



Stakeholder Workshop Report

Advancing Educational Solutions: Research for Scaling Educational Innovations in Emergency Contexts and Fragile Areas Affected by Conflict and Violence (FCV) in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria

7th July 2025

Venue: Conference Hall, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Mabushi, Abuja. Nigeria

Executive Summary

On July 7, 2025, a high-level Stakeholder Engagement Workshop was convened in Abuja, Nigeria, as part of the three-day regional initiative titled “Promoting Educational Solutions: Research for Scaling Educational Innovations in Emergency Contexts and Fragile Areas Affected by Conflict and Violence (FCV) in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Nigeria.” The event brought together policymakers, development partners, civil society organizations, and education sector actors to address the growing challenge of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) in FCV-affected regions, with a focus on evidence-based solutions and inclusive policy dialogue.

Key presentations were delivered by representatives of the Federal Ministry of Education, including the Honourable Minister of State (represented by Dr. Claris Ujam), Dr. Oluwatosin Edafe (Research Fellow), and Dr. Adedeji Adeniran (Director of Research) from CSEA, Dr. Folake (Director, Basic Education, FME), and other stakeholders. Topics explored included the Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP), psychosocial support for learners and teachers, community-based innovations, and the role of data systems and partnerships in scaling effective responses.

A major highlight of the workshop was the formal launch of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG), a multi-stakeholder platform tasked with translating research findings into actionable policy and programmatic outcomes. The PLWG will serve as a vehicle for coordination, evidence use, and sustained engagement.

The workshop highlighted the need for multi-sectoral collaboration, flexible education models, and inclusive frameworks that prioritize the most marginalized learners. Stakeholders expressed a strong commitment to aligning efforts, mobilizing domestic resources, and building resilient education systems capable of serving children in crisis-affected areas.

Acknowledgement

The Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) warmly acknowledges and appreciates all stakeholders who supported and attended the Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, which was highly impactful and productive.

We sincerely thank the Federal Ministry of Education and most importantly the Honourable Minister of State for Education and her representatives, who provided effective leadership, direction and support the commitment of advancing education in emergency and fragile contexts. We highly appreciate the contributions from key directors and officials who enhanced the discussions with policy ideas and viable suggestions.

Special recognition is accorded to our funders, GPE-KIX IDRC, and our partners Associate for Change (AFC) Ghana, and CERFODES Burkina Faso for their technical guidance and cross-country collaboration that shaped the workshop outcomes.

We are deeply grateful to the representatives of state ministries of education, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and other government agencies for their constructive inputs.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to development partners, civil society organizations, teacher training institutions, and community-based actors who enriched discussions with practical experiences and innovations from the field.

Finally, we appreciate the commitment of all participants who travelled from near and far to contribute their expertise and perspectives. Your collective dedication to promoting inclusive, resilient, and scalable education solutions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts made this workshop a meaningful step forward.

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List of Acronyms

AEP	Accelerated Education Programme
ABEP	Accelerated Basic Education Programme
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CSEA	Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FCV	Fragile, Conflict and Violence-Affected Contexts
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
GFP	Girls-Focused Programs
HOVIPAD	Hope for the Village Child Foundation
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
KABHUDA	Kano Basic Human Development Agency
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
NACM	National Commission for Mass Literacy
NCAOOSE	National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education
NCCE	National Commission for Colleges of Education
NEDI	Nigerian Education Data Initiative
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
PLWG	Policy Learning Working Group
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medical Sciences
TARL	Teaching at the Right Level
TTIs	Teacher Training Institutions
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction

The Stakeholder Engagement Workshop was convened as the first phase of a three-day event titled “Advancing Educational Solutions: Research for Scaling Educational Innovations in Emergency Contexts and Fragile Areas Affected by Conflict and Violence (FCV) in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria”, held from 7-9 July 2025 at the Conference Hall of the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Mabushi, Abuja, Nigeria. The event is part of the ongoing GPE-KIX IDRC-funded project led by the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA) in collaboration with the Associate for Change (AFC) Ghana and CERFODES (Burkina Faso).



