



## It Takes a Community to Educate a Child

School-Based Management Committees and other Community Structures are Leading Support for Basic Education in Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano States

*Story of Change*

SOME MEMBERS OF THE MOTHER'S ASSOCIATION IN WASAI SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, KANO

*Community participation in school development is gaining momentum in several towns and communities in Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano states. With support from the PLANE programme, School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and other structures such as Mothers' Associations are mobilising communities to support learning, drive school enrolment, improve school facilities, monitor learning outcomes, among other important roles, all aimed at giving marginalised Nigerian children quality basic education.*

In Nigeria, especially in the north and most rural areas, many children face significant barriers to accessing basic education due to factors such as gender, disability, geographic location, and cultural practices like early marriage. However, with increased awareness and collaboration among government partners and support from PLANE, education stakeholders in three northern states of Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano are ensuring that children in the region get access to quality education regardless of their social background or the prevailing situations.

## A Case from Kano: Wasai Special Primary School

At Wasai Special Primary School in Minjibir Local Government Area (LGA) of Kano State in northwest Nigeria, everyone agrees that the school learning environment needs to be improved. Learners need to be sitting on chairs with tables rather than on the floor, the classrooms need to be properly roofed, well-ventilated and stocked with more learning materials available to pupils. The school also needs working toilets and water facilities to cope with the growing student population.

These needs are not peculiar to Wasai Special Primary School. Many public primary schools in Kano State and across Nigeria need infrastructural upgrades. According to a national audit report by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), **only 52% of public primary school classrooms in Nigeria were in good condition, and only 24% of the schools had toilets in 2023.**

## SBMCs: Community-Driven Solutions

Yet, these are not the only issues, there is also a shortage of qualified teachers, insecurity, high rates of out-of-school children, and low retention and completion rates. These issues have become too daunting for the government alone to handle, requiring all hands on deck for sustainable solutions. Luckily, in Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa, School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) are stepping up to the challenge and leading non-state actors to assist the government in addressing these issues.

“

“On the part of the SBMCs, they are giving us assistance in many ways. We invited them to sit with parents and they told them the problem of children not coming to school, why parents need to send their children to school,” said Idris Bala, 50, head teacher of Wasai Special Primary School.

IDRIS BALA, 50, THE HEADTEACHER AT WASAI SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



“

“We encourage parents whose children are not attending school to stop keeping them at home or sending them out to hawk -- this is not good. We tell them that in today's world, education is the means of survival. We cannot live in a world where there is no education. And by God's grace, they are beginning to listen,” added Umami Tijani Abdullahi, leader of Wasai Mothers' Association, an active arm of the SBMC in Wasai.



UMMI TIJANI, LEADER OF THE WASAI MOTHERS ASSOCIATION

“

“This year, we have enrolled over 200 pupils in Primary One. And every day, we are receiving more newcomers, their parents bringing them here to learn,” head teacher Bala reported, confirming the impact of SBMC in promoting school enrolment.

So, while some children may be sitting on the floor in Wasai Special Primary School, the school is consoled that the children are at least coming to school to learn, rather than roaming the streets as out-of-school children.

In addition to driving school enrolment, education authorities are also pleased that SBMCs have been assisting the government to address other problems in the basic education sector.



“

“SBMCs do minor renovations. They donate to repair furniture, windows, and doors. And they visit schools to observe whether the teachers are doing their work or not. They normally visit the school to see things by themselves,” explained Rabiu Muhammed, a local government Education Secretary and Bala's boss in Minjibir LGA.

RABIU MUHAMMAD, EDUCATION SECRETARY, MINJIBIR LGEA.

## PLANE's Role in Strengthening SBMCs

Aside from Wasai SBMC in Minjibir, several other SBMCs in selected LGAs in Kano, as well as Jigawa and Kaduna states, have been steadily tackling basic education issues in the states. As a result of a series of training provided by the Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) programme, which since 2021, has been supporting Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna states, and the Federal Government of Nigeria, to improve learning outcomes for marginalised Nigerian children such as girls and those with disabilities.

Funded by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), PLANE's interventions prioritise teacher training, provision of teaching and learning materials, strengthening of school monitoring mechanisms, and community mobilisation. The community support provided by PLANE includes empowering SBMCs to effectively carry out their mandates.

SBMCs were established in Nigeria to foster partnerships between public schools, governments, and communities. They ensure quality education delivery and learning outcomes by monitoring school operations, managing resources, and advocating for improved educational access and quality.



LEARNING MATERIALS DONATED IN JAHUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA), JIGAWA STATE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SBMCs), COMMUNITY LEADERS, PARENTS, PHILANTHROPISTS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS).

## Policy Reform and Capacity Building

In Kaduna State, PLANE's support for the SBMCs was particularly comprehensive.

