



Impact Assessment Report

The dRPC's SecondaryGirls4kids (SEG4K) Project in Kano "An African Innovation for ECCD in fragile contexts"



Study Commissioned and Carried out by

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1.0 Acknowledgment

The Impact Assessment on the dRPC's SecondaryGirls4kids (SEG4K) Project was commissioned as independent study by the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) to objectively and comprehensively review, document, conceptualize the dRPC's model and assess the pupils' performance.

The purpose of the assessment was to describe the history and background of the model, explain its key components and how it economically empowered girls, highlight how the girls added value to their families and communities, and demonstrate their contribution to addressing the issue of out-of-school children in Northern Nigeria.

The assessment was conducted by a team of researchers and experts from Bayero University's Dangote Business School (DBS), Centre for Entrepreneurship Research and Training, and the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The research team comprised:

1. Prof. Bala Ado Kofar Mata, Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship Research and Training;
2. Prof. Mukhtar Shehu Aliyu, Dangote Business School, Bayero University, Kano; and
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The assessment was supervised by the Director of Planning, Research, and Statistics from the Kano State Ministry of Education.

Data analysis and support in finalizing the research report were provided by Dr. Michael Turnwait, a gender, sociology, and demography expert with over ten years of experience in research design, monitoring and evaluation, statistical analysis, institutional strengthening, and systematic literature reviews, and by Mallam Suleiman Musa, an education researcher and Lecturer at Yusuf Maitama Sule Federal University of Education, Kano.

2.0. Executive Summary

The SecondaryGirls4kids (SEG4K) project implemented by the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) in Kano State, Northern Nigeria, was designed as a locally grounded, dual-purpose intervention to address two critical and interconnected challenges: the limited educational and economic prospects of female secondary school leavers, and the high number of out-of-school children aged 0-5 in underserved communities. The model empowered these young women to establish and manage low-cost, home-based ECCD centers, thereby transforming them into community educators and early childhood development leaders.



Using a mixed-method approach—including 15 document reviews, four (4) focus group discussions, 5 in-depth interviews, and 5 observational checklists – the report captures the experiences, challenges, aspirations, and outcomes associated with the project over the years. Fieldwork conducted in five selected centers, alongside assessments of pupils’ literacy and numeracy performance in six selected centers, reveals that the initiative has enabled 25 young women and girls to establish ECCD centers, many of which remain operational as of 2025. These centres have collectively served thousands of children, improving early literacy, hygiene habits, school readiness, and behavior. Proprietresses gained social recognition, entrepreneurial experience, and in many cases, became role models within their communities.

The ECCD Project has yielded transformative outcomes in Kano, offering real-life evidence of how localized, girl-led initiatives can impact early education and community wellbeing. Below are key findings that portray the depth and reach of the intervention:

- 1. Transformation of School Leavers into Educators:** Out of the initial 23 girls trained and supported by dRPC across Kano State, 14 proprietresses are currently running active ECCD centers (56% retention). These young women have transitioned from idle secondary school leavers to respected early childhood educators and center owners.
- 2. Child Learning and Behavioral Improvements:** Over 2,000 children have been enrolled cumulatively across all active centers in Kano State. Focus group discussions with parents and community members consistently revealed noticeable improvements in children's hygiene, discipline, vocabulary, and learning skills. As one of the Pupil's parents noted, "Now, my child dresses well, knows colors, and speaks clearly." These outcomes show that ECCD centers are not just classrooms, they are springboards for brighter futures.
- 3. Numeracy consistently outperforms literacy across ECCD schools:** Average numeracy scores range from 59% to 89%, while literacy scores show wider variability, ranging from 42% to 92%. In most schools, numeracy exceeds literacy by 10–25 percentage points (e.g., Al-Ihsan Lower: 84% vs 59%; The Light Upper: 89% vs 68%), confirming a systemic gap in foundational literacy skills.
- 4. Substantial performance disparities exist across schools, particularly in literacy:** The highest literacy score (92% at Safiyya ECD Lower) contrasts sharply with the lowest (42% at Safiyya Childhood Lower), a gap of 50 percentage points. Similarly, overall school performance varies significantly, with strong performers such as Aminchi Upper (89% literacy, 84% numeracy) compared to persistently weak outcomes at Safiyya Childhood (42% literacy, 59% numeracy), indicating unequal learning conditions and instructional quality across centres.
- 5. Strong Community Ownership:** The community support for the school was huge and progressive. The model evolved with strong PTA and SBMC support, land donations, and parental contributions. These collective efforts reinforce the sustainability of the centres and illustrate how dRPC's model fosters community ownership and pride in early childhood education. "The district head gave us land, and youth helped with setup," said a proprietress, reflecting this community-driven success.

- 6. Resilience Amidst Centre Closures:** Of the 3 centres that have closed overtime, at least 2 proprietresses expressed interest in reactivating their centres, citing community demand and personal commitment. Even when centres closed due to life events such as marriage or relocation, proprietresses and communities expressed eagerness to reopen. One parent remarked, “Our children still go to ask when school will resume,” following a closure in Karfi. Such responses highlight the deep value attached to the centers and signal enduring impact, even beyond periods of disruption.
- 7. Aspirations for Institutional Growth:** Proprietresses are not only sustaining centers—they are dreaming bigger. Nearly 80% of active proprietresses voiced ambitions to expand their centers into formal nursery or primary schools. They also called for further support in obtaining Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), ECCD-specific teacher training, and infrastructure upgrades. Many aim to formalize their institutions, employ qualified teachers, and expand to primary education. These aspirations reflect the model's success in nurturing not just educators, but educational entrepreneurs.
- 8. Persistent Operational Challenges:** Common challenges included fee collection, space constraints, infrastructure gaps, and in some cases, centre closures due to marriage or relocation. For example, one proprietress in Kano noted, *“Space constraint and low-income status of parents preventing payment of ₦200 monthly fees”*. Despite these obstacles, proprietresses expressed aspirations to grow their centres into formal nursery or primary schools and requested continued training, certification support, and infrastructure development.

The report concludes with clear recommendations for scaling to zones of fragility, especially in conflict settings. The dRPC's SecondarySchool Girls for Kids project is a cost-effective, high impact ECCD model suitable to fragile contexts where schools are few and communities are many. Communities exist in host settings in internally displaced persons locations and in resettled communities – all, which lack education infrastructure and all of which are insecure.

The dRPC's ECCD Innovation, piloted and tested in Kano State is an organic approach which builds upon the capacity of local girls, in local environments and supports them to set up and run community based ECCD Centers that are sustainable, play-based, child-centered and deliver learning outcomes.

3.0 Introduction

This report presents the impact story of the Secondary School Girls for Kids (SEG4K) Project, is a unique and context-driven initiative designed and implemented by the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) in Kano State, Northern Nigeria. Conceived as a response to two long-standing educational crises in the region, the widespread exclusion of adolescent girls from post-secondary education and the alarming number of out-of-school children, this initiative offers a bold and locally rooted solution that bridges both gaps through a single innovative model.

The project is designed to empower girls who exited the formal education system without transitioning to tertiary institutions. Through targeted capacity-building, mentoring, and provision of educational resources, these girls were trained to become proprietresses of community-based ECCD centres situated in low-income, underserved areas. The centres provide structured early learning environments to children aged 0-5 years, most of whom would otherwise be excluded from Nigeria's formal education system. In doing so, the model simultaneously tackles gender exclusion, youth unemployment, and early childhood learning deficits—issues that lie at the core of sustainable development and social equity.

Unlike formal donor-led programs, the SEG4K ECCD model by dRPC is grounded in local knowledge, driven by community ownership, and supported by a bottom-up mentoring approach. It emerged from lessons learned during a previous donor-funded secondary school intervention and was refined to meet the contextual realities of girls who had no alternative pathways. The project has evolved over the years, supported by a coalition of women mentors, religious leaders, and parental stakeholders.

This report does not present an evaluation. Rather, it serves to narrate the story of the model—how it was conceptualized, how it was implemented, what it achieved, and what it means for the future of grassroots education reform in Northern Nigeria. It brings together empirical insights from field observations, interviews, FGDs, and documentation review, offering a comprehensive account of both the tangible and intangible transformations that the project has catalyzed in the lives of the girls, the children they teach, and their broader communities.

4.0. Background and Rationale

The SEG4K Project is grounded in the decades-long work of the development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC), a Nigerian non-governmental organization founded in 1993 by academics committed to leveraging grassroots civil society to address critical development and humanitarian issues. With over three decades of work focused on improving public health and education in Northern Nigeria, the dRPC has built a reputation for community-based innovation, evidence-informed advocacy, and transformative gender empowerment.

The SEG4K ECCD model emerged as a response to two interconnected crises affecting girls and children in Northern Nigeria. First, many girls complete secondary education with poor grades, often unable to obtain a full certificate or transition to tertiary education. These girls face limited prospects: they are too old to re-enroll in school, too poor to afford private examinations, and often constrained by cultural expectations that emphasize domesticity and early marriage.

Without intervention, they are likely to join the ranks of underemployed, disempowered young women.

Second, the region suffers from some of the highest rates of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa. Although primary education is nominally free and compulsory, enrollment and learning outcomes are undermined by poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and low teacher capacity. In many communities—especially peri-urban and rural areas—children aged 0–5 lack access to foundational early childhood learning, leading to lifelong disadvantages in cognition, literacy, and emotional development.



Pupils at Nana Hafsa ECCD Centre

In 2018, recognizing the nexus of these problems, dRPC developed a community-rooted intervention: training young women school leavers to become ECCD providers within their own neighbourhoods. The model sought to simultaneously reduce youth unemployment, empower girls economically and socially, and provide early education to children at risk of educational exclusion. Inspired by the partial success and limitations of earlier donor-funded programs (notably the PSIPSE project supported by the MacArthur Foundation), dRPC pivoted to a sustainability-focused design that emphasized low-cost, scalable, and replicable community-based centres.