This engagement aimed to deepen understanding, share evidence, and build collaborative strategies for improving access to inclusive, quality education in FCV contexts, particularly in Nigeria’s North-East region. The workshop brought together representatives from the Federal and State Ministries of Education, donor and development agencies, research institutions, NGOs, and community-based actors.

The event was situated within the broader Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) program, which focuses on identifying and scaling effective educational innovations across the Global South, especially in fragile settings.

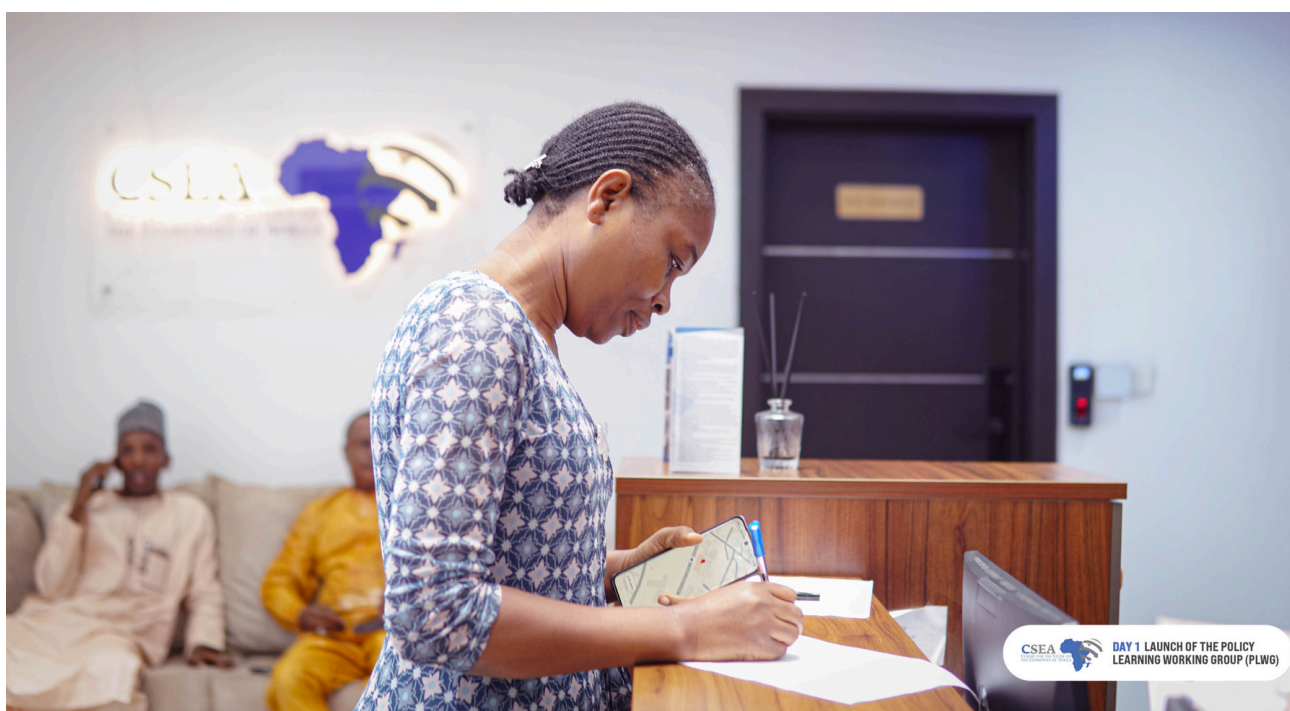
1.1 Workshop Objectives

The specific objectives of the stakeholder workshop are to:

1. Get to know the current situation of education programmes, innovations, non-formal activities in Education in Emergency (EiE) settings, particularly Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs), and Girls-Focused Programmes.
2. Identify challenges and opportunities in national education policies and implementation frameworks that impact the education of OOSCY in FCV contexts.
3. Facilitate discussions and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and local communities to align efforts in addressing barriers to education.
4. Support the integration of research evidence into policy making and programmes through collaborative knowledge-sharing mechanisms.
5. Generate consensus-driven strategies for strengthening education systems, improving programme delivery, and scaling up successful interventions.
6. Enable all stakeholders to develop a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the research initiative on Education in Emergencies in Nigeria. This includes building mutual understanding, aligning expectations, and cultivating a strong team spirit among diverse partners to ensure collaborative leadership and the highest standards of research quality. The workshop will create a platform for stakeholders to contribute actively to the project's vision, goals, and success strategies.
7. Define the specific roles, responsibilities, and expected contributions of each stakeholder throughout the research process. Develop tailored engagement strategies to ensure meaningful participation, communication, and collaboration with stakeholders at local, state, and national levels, strengthening ownership and ensuring that the research remains inclusive, context-sensitive, and impactful.
8. Identify and agree on the target Local Government Areas (LGAs) within Borno State (such as Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Jere, Konduga, etc) where Education in Emergency research activities will be carried out. This will ensure that fieldwork is contextually relevant, logistically feasible, and aligned with the educational needs and displacement patterns in the region.
9. Map and validate key education stakeholders
10. Engage stakeholders in structured discussions to gather their expectations, concerns, and suggestions regarding the research activities on Education in Emergencies. This will help surface important insights about potential challenges, local sensitivities, and desired outcomes, ensuring that the research design, implementation, and communication strategies are responsive to stakeholder needs and realities.
11. Facilitate stakeholder discussions to generate practical recommendations aimed at strengthening the design, implementation, and relevance of the Education in Emergencies research. Stakeholders will collaboratively identify strategies to enhance research quality, local ownership, ethical considerations, and responsiveness to the needs of affected communities.

2. Official Welcome

The welcome session was anchored by Gift Ojima, a Communications Officer at CSEA and the workshop moderator, who set the tone for the day's activities. She warmly welcomed participants and introduced the event's modalities. An engaging icebreaker followed, in which attendees described themselves using adjectives and shared their roles and expectations. The moderator encouraged participants to continually reference these adjectives throughout the workshop to foster interpersonal bonding and a reflective tone.



2.1 Opening Remarks

Dr. Adedeji Adeniran, the CSEA Director of Research, chaired the workshop. In his opening remarks, he welcomed all participants and acknowledged the presence of key stakeholders from federal and state agencies, development partners, implementing organisations, and academic institutions.

He set the tone for the engagement by reflecting on the contested estimates surrounding Nigeria's out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY). He noted that while the exact numbers vary due to data gaps and definitional inconsistencies, the urgency lies not in the numbers themselves, but in the realities they represent: millions of children deprived of foundational learning opportunities.

Framing the challenge within a global context, Dr. Adeniran observed that while Europe and other regions are facing population decline and are actively encouraging immigration to boost their labour force, Africa already has the demographic potential it needs. However, the critical difference lies in investment in human capital. He drew parallels with China, where sustained investments in education and health have transformed a vast population into an economic engine and global manufacturing hub. In contrast, Africa's youthful population continues to struggle with unemployment, exclusion, and educational disruption, especially in conflict-affected areas.

He therefore described the workshop as a timely forum to deliberate on human capital development in crisis settings, particularly how education systems can adapt and innovate to ensure inclusion, equity, and resilience. "This gathering is not just about diagnosing problems," he noted, "but about consolidating what works and building the roadmap to scale."

Dr. Adeniran gave a brief history of the project, noting that the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) has been active in Nigeria for approximately seven years, with CSEA conducting research on its effectiveness for five of those years. He commended the contributions of local partners in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe who have spearheaded implementation in some of the most challenging environments.

Referencing the impact of COVID-19, he challenged participants to think beyond traditional schooling frameworks. "Why must education always mean bringing children to school? Why not take school to the children?" He reiterated that this thinking has led to the emergence of models like AEP, which provide accelerated and flexible learning pathways for displaced, over-age, and marginalised learners.

