in basic education.
- ▶ **Non-state school** policies and regulation, to improve education quality, safety and accountability of the non-state sector in alignment with the National Policy on Non-State Schools in Nigeria (2024).

1.2 Language of instruction evidence-based influencing and technical advice: experience and evidence across PLANE Windows indicate strongly the benefit to effective learning of mother-tongue based teaching, especially in the early grades (P1-P4). Window 2 is aiming to build Kanuri and Hausa-based models into the system in the North East; Window 1's data on learning improvements that may be aligned to its Hausa-based mother tongue instructional approach also gives credit for advocacy for Hausa-based lower grade teaching for improved learning outcomes. However, at federal level there is a pivot back to English language of instruction from the start of primary with uncertainty about how this would be implemented in Hausa-speaking states. This will likely require pragmatic responses that are locally grounded. PLANE can provide evidence to, and engage with, this current and critical debate.

1.3 Teacher training and professional development: based on the evidence of the effectiveness of existing in-service training, combined with the need for further reach and sustainability, PLANE should pivot more resources and technical expertise-sharing towards pre-service teacher training. PLANE should engage and collaborate with the National Commission for Colleges of Education and state Colleges of Education to share evidence of best practice pedagogies, effective classroom management, and record keeping, all of which have been PLANE's strengths. PLANE has a foundational relationship upon which to build for this pivot. PLANE's efforts to build the strengths of state governments for this work, built into new teacher policies, should also continue apace. Additionally, PLANE itself must – during 2026-27 – build in cascade training using Head Teachers and/or Master trainers to disseminate pedagogical good practices more widely, including to non-core teachers in PLANE schools and to teachers in non-PLANE schools.

1.4 SSO capacity development / strategic support: logframes do not address the emerging evidence of the importance of the role and functions of SSOs as a lynchpin between government and schools. Their role in PLANE should be formalised to enable strategic and systemic targets for capacity building and monitoring SSO outcomes, retention, and feed into school data reports.

1.5 VSLA advocacy and strategic support: Village Savings and Loans Associations make a positive contribution to children's enrolment and retention at school and to families' commitment and resourcing of education. Strategic advocacy to sustain existing structures and scale up opportunities to establish VSLAs in other communities would develop the evidence base and raise government awareness of the role of VSLAs in improving access for children, including the most marginalised.

2. Government and/or newly financed programmes should adopt and sustain from PLANE:

2.1 Teaching and Learning Materials procurement, production, distribution and tracking: shift to supporting government-led procurement and production, with appropriate budget lines, plans and processes in place, including via state Education Sector Plans.

2.2 Student learning assessments: PLANE should focus now on capacity development of government agencies, and information-sharing with the World Bank's HOPE-EDU programme, to continue student learning assessments through technical training on reading and maths foundational assessments (including EGRA/EGMA) as well as a handover of PLANE's existing assessment processes via experiential learning in 2026-2027, with manuals and tools on sampling and methodologies, data collection, analysis, and reporting for capacity building and knowledge management. This may be most feasible and efficient in alignment with broader support to education data systems improvement, and ongoing capacity and technical support to ensure that education data systems are fit-for-purpose and sustainable. HOPE-Edu could be a critical vehicle in this sizeable and important work.

2.3 Local Government Authority capacity development for decentralised education management: adapt to include more local government engagement especially following Local Government Reform Agenda and 2024 Supreme Court ruling for fiscal and administrative autonomy. This would include LGA-led SBMC training and continuous support.

2.4 Strategic support for children of school-age living with any disability: there is a major, urgent need for state government leadership and reforms to establish systemic support over individualised adhoc interventions. All partners should harness the expertise and organisations that exist to collaborate on improving and institutionalising inclusivity in education – especially for children living with disabilities – as part of efforts to reach OOSC. This includes federal and state disability commissions networks and non-government organisations like Sightsavers.

2.5 ABEP: ABEP has proven an effective pathway for out-of-school children to quickly acquire improved literacy and numeracy to transition back to formal school. PLANE should now plan for a gradual phase-out of direct delivery of accelerated learning, handing over processes and approaches to state and local government authorities using and developing capacities via the now institutionalised ABEP National Guidelines. The renewed focus on out-of-school children under the federal government's 2025 NESRI agenda adds impetus to this recommended process.

2.6 Support and regulation of all non-state schools, including through new non-state school policy implementation and tracking, to monitor and ensure compliance, quality, and equity, and to maximise equitable utilisation of non-state finance.

8.0 Lessons Learned

The Midline presents six concise operational and programmatic lessons learned for PLANE and future basic education programmes in Northern Nigeria.