The intervention provided selected girls with intensive training in ECCD pedagogy, health and hygiene, school administration, and basic entrepreneurship. They were mentored by older women through faith-based networks such as FOMWAN, equipped with starter kits (toys, mats, curriculum), and encouraged to use the open spaces in front of their homes as nursery schools. Over time, this evolved into a self-sustaining model, with girls registering their schools, organizing PTA meetings, and generating income from modest school fees.

The project has not only created a viable educational pathway for thousands of children but has also redefined the role of out-of-school girls as agents of change. It challenges assumptions about who can teach, where learning can occur, and how women in marginal spaces can be repositioned as institutional actors.

5.0. Objectives of the Report

The objectives of this project are to:

- Describe the history, components, and evolution of the ECCD project model
- Highlight how the model empowered young women and girls economically and socially
- Assess the pupils' learning outcomes
- Document community response, centre reach, and perceived educational impact
- Extract themes, trends, and success factors across Kano State
- Present recommendations for scaling the model

6.0. Methodology

6.1. Theoretical Underpinning of the Method

This report employed a theory-informed, mixed-methods approach, anchored in the **Outcome Harvesting** methodology. Outcome Harvesting is particularly suited to evaluating complex interventions like the dRPC-supported Girls' Empowerment for Community-Based Early Childhood Development (ECCD) Project, where the emphasis is on understanding behavioral and institutional change rather than tracking predetermined outputs. It begins with identifying observable outcomes—defined as significant changes in the behavior, relationships, actions, policies, or practices of individuals or institutions—and then works backwards to determine how the intervention contributed to these changes.

The evaluation drew on multiple data sources, including project documents, monitoring records, and field-based qualitative data. Data collection involved 6 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with proprietresses of ECCD centers (both active and closed), and 4 focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents and community stakeholders across Kano State. These narratives were analyzed using the six steps of Outcome Harvesting: (1) designing the harvest with guiding questions; (2) collecting and drafting outcome descriptions; (3) engaging informants to validate findings; (4) substantiating the outcomes with external input; (5) analysing and interpreting themes across sites; and (6) facilitating use of findings through reporting and dissemination.

The approach ensured that both intended and unintended outcomes—such as increased female entrepreneurship, shifts in community perception of girls' education, or spontaneous closure and reopening of centres—were captured in a systematic and participatory manner. This helps to not only provided a deeper understanding of how dRPC's support contributed to change but also enabled stakeholders to learn from and act on the findings for future programming and policy influence.

The centres sampled for the assessment are:

Table 1: ECCD Centres Sampled for General Assessment

S/N	School Centre Name	State
1	Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai	Kano (Opened School/Centre)
2	Aminchi International School, Gobirawa	
3	Mubeen Child Academy, Yargaya	
4	Safiyya Childhood Development, Kode	
5	Halima Abubakar - G-Bello Academy	Kano (Closed School/Centre)
6	Shamsiyya Suleiman - Hajara ECD	

Table 2: ECCD Centres Sampled for Performance Assessment

S/N	School Centre Name	State
1	Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai	Kano (Opened School/Centre)
2	Aminchi International School, Gobirawa	
3	Mubeen Child Academy, Yargaya	

S/N	School Centre Name	State
4	Safiyya Childhood Development, Kode	
5	The Light Academy, Yargaya	
6	Safiyya ECD School	

6.2. Data Sources

Document Review (Secondary Analysis)

The expert team conducted a comprehensive review of dRPC's internal project documents, training materials, sustainability reports, and enrollment records. This was complemented by an extensive search for external sources including:

- News articles from Daily Trust, The Nation, Vanguard, and All Africa;
- Publications hosted on the dRPC website documenting the ECCD project between 2021–2024;
- International development resources on ECCD and girls' education from platforms such as World Bank and the UNICEF education initiatives.

This secondary analysis helped triangulate findings, contextualize the model within broader educational trends, and corroborate primary data.

Primary Data Collection

General assessment was conducted in some selected ECCD centres. The selection of centres was purposive, based on variation in centre size, success status (active/closed), and location. The following tools were applied:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Conducted with ECCD proprietresses (both active and inactive), community members, and parents. These sessions explored personal motivations, community response, school operations, and child-level outcomes.
- In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** Held with key beneficiaries including the ECCD proprietresses, those currently active and inactive. The interviews offered insight into the girls' personal experiences with children, parents, community members, community collaboration, and institutional challenges.
- Observation Checklists:** A standardized tool was used to assess physical facilities, documentation practices, availability of learning materials, presence of structured learning corners, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) infrastructure.

Performance assessment was conducted in six ECCD Centres using a questionnaire, developed based on the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) curriculum for the ECCD. The instrument was structured to assess two key domains:

- Literacy Competencies – including recitation of the alphabet, identification of letters, recognition of simple words, and reading of short sentences.
- Numeracy Competencies – including recitation of numbers, identification of written numbers, and simple counting tasks.

The administration of the instrument followed two distinct procedures:

- General Assessment:** Teachers presented literacy and numeracy tasks to the entire class. Questions were usually written on the board, except in the case of recitation-based tasks (such as reciting numbers or alphabets) where prompts were given orally. Pupils responded collectively, and their overall performance was recorded.

- b) **Individual Assessment:** In each class, six pupils (three boys and three girls) were randomly selected to respond individually. Their responses were recorded separately to allow for gender-based analysis and to capture variations in individual performance.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting impact assessments across the 13 selected ECCD centres, several ethical issues were carefully addressed to ensure compliance with educational research standards and to safeguard the wellbeing of the children involved:

1. **Informed Consent:** Consent was obtained from parents and guardians before the participation of pupils in the assessment. The purpose of the study and its intended use were clearly explained to them. Participation was strictly voluntary, and no pupil was compelled to take part.
2. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The identity of all participating pupils was kept confidential. Names were not recorded in the assessment data; instead, results were reported collectively in percentages or group summaries. This ensured that no child could be personally identified in the findings.
3. **Non-Maleficence (Do No Harm):** All assessment activities were age-appropriate and aligned with the pupils' normal classroom experiences. The procedures posed no physical or psychological harm to the children. Care was taken to ensure that the assessment process was supportive, non-threatening, and encouraging.
4. **Equity and Fair Treatment:** Both boys and girls were given equal opportunities to participate in the assessment. Pupils were treated fairly regardless of their background, and no child was discriminated against or stigmatized based on their performance.
5. **Right to Withdraw:** Pupils were free to withdraw from the assessment at any point without any negative consequence. Teachers and caregivers were informed that participation was not compulsory.

By addressing these ethical concerns, the assessment ensured that pupils' rights and dignity were respected, while also maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research findings.

Data Analysis

The data collected from both the general and individual assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Percentages and averages were computed to summarize pupils' performance across literacy and numeracy domains. The results were further disaggregated by school, ECCD level (Lower and Upper), and gender, in order to provide a clearer picture of performance trends and variations.

Thematic and Comparative Analysis

All qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic coding framework aligned with the report's objectives.

This methodology ensured both depth and breadth, enabling a well-rounded portrait of the ECCD initiative as a dynamic and replicable model of community-driven early childhood development.

7.0. The dRPC SEG4K ECCD Model

The dRPC's SEG4K ECCD model is a pioneering, community-based initiative designed to simultaneously empower young women and expand early childhood learning in underserved communities in Northern Nigeria. It is an innovative response to the dual crises of youth unemployment among female secondary school leavers and the high number of children aged 0–5 who remain outside the formal education system.

Rooted in dRPC's broader mandate of capacity-building and gender-inclusive development, the model is structured to ensure sustainability, cultural alignment, and cost-effectiveness. It transforms school dropouts into entrepreneurs and early childhood educators, leveraging indigenous knowledge, mentorship networks, and locally available resources.