Citing data from UNICEF, he reminded the audience that over 800 teachers have lost their lives and 133 schools have closed due to violence in Nigeria's northeast. These sobering figures, he argued, necessitate innovation and adaptive models of delivery. AEP, he added, is one such model that has demonstrated that learners can recover lost years of schooling and build essential cognitive skills like resilience, adaptability, and social-emotional competence.

However, he cautioned that AEP alone is not enough. The next step is integration and scale, especially in ways that address broader psychosocial needs, strengthen gender responsiveness, and link learners to formal education or vocational pathways. He was pleased that organisations such as LUMINAH were present to support this holistic approach and noted that the Federal Ministry of Education had recently launched two key documents on girls' education, reinforcing the political momentum behind the cause.

In moving ahead, Dr. Adeniran posed two critical questions to guide the workshop:

- i. Have we discovered interventions that work?
- ii. How do we build on them to ensure system-wide impact?

He also reflected on the importance of partnerships, acknowledging that while the project has benefited from sustained support, it has also witnessed challenges such as donor attrition due to shifting geopolitical priorities. He thanked longstanding collaborators, including Dr. Ujam of the Federal Ministry of Education and the KIX programme, and reiterated that progress cannot be achieved in silos.

Dr. Adeniran concluded by affirming that the right stakeholders were present in the room to drive the next phase of transformation. He expressed optimism that the workshop would not only consolidate lessons learned but also build strong alliances for action. He thanked all participants for their presence and commitment, especially in light of the heavy rainfall that morning.

2.2 Goodwill Messages

Distinguished representatives from government, development partners, and civil society organisations delivered goodwill messages, highlighting their support and commitment to the programme.

The messages offered strong endorsements of the project's goals and emphasized the urgent need to strengthen educational access and outcomes for out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) in fragile, conflict, and violence-affected (FCV) contexts.

Dr Abubakar Tijjani, the Special Adviser on Education to the Executive Governor of Borno State, opened the session with a traditional greeting and acknowledged the critical role of non-formal education in conflict-affected regions. He highlighted Borno's position as the most severely impacted by violence and appreciated the efforts of agencies that have addressed approximately 60% of the challenges. He emphasized the importance of skill acquisition, noting that idleness, not just illiteracy, often drives youth vulnerability to conflict. He commended the state government's investments in alternative education programmes and wished participants a productive deliberation.

Dr. Mohamed Yahaya Askira of KABHUDA expressed his hope that the workshop would generate practical strategies to bridge educational inequality in Nigeria. He applauded CSEA's leadership and affirmed the federal government's support.

Dr. Ransom Stephen, the Executive Director of HOHVIPAD, reflected on insights from the Ghana workshop and research findings, especially regarding the retention of learners with disabilities. He raised critical issues such as children being withdrawn from school during farming seasons, early marriage for girls, and economic pressures that lead parents to deprioritise education. He called for stronger parental empowerment and retention-focused programming.

Mr. Adamu Gurama, representing the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), conveyed greetings from the Executive Secretary, Hajiya Aisha Garba. He outlined several programmes spearheaded by UBEC, including second-chance schools for girls, the Climate *Shanghari* system for Almajiri learners, and open school models for hard-to-reach populations. He announced recent efforts to restructure UBEC's approach to stakeholder engagement, including a newly established desk for real-time dialogue and policy feedback. He expressed enthusiasm for alignment between CSEA's work and UBEC's vision.

Mr. Adamu Benjamin from AIPFF Africa linked the country's high rate of OOSCY to broader development challenges, including corruption and social fragility. He shared examples of how a lack of rights awareness and education access has enabled the exploitation of young girls in his community. He pledged HIVE Africa's continued collaboration with CSEA to tackle these systemic issues.

Mr. Lawal Ayoola Abdulwaheed from the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) conveyed greetings from Mr. Paulinus Chijioke and informed participants of an ongoing five-year curriculum review process, supported by UNESCO. He affirmed that key insights from the workshop would be considered in shaping the next iteration of Nigeria's teacher training curricula and expressed interest in deeper partnership with CSEA.