**“Our SBMC policy was developed as far back as 2010, we saw gaps in the policy. People with disabilities were ignored. Issues like insecurity, disaster management that were emerging were not captured, and secondary school issues were not captured in the policy.”**



**“We contacted PLANE, sat down with them for three days to review the policy and those identified gaps were addressed. Now, I can confidently say we have a workable policy”,** recalled Esther Jibji, 57. SBMC Desk Officer with Kaduna State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

ESTHER JIBJI, 57, SBMC DESK OFFICER WITH THE KADUNA STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD (SUBEB)

Before the policy review, SBMCs in Kaduna had been dissolved by the previous state government following allegations of fund mismanagement by some committees, but PLANE helped to reconstitute the SBMCs in six of the 23 LGAs in the state. Members of the reconstituted SBMCs were trained by the programme, like in Kano and Jigawa, on how to mobilise and judiciously utilise resources for schools, safeguard children within schools and communities, and support the establishment of community learning hubs, amongst other roles.



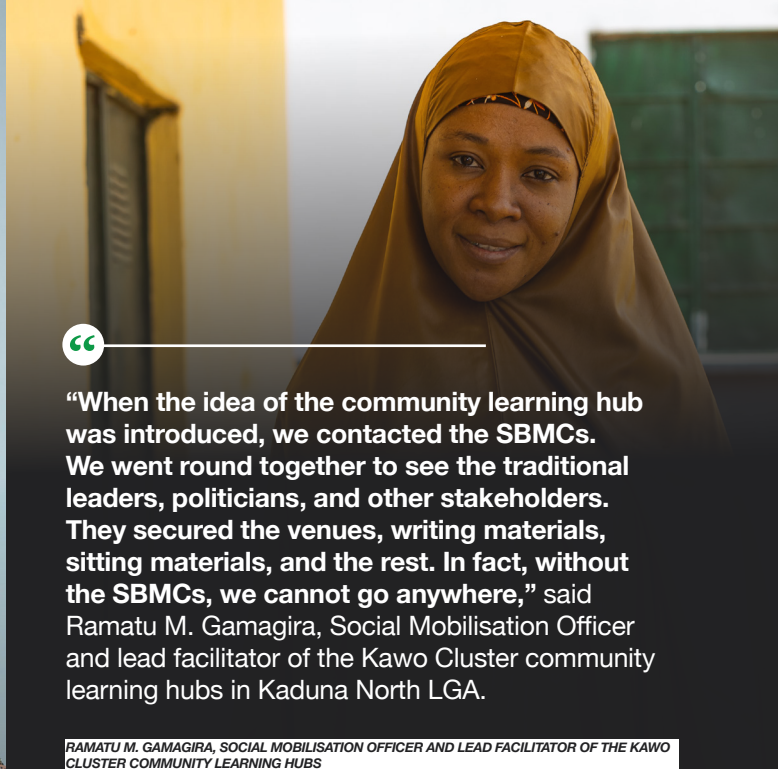
### 6 OUT OF 23

LGAs in Kaduna State had their SBMCs reconstituted with PLANE's Support.



“We have had trainings for SBMCs. PLANE specified the roles of SBMCs in schools and the relationship between SBMC, Social Mobilisation Department, and the community. Even myself, I didn’t know some of the work of the SBMC till I attended that workshop,” admitted Fatima Sani Mohammed Oneminute, Education Secretary, Kaduna North LGA.

FATIMA SANI MOHAMMED, EDUCATION SECRETARY, KADUNA NORTH LGA.



“When the idea of the community learning hub was introduced, we contacted the SBMCs. We went round together to see the traditional leaders, politicians, and other stakeholders. They secured the venues, writing materials, sitting materials, and the rest. In fact, without the SBMCs, we cannot go anywhere,” said Ramatu M. Gamagira, Social Mobilisation Officer and lead facilitator of the Kawo Cluster community learning hubs in Kaduna North LGA.

RAMATU M. GAMAGIRA, SOCIAL MOBILISATION OFFICER AND LEAD FACILITATOR OF THE KAWO CLUSTER COMMUNITY LEARNING HUBS

Like in Kano and Kaduna, SBMCs in neighbouring Jigawa State in at least seven LGAs where PLANE has been intervening, have also recorded significant progress in mobilising parents, guardians, philanthropists, religious leaders, and other community members to support public education in the state – both through the community learning hubs and regular schools.

## Evidence of Impact: It Truly Takes a Village



“The parents bring all sorts of support, as we have had instances of parents bringing sweets and pencils for the children. We also have parents donating exercise books. But above all, we have them coming to say thank you for the work we do in the community with the children, and this means everything to us,” said Abubakar Ubale, 47, a community learning hub facilitator in Kwalam in Taura LGA of Jigawa State.



“The SBMC is an initiative that has been very supportive to my school. We now have the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Women’s Representative, me and others. They support us in ensuring the well-being of

our pupils from school all the way to their homes. I would like to thank SBMC for this support,” said Rabiou Hamza, 54, head teacher of Jahun Pilot Primary School in Jigawa.

Through the SBMC, millions of naira have been raised in cash and kind across Jigawa, Kaduna and Kano states – all resources and efforts directed at enhancing the education of marginalised and underserved children in Nigeria.

All this shows that the education of Nigerian children is not complete without the participation of school communities. Indeed, it takes a village to educate a child.

\* The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.