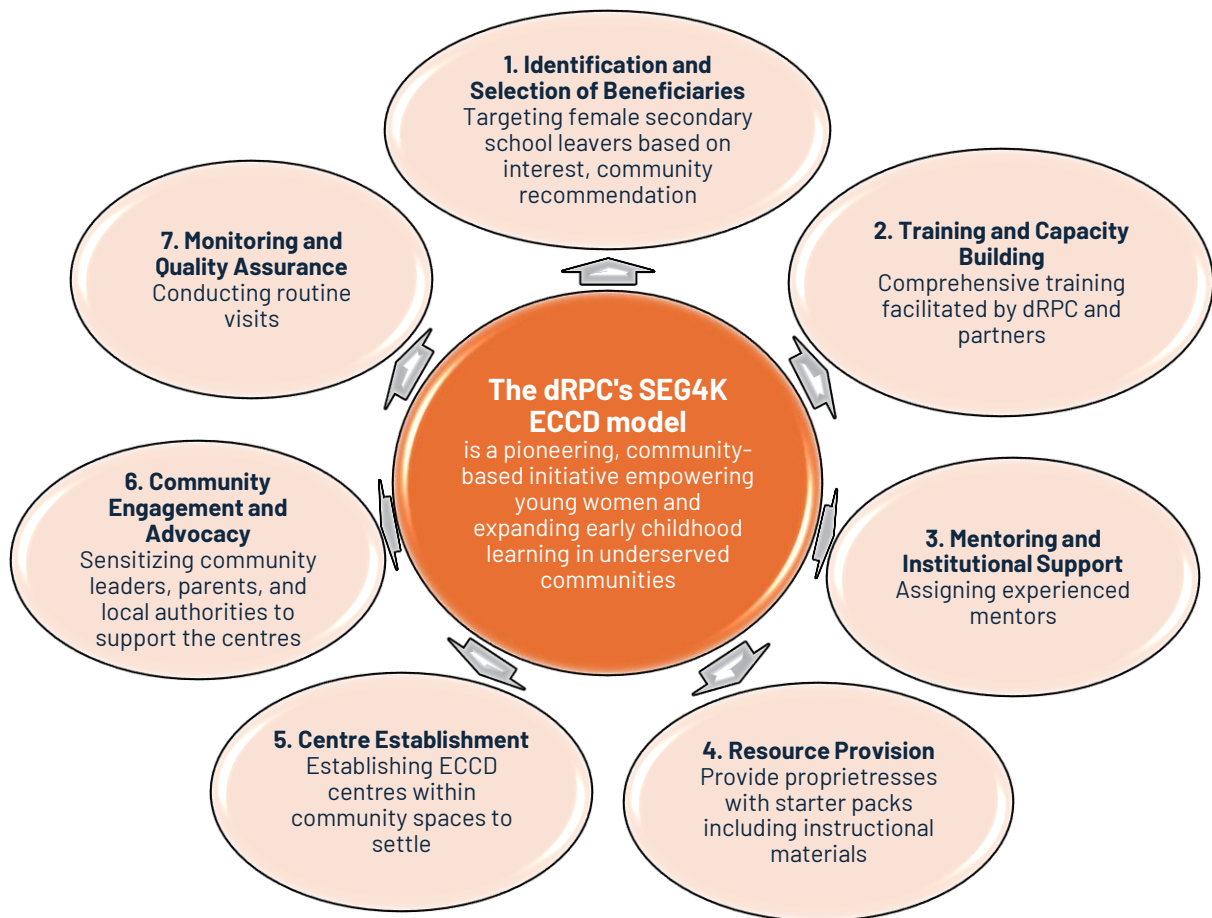


FGD with Community Members and Parents in Sabon Birni, Kode, Kano

7.1 Core Components of the Model

1. **Identification and Selection of Beneficiaries:** The project targets female secondary school leavers who are unable to transition to tertiary institutions. Selection is based on interest, community recommendation, and availability of space to host an ECCD centre.
2. **Training and Capacity Building:** Selected girls undergo comprehensive training facilitated by dRPC and partners. Modules cover early childhood education principles, health and hygiene, classroom management, business literacy, and leadership. Training is continuous, with periodic refresher courses.
3. **Mentoring and Institutional Support:** Mentorship is a key innovation of the model. Girls are assigned experienced mentors—often senior women from organizations like FOMWAN—who provide technical guidance, emotional support, and periodic supervision.
4. **Resource Provision:** Proprietresses receive starter packs including instructional materials, toys, mats, curriculum guides, record books, and sanitation items. Additional items are replenished based on need and performance.
5. **Centre Establishment:** ECCD centres are established within the girls' homes or community spaces, especially in front-yard foyers. This minimizes infrastructure cost and enhances accessibility. Centres operate with small fees from parents to ensure partial self-sufficiency.
6. **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** Community leaders, parents, and local authorities are sensitized to support the centres. Proprietresses are encouraged to form associations, conduct PTA meetings, and align their operations with local education governance structures.
7. **Monitoring and Quality Assurance:** dRPC field officers conduct routine visits using observation tools and compliance checklists. Areas monitored include documentation, pedagogy, learning corners, and WASH infrastructure.

Figure 1: The dRPC SEG4K ECCD Model



7.2 Adaptive and Evolutionary Elements

The model has evolved to accommodate challenges such as low parental cooperation, marriage-related dropouts, and infrastructural inadequacies. Some girls have registered their centres formally, transitioned to primary-level instruction, or secured land donations from communities. Others have formed peer learning groups for support and co-teaching.

7.3 Outcomes and Value Addition

Over 23 girls trained, with 14 actively managing centres as of 2025. Centres have served more than 9,000 children, improving early literacy, hygiene, and social behaviour. Proprietresses have gained income, confidence, and social recognition within their communities.

The model offers a replicable pathway for transforming vulnerable youth into educators and leaders while addressing foundational learning needs. It stands as a unique intersection of gender empowerment, grassroots development, and education reform.

8.0. Findings

8.1. Findings from In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Below thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with proprietresses, parents, and community members. The analysis draws on recurring patterns and unique responses across centres, weaving in quotations and insights, along with the centre names, locations, and source types.

Theme 1. Motivation to Establish ECCD Centres

Many of the proprietresses in Kano State were motivated by a combination of personal passion for education, lack of early childhood facilities in their communities, and support from the dRPC. The decision to establish these centres was not merely functional but deeply rooted in the desire to contribute to their communities and uplift children's educational foundations. For instance, Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu was encouraged by both the backing of dRPC and her father's support, highlighting the role of family and program assistance in her decision. Similarly, Maryam Rabiou noted that her passion for teaching children, combined with the support she received from dRPC, led her to open her centre. Both responses reflect how personal drive and encouragement from others played a role in their involvement. In the interviewees' words:

"The support of dRPC and the encouragement of my father" – Sham siyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD with Proprietress, Kano)

"I decided to establish the ECCD centre for the interest and passion I have to teach children and with support of dRPC" – Maryam Rabiou, The Light Academy ECD, Yargaya (In-depth Interview, Kano)

This theme was dominant in all active centres and re-emerged in interviews with closed centre proprietresses, reinforcing dRPC's critical catalytic role.

Theme 2. Enrollment and Reach

The ECCD centres in Kano demonstrated varying capacities in terms of pupil enrollment, but a common trend of growth was evident despite infrastructure limitations. Several centres started with less than 10 children and expanded significantly. For instance, Naziya Hussain explained that her centre started with 20 pupils and now has 30, indicating a steady increase. Similarly, Mardiyya Rabiou Nagoda began her centre with just 10 preschoolers and currently has 80 enrolled, showing significant growth. These responses highlight the centres' expanding reach and the growing acceptance of early childhood education within their communities.

"Started with 20 pupils and currently the school population stands at 30" – Naziya Hussain, Mubin Child Academy, Yar Gaya (In-depth interview, Kano)

"Began with 10 preschoolers... currently enrolls 80" – Mardiyya Rabiou Nagoda, Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai B (In-depth interview, Kano)

Though modest in scale, these figures also underscore the latent demand for preschool education in underserved communities. This growth was achieved despite minimal promotional efforts due to space or financial constraints.

Theme 3. Performance in the ECCD Schools

This section presents the findings of the field-based assessment of pupils' literacy and numeracy performance across six ECCD centres in Kano State, Nigeria. The assessment covered both Lower and Upper ECCD classes, with the aim of establishing a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in foundational learning outcomes. Primary data were gathered through direct classroom observation, structured assessment activities, and teacher interactions, focusing on children's ability to recognize, recall, and apply basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Analysis of Average Literacy and Numeracy Performance of Pupils by School and Level (Gender-Based Performance Analysis):

Three broad trends emerged from the data on pupils’ performance in literacy and numeracy. First, pupils generally performed better in numeracy than in literacy, suggesting that number-related tasks are more easily mastered than reading and writing skills at this stage of development.

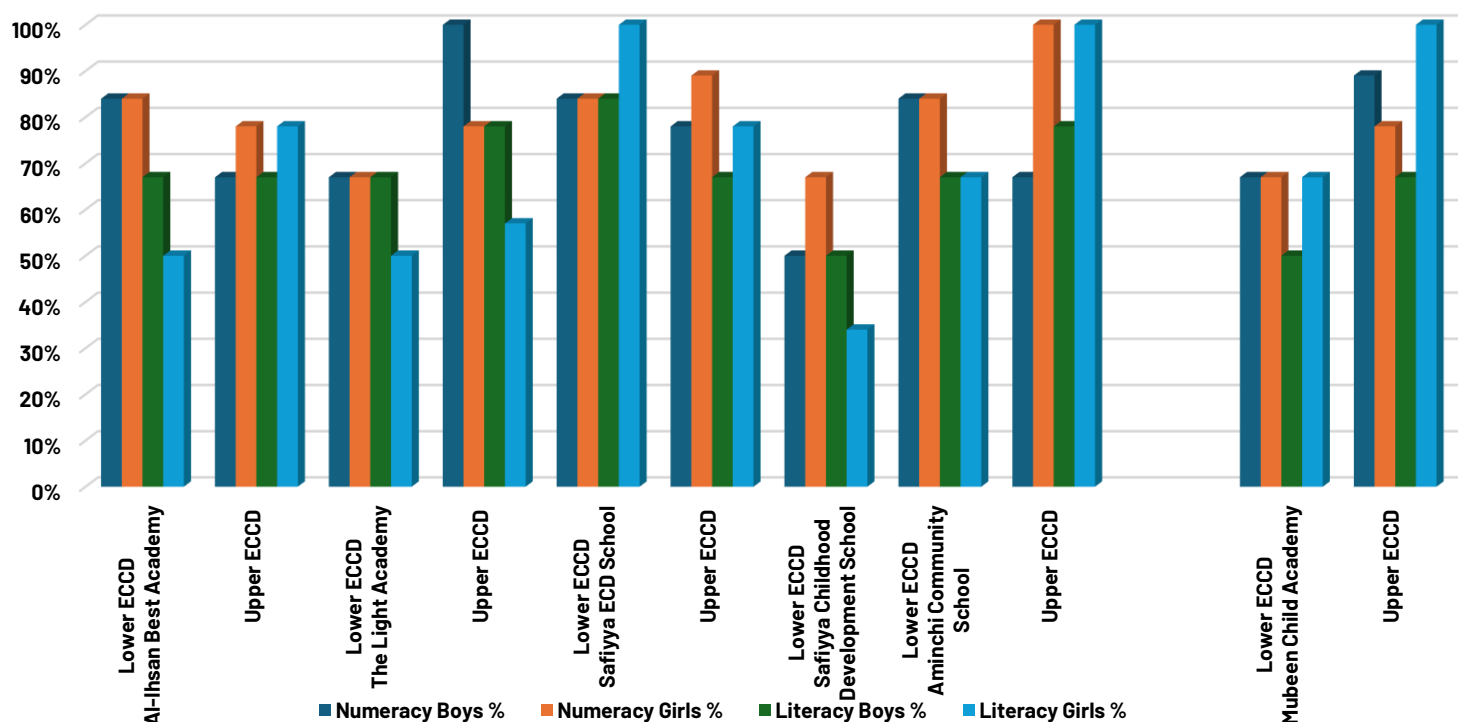
Second, gender disparities were observed, though these did not follow a consistent pattern. In some schools, boys outperformed girls in literacy, while in others, girls demonstrated stronger performance.

