



**Knowledge hub**  
-  
**Collection of best practices**

**Summary of the best practice**

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) \*

Supporting girls' education champions for sustainable home-based ECCD centers

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

Nigeria

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to \*

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) \*

development Research and Projects Centre

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. \*

Community based ECCD Centers; Girls education champions;  
Out-of-school children; community assets

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

Leveraging community resources and assets; responding to community needs in a sustainable manner; and transforming Northern Nigeria's out-of-school education challenge through organic approaches that are sustainable and legitimate.

## Description of the best practice

### 7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? \*

The dRPC's intervention targets Nigeria's 15million out-of-school children, all of whom have never attended schools and the majority of whom are within the age range for early childhood care and development and primary school level education. Interventions to expand access for out of school children in Northern Nigeria with the highest concentration of these children have failed to be sustainable, to attract and retain children in the context of poverty and a counter-narrative of Western education being haram. Against this background the dRPC adopted the approach of developing girls' champions for ECCD from local communities to run home-based ECCD centers targeting out-of-school children, especially girls who would not normally be enrolled in schools.

The dRPC identified and developed the girls' education champions graduates of government secondary schools who failed to obtain qualifications to transition into post-secondary education. The dRPC worked with 750 of these girls under the MacArthur Foundation funded Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education (PSIPSE) project over a period of 5 years. The project blended vocational skills acquisition in after-school clubs with teacher training in girls' senior secondary schools in two educationally disadvantaged states (Kano and Jigawa) in Nigeria. Between 2013 and 2017, PSIPSE evaluation improved learning outcomes with an 80 percent increase in students graduating with senior secondary certificates in all five subjects. Additionally, 50 percent of all girls in PSIPSE senior secondary school class 3 completed vocational skills programs in after-school clubs.

However, more than two thirds of the girls writing secondary school terminal exams failed to obtain complete certificates and were therefore unable to transit to post-secondary education. As the PSIPSE project closed out in 2017 we targeted these girls, developing them into champions for ECCD education at community level and equipping them to run home-based ECCD center. Despite their low learning outcomes, 40 girls with poor education outcomes were supported by the dRPC in collaboration with the Kano and Jigawa state governments to start up and run home-based ECCD centers for the out-of-school children of the community. The girls were trained to be teachers and care-givers of children ages 3 to 6 years in early childhood development (ECD) centers.

## 8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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A series of training workshops the 40 selected girls were convened for the 40 girls between 2017 to 2018 at the in collaboration with Kano State the ECCD Department of State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Ministry of Education in Kano and Jigawa State. The dRPC organized several on-site mentoring sessions for the 40 girl champions in collaboration with Kano and Jigawa State Ministries of Education and SUBEB ECD coordinators. The dRPC education team also equipped the girls with ECCD starter kits of materials, mats and basic equipment to run their home-based centers for local children 3 to 6 years.

The activities commenced from May 2017 to the contemporary time, 2022e.

The key implementers of this project included the dRPC as the catalytic organization; the ECD Coordinators of State Universal Basic Education Boards as the authorizing government agency; community and traditional leaders; and the local government authority which is responsible for education at community level. The dRPC also partnered with the indigenous non-profit, the Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria to conduct teacher trainings and National Association of Community Health Practitioners of Nigeria to train girls on first aid.

With the end of the MacArthur Foundation PSIPSE project, the dRPC committed over 10 Million Naira its own resources on this innovation between 2017 to 2022.

## 9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? \*

By December 2019, 39 of the 40 girls were each managing ECD schools with an average of 55 children each. Most of these 2,145 children were unlikely to attend school other than Koranic education. Moreover, 35 percent of all of the ECD centers' pupils were little girls. In the government primary schools less than 20% of the school population were girls. For poor parents and guardians, the school fee of \$4 per child per month was much more attractive than the going rate of \$27 per month at private ECD schools. As of February 2020, all of the 39 girls education champions remain unmarried, more than half expressed a desire to re-take their secondary school exams, and 10 wanted to enroll in part-time professional teacher development programs. In addition, many of the girls were receiving support from local government authorities and male community leaders to maintain their ECD centers—only one closed her school as she became chronically ill.