8.1 Lessons learned for the PLANE programme

- i. **Intra-portfolio communications and collaboration can redouble programme insights and quality:** when DELVe has shared insights and findings between the Windows – informally and formally – each implementing partner learns and gains much from the other. Learning and expertise sharing is neither happening sufficiently for a portfolio approach to maximise efficient and effective programming nor prioritised strategically across PLANE. The responsibility for cross-Window collaboration is delegated to W1 – it requires sustained effort but offers significant learning and efficiency rewards.
- ii. **Gathering evidence of the operations, successes and challenges of the PLANE programme is arduous:** the evaluation sought portfolio-wide evidence and information, but this required multiple individual interviews and access to multiple document sources. The volume and richness of evidence gathered is credit to the programme’s experience and expertise, but reports and learnings are fragmented, difficult to access and interpret. This has been true within Window partners and staff, as well as for the evaluation. Consolidating knowledge and information into a quality-assured central knowledge repository would benefit the programme and enable continued use and uptake of its work.
- iii. **Student learning assessment data remains fragmented and difficult to consolidate across PLANE** and with external sources, due to different teaching and assessment methodologies and reporting approaches that differ between Windows and within Windows over time. Teacher self-reports of student learning (e.g. TaRL) appeared weaker than external standardised assessment (e.g. EGRA/EGMA). To show learning gains the evaluation generated summary tables of learning gains utilising PLANE data, but there are gaps. The consequences of these issues are that the programme still lacks the ability to report holistically on learning gains overall and comparing different approaches. This also affects government confidence in adopting a well-evidence approach to assessing learning.
- iv. **Policy influencing and systems reform** are central to sustainable change. Efforts at this level offer the strongest opportunity of impact beyond the programme and are essential for future pivots from service delivery to systems. Quality assurance, accountability mechanisms, and the operationalisation and tracking of reforms are areas where PLANE’s initiatives so far are yielding and can continue to yield major contributions.

8.2 Lessons learned for future basic education programmes in Northern Nigeria

- i. **Sustainability by design:** Ensure that all interventions are sustainable by government or systems partners by design and/or that handover to government/systems partners is embedded within the first half of a programme, with monitoring and technical support after systemic adoption. The handover of W1’s Foundational Skills Package, for example, to government partners has just two full years remaining (2026 and 2027) to support operational (procurement, publishing, distribution) and technical (content updates, scale up) capacity development for long-term sustainability and government ownership.
- ii. **The long-term trajectory of individual and organisational support:** linked to (i) above, programmes must build in consideration of the long-term trajectories of learners, schools, and organisations in programmes. At student level, the evaluation finds that PLANE has not adequately monitored (as a

programme or through supported/improved government systems) students of accelerated or community-based learning initiatives into formal schooling (transition – retention – progression). Teachers and SSOs trained by PLANE were not traced for mid to long-term trajectories (transfers, retirements, new work) for system-wide impact evidence; likewise, government officials' retention, transfers, utilisation of skills were also not tracked. These tracking gaps limit evidence of impact and systemic success.

- iii. **Pragmatism on marginalised learner focus:** programmes must use evidence and learning from other state and non-state programmes and policy to realistically identify the forms of learner marginalisation that can be successfully addressed within the design and resourcing of an education programme. For example, the PLANE portfolio embedded and targeted CLWD in its design and reporting. For all Windows, this was ambitious and not adequately led by evidence, which resulted in under-performance against targets and under-delivery against the programme ToC. CLWD were supported ad hoc and short-term, which is neither sustainable nor satisfactory for families. Alternative, strategic approaches to marginalisation – rather than aspirational broad-brush designs, are critical to achieve actual, sustainable redress to marginalisation.
- iv. **The quantitative education data ecosystem remains fragmented, unreliable and difficult to navigate** without robust numbers, even the most well-designed programmes will struggle to demonstrate impact or support systemic scale-ups. Data systems that should provide timely and good quality data against core education indicators fail to deliver due to a range of factors including financial constraints, weak organisational capacity, insecurity, and shifting modalities of education delivery. Programmes cannot gather sufficient data of their own efficiently to make up for systemic shortfalls and inaccuracies. A concerted and collaborative federal and regional focus is required to improve data systems, but this needs to be realistic and achievable based on prior learning and data that are already available and being gathered.

9.0 Annexes

- A. DELVe ToRs
- B. List of team members, roles and responsibilities
- C. Portfolio ToC narrative
- D. ToC Assumptions
- E. Midline Validation Workshop
- F. Tools
- G. Ethics and safeguarding operationalisation
- H. References
- I. 9 stages of the reform process