Finally, progression across class levels was uneven. While certain schools recorded improved outcomes at the upper levels, others showed stagnation or even decline, particularly in literacy performance.

The data confirms that numeracy is a relative strength across the schools, but literacy outcomes are uneven and generally weaker. Safiyya ECD and Aminchi Community School stand out as strong performers, particularly for girls, while Safiyya Childhood Development School represents the weakest case, with serious concerns in literacy achievement.

The findings highlight both strengths and weaknesses in early learning across the six ECCD schools. While numeracy outcomes are relatively strong, literacy remains a critical area requiring attention. Moreover, gender disparities in performance, though variable, suggest the need for deliberate, school-specific interventions.

Figure 3: Numeracy and Literacy Performance of Pupils by School and Level (ECD 1 & 2)



This chart illustrates the average literacy and numeracy performance of pupils across the six assessed schools. The results are shown separately for ECCD 1 and 2, highlighting differences in performance by class level.

Table 3: Average Literacy and Numeracy Scores Across ECCD Schools and Levels.

School & Level	Avg. Numeracy (X)	Avg. Literacy (Y)	Level
Al-Ihsan Lower	84	59	Lower ECCD
Al-Ihsan Upper	73	73	Upper ECCD
The Light Lower	67	59	Lower ECCD
The Light Upper	89	68	Upper ECCD

School & Level	Avg. Numeracy (X)	Avg. Literacy (Y)	Level
Safiyya ECD Lower	84	92	Lower ECCD
Safiyya ECD Upper	84	73	Upper ECCD
Safiyya Childhood Lower	59	42	Lower ECCD
Aminchi Lower	84	67	Lower ECCD
Aminchi Upper	84	89	Upper ECCD
Mubeen Lower	67	59	Lower ECCD
Mubeen Upper	84	84	Upper ECCD

This table presents the compiled average performance of pupils in literacy and numeracy across six ECCD schools. It summarizes overall performance at ECD 1 and ECD 2 levels, providing a general picture of pupils achievement in the two domains.

Figure 4: Average Literacy and Numeracy Performance of Pupils by School and Level

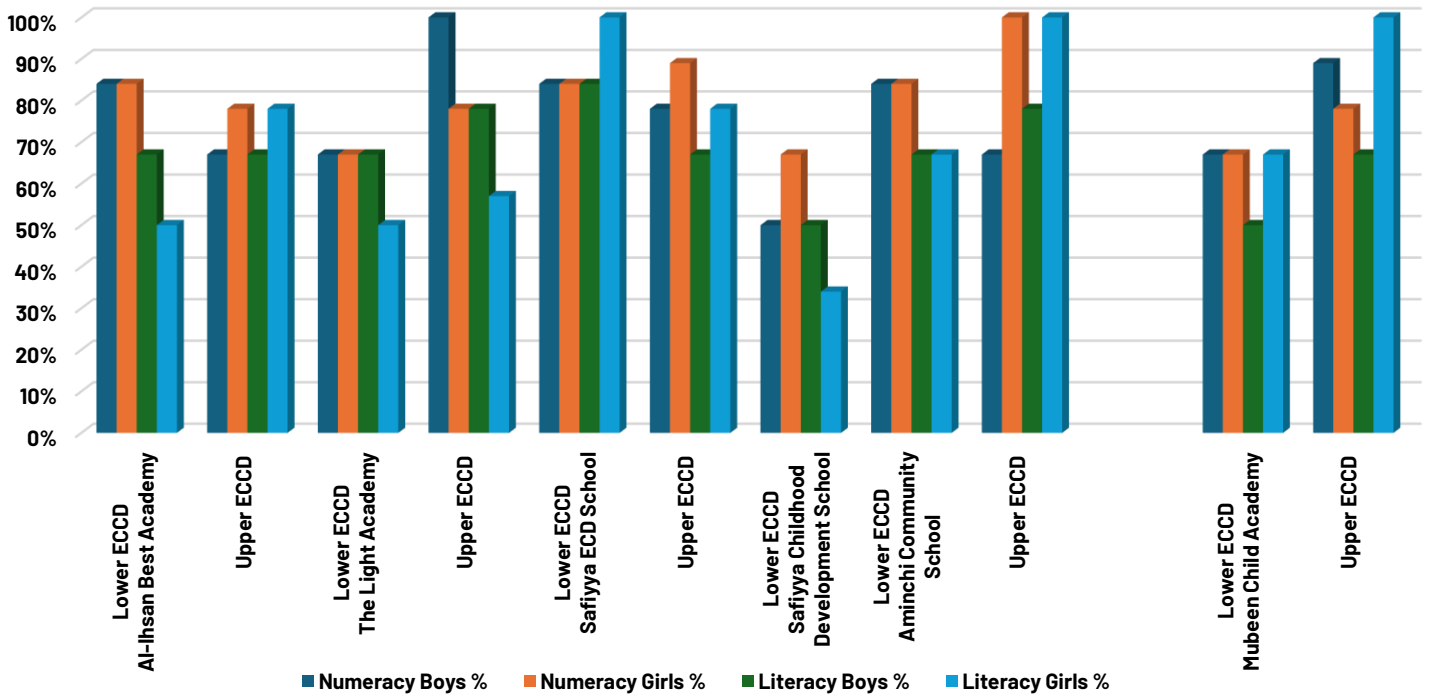
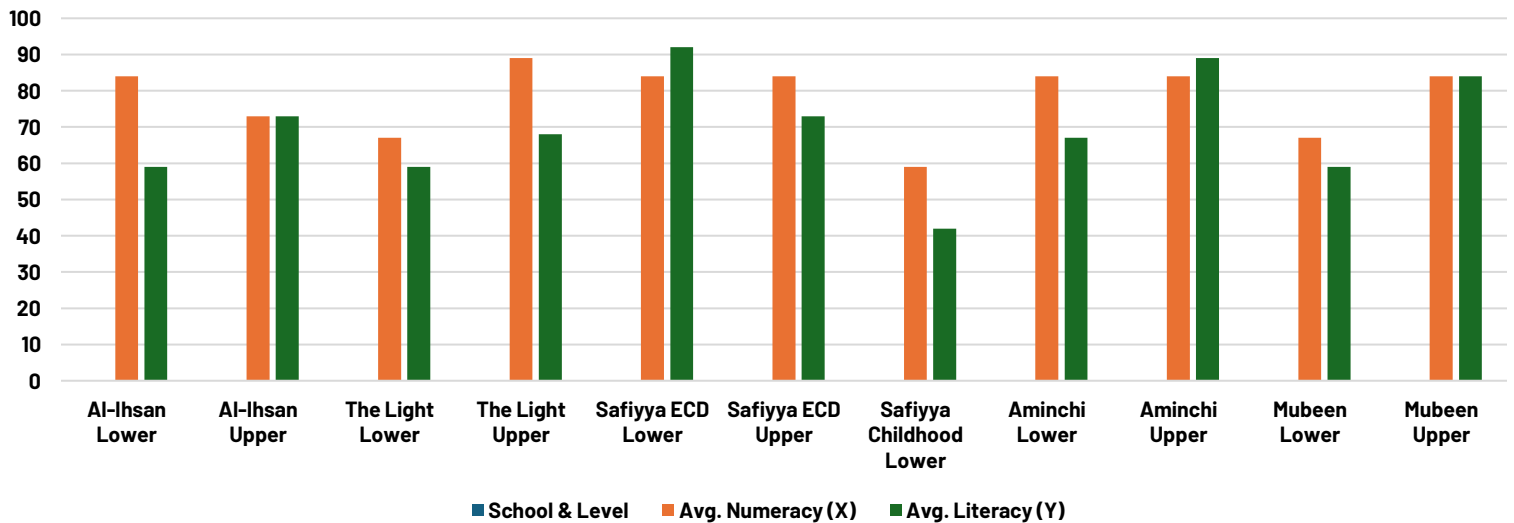


Figure 5: Average Literacy and Numeracy Across ECCD Schools and Levels



This chart presents the average performance of pupils in literacy and numeracy across six ECCD schools. It summarizes overall performance at ECD 1 and ECD 2 levels, providing a general picture of pupils' achievement in the two domains.

Overall Literacy and Numeracy Performance

- Pupils across the six ECCD centres demonstrated stronger performance in **numeracy** compared to **literacy**.
- Average numeracy scores across schools ranged from 59% to 89%, while literacy scores ranged more widely from 42% to 92%.

Analysis of Pupils' Average Performance in Literacy and Numeracy across ECCD Schools



CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DRPC'S GIRLS EMPOWERMENT FOR COMMUNITY BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MODEL

Waziri Shehu ECCD Academy

The data reveals three important trends. First, numeracy performance is consistently stronger than literacy in almost all schools. This suggests that pupils more readily acquire skills related to counting and numbers than those associated with reading and writing. Second, variation in school performance is evident, with certain schools demonstrating commendable outcomes, while others show marked deficiencies. Third, progression from Lower to Upper ECCD is uneven: some schools exhibit improvements as learners advance, while others record stagnation or even decline in literacy scores.