When forced to close schools in March 2020 to stem the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria, the 39 girls still running their ECD centers quickly repurposed their home school spaces and entrepreneurial skills to generate new sources of income. The home spaces were used for lectures on social distancing; selling airtime recharge cards to community members with mobile phones, as well as locally made disinfectants. School toys were also renting out to community members for a small fee. While COVID-19 meant that income has fallen for these girls, enthusiasm had not waned as they look forward to school reopening in July 2020. The schools are monitored on quarterly basis and the findings from the visits in designing trainings and identifying the support that will be required by the girls.

## 10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? \*

Upon reflection, what worked well in this case study was our capacity to innovate, to leverage community resources and to view challenges as opportunities. The fact that the girls who did not attain full secondary school certificates were viewed as failures constituted an opportunity for transformation of the ECCD education system in the selected communities. We learned that innovation can emerge from unexpected initiatives: through experimentation, problem-solving, and by recognizing challenges and retooling strategies so that those who may have “failed” can still achieve some measure of success. In this way, innovation is about building sustainability and resilience within the least likely to succeed and the most vulnerable populations. It is also about pushing against limits and imagining hanging fruit on fledgling trees. But perhaps most importantly, innovation is not a thing but an ever-evolving dynamic process of adaptation.

## 11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? \*

The dRPC’s innovation of girls’ champion for home-based ECCD can be considered a best practice as it organic, leverages only community resources, it is flexible, and sustainable. It is transformative from the point of view of applying local sustainable inputs to address a local problem in an otherwise unlikely way. By tapping the creativity, commitment and desire to be recognized of so-called failed girls, the innovation had the greatest success factor – the girls’ desire to prove that they were not failures, to gain community recognition and status. The fact that business management principles was a key component of the training provided them with the skills to generate income for their families who were forced to confront expectations of early marriage as the only option for girls completing secondary schools. The fact that traditional leaders, local government and other community influential take their children to the home-based girls centers elevated the status of the girls and their entire families in the community. Paying with toys, painting, and joy in home-based ECCD education is emerging as a challenge to the government run ECCD centers and primary schools of the communities.

## 12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. \*

Reflections on innovation in girls’ education in Nigeria -  
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/06/26/reflections-on-innovation-in-girls-education-in-nigeria/>

How Kano, Jigawa ladies make fortunes from ECD schools business | Dailytrust -  
<https://dailytrust.com/how-kano-jigawa-ladies-make-fortunes-from-eed-schools-business>

Centre assists 40 exam failures to become entrepreneurs - Daily News 24:  
<https://dailynews24.ng/centre-assists-40-exam-failures-to-become-entrepreneurs/>

Daily Trust (18th October, 2019): Exam failure not an excuse to be redundant. Retrieved October 22, 2019, from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/exam-failure-not-an-excuse-to-be-redundant.html>

Daily Trust (Oct 16, 2019): Over 10, 000 girls empowered in Kano, Jigawa. Retrieved October 24, 2019 from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/over-10-000-girls-empowered-in-kano-jigawa.html>

The Nation (October 24, 2019): How school leavers boost ECD in Kano, Jigawa Retrieved October 24, 2019 from <https://thenationonlineng.net/how-school-leavers-boost-eed-in-kano-jigawa/>

Daily Trust (18th October, 2019): Exam failure not an excuse to be redundant. Retrieved October 22, 2019, from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/exam-failure-not-an-excuse-to-be-redundant.html>.

Africa Newpage: dRPC-PSIPSE: Empowering Northern girls and communities through early childhood education. Retrieved October 22nd 2019, from <https://www.africannewpage.net/2019/07/promoted-drpc-psipse-empowering-northern-girls-and-communities-through-early-childhood-education/>

Centre trains 40 girls to become school owners | Dailytrust; <https://dailytrust.com/centre-trains-40-girls-to-become-school-owners#:~:text=The%20Development%20Research%20and%20Projects,in%20Kano%20and%20Jigawa%20states>

dRPC disseminates learning from #Skill4Girls4Life project to stakeholders -  
<https://www.africannewpage.net/2019/10/drpc-disseminates-learning-from-skill4girls4life-project-to-stakeholders/>

dRPC-PSIPSE: Empowering Northern girls, communities through early childhood education -  
<https://www.africannewpage.net/2019/07/promoted-drpc-psipse-empowering-northern-girls-and-communities-through-early-childhood-education/>