

# Enhancing Almajiri Education in Nigeria: Priority Actions for Implementing the National Policy

## Executive Summary

*The National Policy for the Enhancement of Almajiri Education seeks to address decades of exclusion, weak regulation, child begging, and poor learning conditions affecting Almajiri learners—many of whom fall within Nigeria's basic education age group. Operating largely outside formal education structures, the system has faced inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent curriculum, limited oversight, and heightened vulnerability for girls.*

The policy introduces a structured reform agenda centred on four core actions: establishing minimum standards for learning centres, integrating literacy and skills-based education alongside Qur'anic instruction, strengthening governance and monitoring through the National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education (NCAOOSCE), and enforcing child protection safeguards to eliminate begging and abuse.

If effectively domesticated and financed by states, the policy has the potential to transform Almajiri education from an informal and vulnerable system into a regulated, inclusive, and accountable pathway that improves learning outcomes, protects children's rights, and contributes to Nigeria's broader human capital and out-of-school reduction goals.

## Policy Context

Nigeria's education system continues to face significant structural challenges that underscore the urgency of reform. According to UNICEF, an estimated **18–20 million** children are out of school, one of the highest figures globally. While enrolment at primary level has expanded, only about **61%** of children attend primary school regularly, and transition to secondary education remains weak, with roughly **60%** progressing beyond primary school.



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Underinvestment in education has contributed to overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher development, and persistent quality gaps. Many schools lack modern teaching materials, digital learning opportunities, and updated curricula aligned with current national priorities. Inequalities remain pronounced, particularly in rural and northern regions, where girls face disproportionate barriers to access and completion.

Within this broader national context, Almajiri education—serving children largely within the basic education age bracket has historically operated outside mainstream education governance and quality assurance systems. Following the introduction of Western education during the colonial era, the system experienced prolonged institutional neglect and limited regulatory oversight. Over time, this separation contributed to weak curriculum alignment, poor infrastructure, inadequate welfare safeguards, and increased vulnerability of learners to child begging, exploitation, and abuse.



**The establishment of the National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education (NCAOOSCE) in 2023 and the development of the National Policy for the Enhancement of Almajiri Education signal a renewed commitment to structured governance, system integration, and accountability.**

By aligning Almajiri learning centres with national education standards, strengthening oversight, and integrating literacy, skills, and child protection measures, the policy seeks to address long-standing systemic gaps and contribute to reducing the out-of-school burden in Nigeria.

## Key Features of the National Policy for the Enhancement of Almajiri Education in Nigeria

### Purpose of Policy

*The policy aims to create a functional, inclusive, and regulated Almajiri education system that is fully integrated into Nigeria's national education framework. It seeks to improve learning conditions, protect learners' welfare, eradicate child begging and abuse, and enhance access to relevant education and skills*

### Policy Objectives

- 01.  To increase the educational relevance, access and opportunity of all (male and female including children with disability) Almajiri learners.
- 02.  To ensure improved infrastructure and other conditions of the Almajiri learning centres
- 03.  To set a minimum standard for infrastructure and other facilities requirement
- 04.  To facilitate adequate welfare of learners and facilitators through access to funding supports
- 05.  To enhance teaching and learning skills through facilitators training and standardised curriculum.
- 06.  To eradicate all forms of child begging, abuse and stigmatisation
- 07.  To enhance the participation of female learners and facilitators

## Policy Scope/Provisions

The policy applies to all male and female Almajiri training centres in Nigeria and it covers the following:

- 1. Almajiri learning centre establishment and registration-
- 2. Operation and coordination
- 3. Curriculum and certification
- 4. Infrastructure standard for male and female centres
- 5. Welfare and allowance
- 6. Capacity building of facilitators
- 7. Sanctions
- 8. Adding more detail on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms for tracking the success of the policy implementation would enhance its feasibility

# Priority Policy Action for Policy Makers

01

**Accelerate state domestication and enforcement** of registration, infrastructure, and curriculum standards

02

**Secure predictable financing** through Federal, state, and local budgets aligned with Annual operational plans

03

**Strengthen monitoring and data systems** by integrating Almajiri centres into NEMIS, NEDI, and annual school census processes

04

**Enforce child protection and sanctions** against begging and abuse in line with existing laws

05

**Expand target support for female learners**, including dedicated centers, safeguarding mechanisms, and scholarships

## Roles and Responsibilities

Actor	Roles and Responsibilities
<b>Federal Ministry of Education (FME)-</b>	The FME is the primary authority responsible for the development and implementation of education policies
<b>National Commission for Almajiri and Out-Of-School Children Education</b>	Responsible for the overall coordination, strategic direction and oversight function of the implementation of the Almajiri policy
<b>State Ministry of Education and Its Agencies</b>	Domesticate and implement the Almajiri policy at the state level
<b>Local Government Education Authority (LGEA)</b>	Support schools within the LGA to implement the provisions of the policy
<b>Ulamas/Alarhammas (Facilitators)</b>	Ensure adequate protection of the learners and regulate their associations
<b>Community and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)</b>	Provide community-level support and oversight by contributing resources to learning centres, monitoring compliance and safeguarding standards, reporting misconduct, and promoting vocational and agricultural skills initiatives.
<b>Development Partners and Donors</b>	Support implementation through registration and coordination with government authorities, provision of funding and technical assistance, delivery of agreed reform programmes, and participation in monitoring to ensure compliance with standards
<b>Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Relevant to Almajiri and Out-of-School Education Reforms</b>	Mobilise resources, conduct advocacy and community sensitisation, collaborate with government on training and reform initiatives, promote vocational programmes, and participate in monitoring to strengthen accountability

# Conclusion

The National Policy for the Enhancement of Almajiri Education provides a credible and structured pathway to reform. However, without decisive implementation—through enforceable standards, adequate and predictable financing, and strong coordination across federal, state, and local governments—the systemic challenges facing Almajiri learners will persist. Continued neglect risks entrenching child begging, weak learning outcomes, gender exclusion, and the broader cycle of out-of-school vulnerability that undermines Nigeria's human capital development.

To avoid this outcome, urgent and coordinated action is required. Policymakers are encouraged to prioritise Almajiri education in upcoming federal and state budgets, accelerate domestication of the policy across states, strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, and ensure that child protection safeguards are fully operational. Development partners, civil society, and community stakeholders must support implementation efforts.

Timely and sustained action will determine whether this policy becomes a transformative instrument for inclusion and protection—or remains an unrealised commitment.

## IF NOT IMPLEMENTED



**a.**  
Continued child begging



**b.**  
Weak regulation and poor learning conditions



**c.**  
Persistent gender exclusion



**d.**  
Ongoing out of school vulnerabilities

## IF IMPLEMENTED



**a.**  
Regulated and accountable centres



**b.**  
Improved learning outcome



**c.**  
Stronger child protection safeguards



**d.**  
Reduced number of out-of-school children



**e.**  
Acquisition of life skills for lifelong sustenance.