School-Level Analysis

1. Al-Ihsan Best Academy: At the Lower ECCD level, pupils recorded a strong performance in numeracy (84%) but a much weaker outcome in literacy (59%). At the Upper ECCD level, a more balanced result was achieved, with both numeracy and literacy averaging 73%. This reflects progress in literacy as learners advance.
2. The Light Academy: Performance at the Lower ECCD level is moderate (67% numeracy, 59% literacy). At the Upper ECCD level, improvement is evident, particularly in numeracy (89%), while literacy also rises to 68%. This indicates effective consolidation of numeracy skills, though literacy remains comparatively lower.
3. Safiyya ECD School: This school demonstrates strong outcomes overall. In Lower ECCD, pupils achieved 84% in numeracy and an impressive 92% in literacy. At the Upper ECCD level, numeracy remains high (84%), but literacy drops to 73%. While still above average, the decline raises questions about continuity in literacy instruction.
4. Safiyya Childhood Development School: The weakest performer in the sample, with Lower ECCD pupils averaging only 59% in numeracy and a concerning 42% in literacy. This indicates serious foundational challenges and highlights the urgent need for pedagogical support and resource input.
5. Aminchi Community School: A consistently high-performing institution. At the Lower ECCD level, numeracy stands at 84% and literacy at 67%. At Upper ECCD, results improve markedly, with numeracy maintained at 84% and literacy increasing to 89%. This progression suggests effective teaching strategies and a supportive learning environment.
6. Mubeen Child Academy: Lower ECCD performance is modest (67% numeracy, 59% literacy). However, Upper ECCD shows significant improvement, with both numeracy and literacy averaging 84%. This indicates a positive trajectory in learning outcomes as pupils progress.

Discussion

Taken together, the data highlights that numeracy is a relative strength across the schools, while literacy remains the weaker area of performance. This imbalance is of particular concern in early childhood, where literacy development is critical for later academic achievement. The disparities between schools further underscore that some institutions are better equipped or resourced to support early learning, while others struggle.

The case of Safiyya Childhood Development School is especially noteworthy, given its alarmingly low literacy outcomes. Conversely, Aminchi Community School and Safiyya ECD School provide encouraging examples, with strong averages and evidence of effective instructional practices.

The uneven progression from Lower to Upper ECCD also warrants attention. In some schools, literacy outcomes decline rather than improve with progression, raising questions about curriculum delivery, teaching methods, and learning continuity.

Table 4: Average Literacy and Numeracy Scores Across ECCD Schools and Levels

School & Level	Avg. Numeracy (X)	Avg. Literacy (Y)	Level
Al-Ihsan Lower	84	59	Lower ECCD
Al-Ihsan Upper	73	73	Upper ECCD
The Light Lower	67	59	Lower ECCD
The Light Upper	89	68	Upper ECCD
Safiyya ECD Lower	84	92	Lower ECCD
Safiyya ECD Upper	84	73	Upper ECCD
Safiyya Childhood Lower	59	42	Lower ECCD
Aminchi Lower	84	67	Lower ECCD
Aminchi Upper	84	89	Upper ECCD
Mubeen Lower	67	59	Lower ECCD
Mubeen Upper	84	84	Upper ECCD

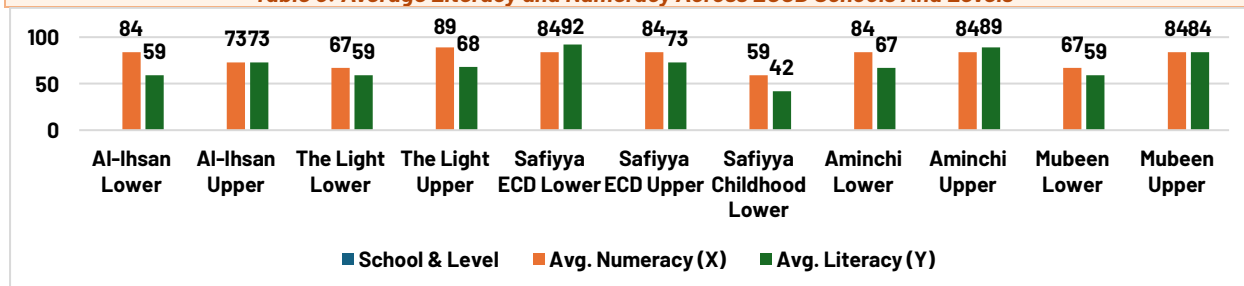
Conclusion

This analysis affirms the importance of strengthening literacy instruction across ECCD centres. NGOs and education stakeholders should prioritise targeted interventions in literacy, with particular emphasis on low-performing schools such as Safiyya Childhood Development School. At the same time, numeracy strengths should be sustained through continuous reinforcement.

Furthermore, interventions must recognise the variation across schools, as a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective. Tailored, school-specific support is required. Finally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of literacy and numeracy outcomes should be institutionalised to ensure that learning gains are not only achieved but also sustained across the different stages of ECCD.

This table presents the compiled average performance of pupils in literacy and numeracy across six ECCD schools. It summarizes overall performance at ECD 1 and ECD 2 levels, providing a general picture of pupils achievement in the two domains.

Table 5: Average Literacy and Numeracy Across ECCD Schools And Levels



Discussion

The analysis of pupils' average performance in literacy and numeracy across the six ECCD schools reveals important insights into both strengths and challenges within early childhood education. A consistent pattern observed is that, while numeracy performance appears relatively strong across most schools, literacy outcomes remain comparatively weaker. This trend is particularly significant because literacy development forms the foundation for later academic achievement across all subjects.

Variation Across Schools: Safiyya ECD School and Aminchi Community School demonstrate balanced and commendable outcomes, achieving high averages in both numeracy (84% each) and literacy (82.5% and 78% respectively). These schools provide a model of effective practice, suggesting that their teaching methods and learning environments may be more supportive of holistic early childhood development. Conversely, Safiyya Childhood Development School recorded the lowest averages in both domains, with particularly concerning literacy outcomes (42%). Such results highlight an urgent need for targeted interventions to strengthen teaching strategies, classroom resources, and possibly teacher capacity.

Numeracy-Literacy Gap: Across most schools, numeracy performance outpaced literacy. For example, Al-Ihsan Best Academy and The Light Academy recorded numeracy averages of 78.5% and 78% respectively, while literacy lagged behind at 66% and 63.5%. This discrepancy suggests that children may be receiving more consistent instruction and practice in numeracy-related tasks compared to literacy activities, which require more exposure, parental engagement, and language-rich environments. The gap points to a broader systemic issue that NGOs and education stakeholders should address through curriculum strengthening and literacy-focused programs.

Implications for Stakeholders: For NGOs and education practitioners, these findings provide a clear direction for resource allocation. Literacy-focused interventions, such as early reading programs, teacher training in phonics-based instruction, and provision of age-appropriate reading materials, should be prioritized. Schools like Safiyya Childhood Development School should be the focal point of intensive support, while strong schools such as Safiyya ECD and Aminchi could serve as demonstration sites to share best practices with others.

Equity Considerations: While the analysis did not disaggregate further by socio-economic background, the disparities between schools may also reflect inequalities in community support, infrastructure, and access to qualified teachers. This underscores the importance of not only school-level interventions but also systemic efforts to ensure equitable access to quality ECCD services across communities.

Theme 4. Challenges in Managing ECCD Centres

The centres across Kano reported consistent structural and socioeconomic barriers. These include limited space, inability of parents to afford even modest fees, and lack of formal government recognition or resources. For example, Naziya Hussain pointed out that limited space and the inability of low-income parents to pay a modest ₦200 monthly fee affect the smooth running of her centre. Maryam Rabi identified issues such as late payment of levies, difficulties with the school's location, and the inability to pay teachers adequately. Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu mentioned challenges including pupils' lateness, lack of cooperation from parents, and non-payment of school fees. These challenges reflect the everyday difficulties that hinder the effective operation and sustainability of the centres.



“Space constraint and low-income status of parents preventing payment of ₦200 monthly fees” – Naziya Hussain, Mubin Child Academy, Yar Gaya (In-depth interview, Kano)



“Prompt payment of the levy, location issues, and insufficient payment for teachers” – Maryam Rabi, The Light Academy ECD, Yargaya (In-depth interview, Kano)



“Lack of punctuality of pupils, non-cooperation of the parents, non-payment of school fees” – Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD, Closed Centre, Kano)

These challenges contributed to the closure of some centres and are also a potential threat to the sustainability of active centres if not adequately addressed.

Theme 5. Community and Parental Support

Support from the community has been largely in-kind and moral, such as the donation of land, mats, or verbal encouragement. However, structured or financial support remains limited, and parental involvement was generally rated as low to moderate. For example, Mardiyya Rabi Nagoda shared that her community provided chairs and mats, showing material support. In contrast, Naziya Hussain reported low parental involvement, and parents at Safiyyah Childhood Development School admitted they had not contributed yet but expressed willingness to do so in the future.

“Community provided chairs and mats” – Mardiyya Rabi Nagoda, Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai B (In-depth interview, Kano)

“No action taken to support the school but willing to contribute in future” – Parents FGD, Safiyyah Childhood Development School, Warawa LGA (FGD with Community Members, Kano)

“Low level of parental involvement in the school” – Naziya Hussain, Mubin Child Academy, Yar Gaya (In-depth interview, Kano)

However, some focus group discussions highlighted more active forms of support, such as donating land, helping control pupils, and providing counseling, showing that in some communities, there is a growing sense of ownership and involvement in the success of the centres.

Theme 6. Motivation and Aspirations of Proprietresses

The proprietresses show strong commitment to continue despite all odds, driven by their passion for education and their standing in the community. The quotations reflect the deep personal motivation and future aspirations of the proprietresses involved in the ECCD project. For instance, Safiyya Muhammad Adam expresses a genuine passion for teaching and a desire to see children learn and succeed, showing that her involvement is driven by care and dedication. Mardiyya Rabi Nagoda envisions building a more formal and well-equipped academic centre, indicating her hope to expand and improve the quality of education she offers. Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, although her centre is currently closed, plans to reactivate it by converting a newly built visitors' room into a classroom, showing her determination to continue contributing to early childhood education in her community. In the interviewees' words:

“Passion in teaching and concern for the pupils to learn” – Safiyya Muhammad Adam, Safiyya Childhood Development School, Warawa LGA (In-depth interview, Kano)

“She intends to reactivate the school and use the newly built visitors' room as classroom” – Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD, Closed Centre, Kano)

“Envision a well-built standard academic centre” – Mardiyya Rabi Nagoda, Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai B (In-depth interview, Kano)

This sense of personal ownership and hope for future expansion (including transforming into primary or secondary schools) is a strong point for model scaling and sustainability—if properly supported.

Theme 7. Impact on Children and the Community

FGDs with parents and community members revealed noticeable improvements in children's behaviour, learning, ethics, and appearance, underscoring the centres' educational and social value. The quotations show that the ECCD centres have had a positive impact on children and the wider community. For example, parents at Mubin Child Academy observed improvements in pupils' ability to identify objects, demonstrate knowledge, and show ethical behaviour. At Safiyyah School, parents reported better conduct, skills, and personality development among pupils, describing the school as providing a safe and nurturing environment. In contrast, Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu noted that the closure of her centre negatively affected the community, as many children became vulnerable due to the lack of a secure learning space. These responses highlight both the value of the centres and the consequences of their absence.

"Changes in pupils' ability to identify objects, demonstrate knowledge, and ethical behaviour" – Parents FGD, Mubin Child Academy, Yar Gaya (FGD, Kano)

"Improved conduct, skills, and personality; pupils are caged in a good environment" – Parents FGD, Safiyyah School, Warawa LGA (FGD, Kano)

"Community was not happy with the closure... many children became vulnerable due to environmental happenings" – Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD, Closed Centre, Kano)

These sentiments validate the relevance of the dRPC model as a grassroots solution for out-of-school children.



FGD with Community Members and Parents

due to familiarity, suggesting a need for training on professional boundaries and assertiveness. These responses indicate that while training has been beneficial, there is still a demand for continued capacity development to strengthen the proprietresses' confidence and effectiveness.

Theme 8. Training and Capacity Building

Most proprietresses acknowledged that the only training they received was from dRPC, typically around five sessions. There is strong demand for formal certification and further capacity development in record-keeping, pedagogy, and classroom management. For example, Maryam Rabiou noted that she had received training from dRPC about five times and expressed a desire to further her education by pursuing an NCE or degree. Mardiyya Rabiou Nagoda identified specific areas where more training is needed, including teaching methodology, classroom management, and informal school leadership. Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu shared her experience of being taken for granted by parents

"dRPC training about five times; I want to pursue NCE or degree" – Maryam Rabiou, The Light Academy ECD, Yargaya (In-depth interview, Kano)

"Parents took advantage of me because I was familiar" – Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD, Kano)

"Need training in methodology, classroom management, and informal school leadership" – Mardiyya Rabiou Nagoda, Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Yakasai B (In-depth interview, Kano)

This training gap presents an opportunity to integrate the SEG4K ECCD model into formal education systems and equip the young women and girls as recognized educators.

Theme 9. Sustainability and School Closures

Two proprietresses in Kano had closed their centres at the time of the interview. Their narratives reflected non-structural closures—linked to social changes like marriage, parental non-cooperation, and limited

“Parents were not happy with the closure... children still come to ask when school will resume” — Aisha Haruna Muhammad, Albarka ECD (FGD, Closed Centre, kano)

“Closure was due to marriage and non-payment of fees, but I am ready to restart” — Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu, Hajara ECD, Karfi (FGD, Kano)

economic viability. Importantly, they expressed willingness to restart, and both communities reportedly miss the schools. For example, Aisha Haruna Muhammad shared that parents were unhappy about the closure of her centre and that children continued to visit, asking when the school would reopen—showing the centre’s importance to the community. Similarly, Shamsiyya Sulaiman Shehu explained that her school closed due to her marriage and parents’ inability to pay fees, but she expressed readiness to restart. These statements indicate that while closures have occurred, the demand and interest in the centres remain strong, and some proprietresses are motivated to resume operations when circumstances allow.

These insights challenge simplistic assumptions about dropout or failure, emphasizing instead the need for robust systemic and psychosocial support for young women and girls educators.

9.0 Findings from Observation Checklist

The analysis of the observation checklist for Kano State ECCD centres, covering four centres: The Light Academy, Safiyya Childhood Development School, Mubin Child Academy, and Aminchi ECCD. The analysis is structured into key domains: documentation and records, learning and teaching resources, learning corners, and health/sanitation facilities.



Pupils at The Light Academy and Aminchi ECCD

Domain 1: Documentation and Records Management

There is strong evidence of basic record-keeping practices across most centres, although with some variation in completeness. *The Light Academy and Aminchi ECCD* maintain all key documents, including admission and attendance registers, child personal files, record of work, and use of a one-year primary curriculum. *Safiyya School* needs a child personal file and attendance register,

suggesting limited capacity for individualized tracking. *Mubin Child Academy* maintains essential records but does not keep child personal files or curriculum documentation, reflecting partial compliance. By implication, record-keeping is functional in most centres but not yet standardized. Gaps in individualized documentation (e.g., child files) could undermine developmental tracking and assessments.

Domain 2: Learning and Teaching Resources

All centres show commitment to creating a learning environment, particularly with basic materials like flashcards, posters, and charts. Every centre reported having basic learning materials. However, nearly all the centres need a comprehensive set of specialized learning corners, which are crucial for hands-on, child-centred learning. *Mubin Child Academy* outshines other centres with an active *Creativity Area*. *The Light Academy* stands out by having multiple functional zones, including *STEM, Home, and Colour Areas*. By implication, while general learning materials are present, thematic learning spaces (e.g., cognitive and PSS areas) are inadequate, limiting child development through exploratory play and skill specialization.

Table 6: Observation Checklist Results - Kano State ECCD Centres

Centre Name	Location	Admission Register	Attendance Register	Child Personal File	Record of Work	Primary Curriculum	Learning Materials	Learning Corners	Clean Water	Handwashing Basin	Toilets (Separate)
The Light Academy	Yargaya	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Home, Colour, STEM	✓	✓	✓
Safiyya Childhood Dev. Sch.	Sabon Garin Doka	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		
Mubin Child Academy	Yar Gaya	✓	✓		✓		✓	Creativity Area			
Aminchi ECCD	Kano	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Al-Ihsan Best Academy	Gwaram Nagoggo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Home, STEM	✓	✓	✓

Domain 3: Learning Corners and Functional Zones

The observation highlights deficits in the establishment and functionality of early childhood learning corners—which are vital for promoting autonomy, curiosity, and diverse cognitive engagement. *The Light Academy* shows the most robust corner setup, covering three areas (STEM, Colour, Home). *Safiyya School and Aminchi ECCD* had no functional learning corners. *Mubin Child Academy* activated only one area (Creativity), suggesting attempts but not yet systemic implementation. By implication, learning corners, a cornerstone of ECCD pedagogy, are underdeveloped. This gap points to a need for infrastructure and training support to incorporate learning corners as central instructional tools.

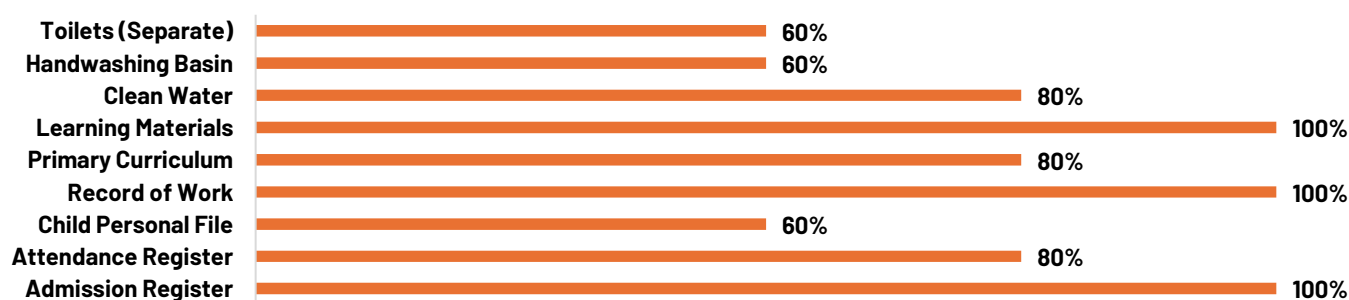
Table 7: Summary of Observational Indicators - Kano ECCD Centres

Indicator	No. of Centres	Percentage (%)
Admission Register	5	100.0%
Attendance Register	4	80.0%
Child Personal File	3	60.0%
Record of Work	5	100.0%
Primary Curriculum	4	80.0%
Learning Materials	5	100.0%
Clean Water	4	80.0%
Handwashing Basin	3	60.0%
Toilets (Separate)	3	60.0%

Domain 4: Health and Sanitation Facilities

The provision of health and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities varied across the five centres. *The Light Academy and Aminchi ECCD* provide clean water, handwashing stations, and gender-separated toilets, indicating strong WASH compliance. *Safiyya School* has clean water but lacks handwashing and sanitation facilities. *Mubin Child Academy* reported no WASH facilities, exposing children to potential health risks. By implication, there is inequitable access to WASH facilities, with at least one centre lacking basic hygiene infrastructure. This compromises health outcomes and violates foundational ECCD standards.

Chart 1: Observational Indicators Across Kano ECCD Centres



The observational findings from Kano ECCD centres show encouraging progress in record-keeping and the provision of core learning materials. However, major gaps exist in thematic learning corners and equitable health facilities. The disparities among centres suggest inconsistent resourcing and point to opportunities for improvement.

10.0 Document Review: Supporting Evidence for the ECCD Project in Kano State

This section synthesizes relevant secondary sources, including news articles, organizational reports, and program evaluations that corroborate and contextualize the findings of the ECCD project in Kano. These sources provide additional insights into the project's implementation, challenges, and impact.

10.1. Empowerment of Female Proprietresses and Community-Based ECCD Centres

The development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) has been instrumental in training and supporting young female secondary school leavers to establish and manage community-based Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres. (Nation News, see: https://thenationonline.net/how-school-leavers-boost-ecd-in-kano-jigawa/#google_vignette). This initiative aims to address the educational needs of children aged 0–5 years and reduce the number of out-of-school children in Northern Nigeria. (Daily Trust News: <https://dailytrust.com/how-kano-jigawa-ladies-make-fortunes-from-ecd-schools-business/>)

In 2019, dRPC collaborated with the Ministries of Education in Kano and Jigawa States to train 40 young women, leading to the establishment of 37 ECCD centres (23 in Kano and 14 in Jigawa). These centres have collectively enrolled over 9,280 children since inception. (See <https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/dRPC-ECCD-Innovation-and-20-Year-Sustainability-Summary-Report-1.pdf>). This initiative has not only provided early childhood education but also empowered young women and girls economically and socially, offering them an alternative to early marriage and domestic servitude. (<https://drpcngr.org/project/early-childhood-care-and-development/>).

10.2. Provision of Learning Materials and Infrastructure Support

To enhance the quality of education in these ECCD centres, dRPC has distributed learning and play materials worth over ₦3 million to 23 young female proprietors in Kano and Jigawa States. This support includes replenishment packs consisting of educational materials, sanitation items, and non-android phones to facilitate mentoring. (AllAfrica News: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202412180533.html>?)

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, such as parents' inability to pay school fees and proprietors' difficulties in replenishing materials. A survey revealed that over 70% of parents were behind on fee payments, and 80% of proprietors struggled to restock learning materials. (Vanguard News: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/12/group-gives-ecd-jigawa-kano-schools-learning-play-materials/>?).

10.3. Impact on Reducing Out-of-School Children

The ECCD initiative has significantly contributed to reducing the number of out-of-school children in Kano and Jigawa States. Over 2,000 children under the age of five have been enrolled in these centres, providing them with early education opportunities that were previously inaccessible. [Vanguard News](#)

This early intervention is crucial in building a culture of education within communities and addressing the broader issue of educational neglect in Northern Nigeria.

10.4. Integration with Broader Educational Goals and Child Poverty Targets

The dRPC SEG4K ECCD initiative aligns strongly with both national and global education and child development goals, particularly those outlined by the World Bank and UNICEF in response to widespread learning poverty and child vulnerability. According to the [World Bank's Project Appraisal Document for](#)

[the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment \(AGILE\)](#), Nigeria has one of the highest burdens of out-of-school children globally, with over 10.2 million children excluded from education—most significantly in the Northern states due to socio-cultural and economic constraints. By directly targeting secondary school-leaving girls and enabling them to become ECCD providers, the dRPC model re-engages these young women as agents of change while simultaneously promoting access to foundational education for preschool-aged children. This dual-purpose model complements Nigeria’s broader ambition under AGILE to expand equitable access to education and life skills for vulnerable adolescent girls.



Mubin ECD Centre

Additionally, the [UNICEF 2022 State of Learning Poverty report](#) highlights that 70% of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries are unable to read and understand a simple text—an alarming figure to which Nigeria significantly contributes. The dRPC’s grassroots ECCD centres provide a critical early learning intervention, strengthening school readiness and preventing early dropout. Furthermore, UNICEF’s [Situation Analysis of Children in Nigeria](#) identifies multidimensional child poverty as particularly acute in Northern Nigeria, driven by inadequate access to health, education, and protective environments. By embedding child development services within local communities and offering inclusive, low-cost access, the dRPC ECCD project contributes directly to Nigeria’s commitments under SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

10.5. Sustainability and Community Engagement

The sustainability of the ECCD centres is bolstered by community involvement and support from local leaders. Traditional leaders and community members have played a role in providing venues and resources for the centres, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the success of the initiative.

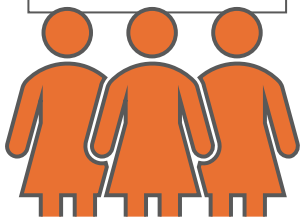
Furthermore, the centres have generated employment opportunities, with 82 teacher helpers and caregivers employed since 2019, contributing to the local economy and reinforcing the value of early childhood education. (See [The dRPC – 5 year Girls Empowerment Education Project](#)).

11.0 Reflections of Change: Proprietresses on ECCD Centres and Future Aspirations

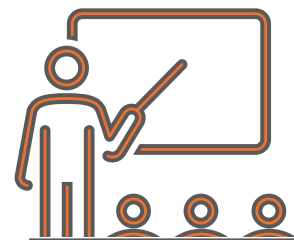
What began in 2018 as a bold experiment with 25 young women in Kano has evolved into a community-driven transformation in early childhood education. The dRPC-supported Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres now serve over **9,000 children**, engage **more than 30 teachers**, and provide livelihoods for **30 support staff**, including nannies and caregivers. At the heart of this progress are the proprietresses—once idle school leavers, now confident educators, school managers, and local change agents.



9,000 +
children served



30
support staff
livelihoods



30 +
teachers engaged

Despite the inevitable challenges, these young women have grown professionally and personally. Their testimonies illustrate how the ECCD initiative has restored hope, provided economic stability, and created a profound sense of purpose. As Safiyya Muhammad Adam of Safiyya Childhood Development School in Kano reflected,

“This school has helped me a lot in getting income... and we also assist children whose parents cannot afford to provide them with education. We are doing this all to make our community better.”

Several proprietresses have used proceeds from their centres to fund further education, such as the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). Mardiyya Rabiya Nagoda of Al-Ihsan Best Academy, Kano, shared,

“Through the income I earn, I’ve been able to meet my personal needs and pursue goals that many women aspire to achieve.”

Beyond personal empowerment, the impact on the broader community is clear. ECCD centres are increasingly recognized for their role in reducing child idleness, complementing government education efforts, and nurturing early literacy, hygiene, and discipline. Maryam Rabiya Adam of The Light Academy ECD in Kano noted,

“Every morning, I wake up knowing I have something meaningful to do—caring for the children and teaching them.”

Parents and local leaders regularly express appreciation for these centres. As she further stated,

“Some parents even visit my home to thank me for the positive changes in their children.”

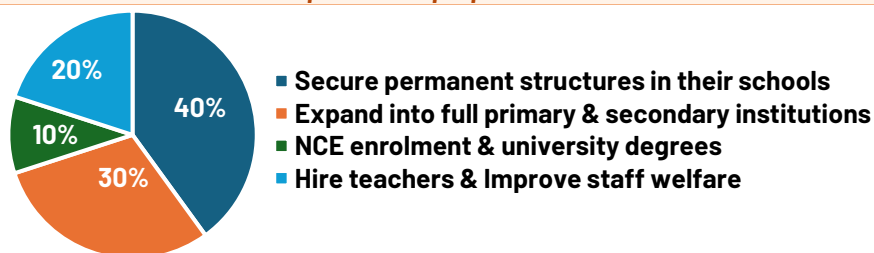
Another proprietress, Naziyya Haruna Yahaya of Mubin Child Academy, Kano, affirmed,

“Parents say they value our efforts more than those of other schools in the community.”

Looking ahead, the proprietresses envision growth, formalization, and long-term sustainability. Of the ten proprietresses interviewed, **40%** intend to secure permanent structures for their schools, while **30%** aspire to expand into full primary and secondary institutions. **10%** reported using their school earnings to fund NCE enrolment and are aiming for university degrees.

Additionally, **20%** plan to hire more teachers and improve staff welfare to increase quality and local employment.

Chart 3: Aspiration of proprietresses



For Maryam Rabi Adam, the allocation of land for a permanent structure is already a “milestone,” and a sign of things to come. And for Mardiyya Rabi Nagoda,

“I am determined to continue improving myself and the quality of education we offer.”

These reflections reveal a movement that is not only addressing the problem of out-of-school children but also unlocking the leadership, creativity, and resilience of young women. The ECCD centres stand as models of community empowerment, educational innovation, and female-led development.

12.0 Conclusion

The Girls’ Empowerment for Community-Based ECCD Project implemented by dRPC in Kano State stands as a compelling example of how locally-driven, gender-responsive interventions can address complex educational and socioeconomic challenges in underserved communities. By transforming marginalized school-leaving girls into proprietors and educators, the model not only creates employment and leadership pathways for young women but also delivers foundational education to children who would otherwise be excluded from formal learning environments. This impact story reveals a dynamic and adaptable model rooted in community participation, mentorship, and sustainable grassroots development. The findings highlight the project’s success in catalyzing change in multiple dimensions: economic empowerment for girls, behavioural and cognitive improvements in young children, and evolving attitudes among parents and community leaders toward early childhood education.

While challenges persist, particularly around infrastructure, sustainability, and the need for formal recognition, this report demonstrates that with strategic support, the SEG4K ECCD model can be refined and scaled. Ultimately, the SEG4K ECCD model represents more than a service delivery intervention; it is a vision for transforming societal norms, amplifying community agency, and building a generation of young leaders and learners from the ground up. dRPC’s pioneering work offers a roadmap not only for Nigeria but for other settings where girls’ education, early childhood learning, and community development intersect.

13.0 Implications for Replicating the dRPC's innovative model in fragile contexts in the Northeast

The dRPC's **SecondarySchool Girls for Kids** project is a cost-effective, high impact ECCD model suitable to fragile contexts where schools are few and communities are many. Communities exist in host settings in internally displaced persons locations and in resettled communities – all of which lack education infrastructure and all of which are insecure.

The dRPC's ECCD Innovation, piloted and tested in Kano state is an organic approach which builds upon the capacity of local girls, in local environments and supports them to set up and run community based ECCD Centers that are sustainable, play-based, child-centered and deliver learning outcomes.

These recommendations are designed to guide civil society organizations in fragile contexts affected by poverty, insecurity and conflict on the systematic steps to be taken to build a movement in advancing the dRPC model while allowing for context-sensitive adaptations. With sustained support, the model has the potential to become a regional best practice in grassroots early childhood education and girls' empowerment in context of fragility.

The dRPC's SecondarySchool Girls for Kids project is a cost-effective, high impact ECCD model suitable to fragile contexts where schools are few and communities are many. Communities exist in host settings in internally displaced persons locations and in resettled communities – all of which lack education infrastructure and all of

1. Identify a cohort of 15 to 20 girls who have a genuine love for children, belong to a locality/community of ECCD needs, have familiar support to participate in the project, who express commitment to and belief in the transformative power of education and completed up to SSII or at best are secondary school levers.
2. Support these girls with a 1-week training program using the dRPC's Manual based on the National Curriculum, making sure to cover the add-on components on First Aid and psycho-social support and also the component on small business management and bookkeeping. At the end of training are provided with a start-up pack containing play and educational materials. While the girls will be trained in a cohort of 20, a ratio of 2 girls per ECCD center is proposed. This means that if 20 girls are trained in cohort 1, only 10 ECCD centres will be operational, each with 40 children.
3. Facilitate linkages with government agencies responsible for education at LGA level. The implementing NGO is required to build legitimacy and support for this intervention by arranging meetings which must include the girls. It is imperative that the NGO explain and give assurances to the governmental agencies, that this model does not compete with or seek to replace government's interventions at ECCD levels. It is complementary and children graduating from the ECCD centers will be expected to transit into government primary schools. Where possible, seek to access safe government facilities such as LGA offices or schools. Formal written acknowledgement, if not permission must be secured by the NGO implementing this model. The community ECCD model should be presented to government as a non-formal model with linkages to the formal system. Moreover, the LEA of the LGA should be invited to be a member of the community learning assessment committee.
4. Identify a suitable and safe space within the community for a safe community ECCD center. This space can be the common outer area of the traditional leader's house, a space in an existing house or lodging facility, a LGA area or a space in the house of a community leader. A small sum may have to be paid for the use of such space or a tent may have to be provided. Minimize the cost of the facility while maximizing WASH facilities, safety and security. Establish a fee payment that is at cost recover level ONLY at the rate of no more that N15,000 per month for ECCD classes that are ½ day only
5. Commence recruitment of ECCD aged children from the catchment using screening and assessment criteria to enroll the most vulnerable children who would not normally have gone to school. It is imperative that mothers or caregivers accompany all children being screened and that opportunities for recruiting mothers or caregivers to support the ECCD Center as care givers. Ensure that the ratio of 1 caregiver to 10 children is not exceeded. The ideal number children for a ½ day class is 40, maximum.

The girls running the community ECCD Center may choose to hold 2 ½ day classes in a day, in response to demand.

6. Once ECCD centers are established and running, one month after, the NGO will provide structured on-site mentorship to ensure that school fees are banked or kept in safety, that replacement of materials drawn down upon is prioritized, that parents and caregivers are able to provide feedback, that there is a reporting mechanism to address children in crisis
7. Conduct a refresher training for the cohort of 20 girls, with emphasis on teamwork, leadership, and technical components of play based learning. This will be conducted at the end of term one.
8. Problem solving, adopt a problem-solving approach to support the girls' ECCD centers by supporting the formation of parents committees which will be pro-active in supporting the NGOs to meet with LGA and other authorities to address problems as they arise
9. Addressing gender and cultural issues – support the development of a clear policy on gender, religious and cultural issues as they arise and to the extent that they may constitute challenges. Some parents may wish for daughters to only attend girls ECCD classes and may reject co-educational ECCD classes. Other parents may wish that they children only attend morning ECCD classes so that they are free to attend Islamic schools in the afternoons. Others may request for Friday to be a school free day as is the custom with some Islamic schools. All these factors must be anticipated in advance and clear and consistent guidelines provided.
10. Establish a Standardized ECCD Quality Framework: Develop a unified minimum operational standard for all centres, covering documentation, child protection, curriculum use, learning corners, and hygiene facilities. This framework should be co-developed with state education boards to ensure contextual alignment.
11. Prioritize Assessment of Pupils' Performance and Literacy Development
Literacy outcomes were consistently lower than numeracy across most schools. There is an urgent need to design and implement literacy-focused interventions such as structured phonics programmes, early reading activities, and the provision of age-appropriate reading materials.
12. Integrate Proprietress Training into Formal Certification Pathways: Partner with colleges of education and NCE-granting institutions to create short-term certification modules for ECCD proprietresses. Formal recognition will enhance credibility, teacher capacity, and long-term career progression.
13. Leverage Digital Tools for Mentorship and Monitoring: Expand the use of non-android mobile devices or low-cost tablets for real-time feedback, mentoring, and reporting by proprietresses, especially in remote areas with limited field supervision.
14. Use High-Performing Centres as Peer Learning Hubs: Identify and equip successful centres as zonal hubs to provide practical training and peer mentoring to new entrants in neighbouring LGAs or states.
15. Include the Community based ECCD centers into State Education Budgets and Policy Plans: Advocate for inclusion of community-based ECCD in state education strategic plans and budget lines, ensuring sustainability beyond donor funding cycles.
16. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: Standardize tools for annual reporting, centre assessment, and impact tracking, with a focus on child outcomes, centre survival, and proprietress retention.

Appendices

For additional sources and further stories on the dRPC ECCD initiative, please refer to the links below:

ECCD: The dRPC's Girls Empowerment Education Project (YouTube) live testimonies - <https://youtu.be/eTawJywoatQ>

GIRLS EDUCATION AND CHILD PROTECTION REPORT 2013-2024 - <https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Education-piece-summary-updated-13.07.2024.pdf>

Group gives ECCD Jigawa, Kano schools learning, play materials - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/12/group-gives-eccd-jigawa-kano-schools-learning-play-materials/?>

Early Childhood Development: We've pulled over 2,000 under 5 children out of Kano, Jigawa streets back to school - dRPC - <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/06/early-childhood-development-weve-pulled-over-2000-under-5-children-out-of-kano-jigawa-streets-back-to-school-drpc/>

List of dRPC Active and Inactive ECCD Centres

dRPC's Active ECCD Centres

S/No	Name of Proprietors	Name of ECCD Centre	State	Contact Numbers
1	Khadija Yusuf Abubakar	Aminci Intrnational School, Gobirawa	Kano	09061698809
2	Maryam Rabiu Adam	The Light Academy, Yargaya, Kano	Kano	09039567215
3	Naziyya Usaini Yahaya	Mubeen Child Academy, Yargaya	Kano	08086775119; 08060681783
4	Safiya Abdullahi Gwarzo	Safiyya ECD, Gwarzo	Kano	09066661118; 08037054623; 08034522443; 08034522413
5	Hauwau Shuaibu (Halima Ibrahim Shuaibu)	Al-Ansar Academy, Sumaila	Kano	07068497816
6	Binta Inuwa Muaazu	Al-Ameen Academy, Kofar Gabas, Sumaila, Kano	Kano	07062723285
7	Mardiyya Rabiu Nagoda & Maryam Auwal Bilya	Al-ihsan Best Academy	Kano	08162600098
8	Safiya Muhammad Adam	Safiya Childhood Development, Kode, Dawakin Kudu Local Government	Kano	07014426242; 08085364679 (Sister); 08089745472; 08082403916
9	Zainab Nasir Dan-dawaki	Alhaji Wada Memorial ECCD	Kano	07064320747
10	Amina Ahmad	Al-Amin Best Academy, Yakasai	Kano	08105450023
11	Fatima Adamu Abdullahi	Sumy Child Academy	Kano	07086090567; 07067616943
12	Amina Abdullahi Umar	Yahanasu Abdullahi Comprehensive ECCD Makole	Kano	08023846525; 07044314431
14	Khadija Abdullahi	Sultan International Academy, Yargaya	Kano	09048861613; 08033082785

Inactive/Closed Schools

S/No	Name	ECCD Name	State	Phone Number
15	Shamsiyya Suleiman	Hajara ECCD	Kano	09030625632; 08036184837
16	Maryam Lawal Yola	Al-khairat ECCD School, Kano	Kano	09039477589; 08063441052 (Mother); 07068960547
17	Fatima Said	Aminci Light Academy	Kano	09071168924; 081660053759
18	Amina Habibu	Sayyada Academy	Kano	08143441116
19	Hauwa Adam Salihi	Late Abubakar Sadiq ECD	Kano	07065627323
20	Safiya Abbas & Amina Usman Muhammed	Nana Fatima Best Academy	Kano	09061188851, 07054845232 08129629157
21	Saadatu Sherif	Saada Royal ECD, Academy, Kabara	Kano	07083374988
22	Marakisiyya Ibrahim	Alkheri ECCD Yargaya	Kano	09039320550
23	Amina Habibu	Sayyada Academy	Kano	08143441116