Ms. Tobi from PLANE (Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria), extended goodwill from the organisation's Country Director and reiterated Plan's commitment to girls' education in FCV settings. She noted that the workshop presents an opportunity for renewed collaboration and committed to sharing the outcomes with her senior leadership for programmatic uptake.

Finally, Mrs. M. U. Khalid, the Director of Monitoring and Learning at the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) delivered her remark and highlighted the commission's ongoing work in *literacy-by-radio* programmes and skills training in IDP camps across seven states, including Borno and Yobe. She affirmed NMEC's interest in aligning its work with CSEA's research efforts.

Following these goodwill messages, Dr. Oluwatosin Edafe, a Research Fellow at CSEA, presented the workshop objectives and an overview of the AEP research initiative.

3. AEP Project Overview

3.1 Presentation by Dr Oluwatosin Edafe

Dr Edafe provided an in-depth overview of the research project titled “Advancing Educational Solutions in Emergency and Fragile Settings,” which focuses on addressing the needs of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) in Nigeria, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. She highlighted the project’s core objectives: to generate evidence for scaling effective, gender equality and inclusion (GEI)-sensitive educational innovations in fragile, conflict, and violence-affected (FCV) contexts; to enhance access and retention of OOSCY through adaptable and proven models; to mobilise knowledge that informs policy and practice with a focus on equity and inclusion; and to strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders, governments and civil society organisations, to effectively utilize evidence from tested educational innovations effectively.



Dr. Edafe outlined the profound educational challenges associated with protracted violence in Northern Nigeria. She noted that violence-induced instability not only disrupts schooling but has enduring psycho-social effects, particularly for children affected by displacement, trauma, and loss. Reintegration remains especially difficult for girls, who face elevated risks of early marriage, gender-based violence, and educational exclusion. She highlighted alarming statistics, including the death of over 2,295 teachers due to violence and the closure of many schools in high-risk zones.

Dr. Edafe cited that Northern Nigeria accounts for the highest share of OOSCY, with children from the poorest wealth quintile being the most affected. In this context, the project seeks to address systemic educational gaps, scale proven models, and build strong partnerships for improved policy and programmatic responses.

She detailed a range of interventions being evaluated, which include:

- i. Accelerated Education Programs (AEPs) that compress learning timelines for over-age and out-of-school children,
- ii. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approaches to address trauma and build resilience,
- iii. Girls-Focused Programmes (GFPs) that mitigate barriers to female education.

Dr. Edafe highlighted notable programmes that have demonstrated high effectiveness in re-enrolling OOSCY. She shared that participants in AEPs have achieved a 95% transition rate to formal schooling pathways, highlighting the success of these models. She also referenced the AGILE project as an example of a girl-centered intervention that has improved both enrollment and retention outcomes.

The objectives of the project include:

- i. Generating rigorous evidence for scale,
- ii. Enhancing access and retention in FCV education systems,
- iii. Promoting inclusive education,
- iv. Strengthening stakeholder capacity to implement and adapt effective interventions.

The research uses a mixed-method approach and is structured into four implementation phases. Borno State serves as the primary case study site, with zones within the state stratified into three levels of security risk to capture geographic diversity in experiences and needs.

Dr. Edafe concluded by expressing optimism that the workshop would catalyze greater policy engagement, institutional responsiveness, and context-driven innovation in FCV education spaces.

3.2 Presentation by Dr Adedeji Adeniran



Dr. Adedeji Adeniran provided strategic reflections on partnerships as the foundation for sustainable scale-up. He began with a reference to the “One Laptop per Child” initiatives in Kenya and Peru, programs that, while promising at pilot stage, ultimately struggled to achieve national scale due to the lack of systemic alignment.

This, he noted, illustrates a key insight: scaling educational innovation requires more than good ideas, it requires an ecosystem.

An ecosystem that includes policy champions, resource partners, implementation actors, and knowledge producers working in tandem.

Dr. Adeniran outlined the multi-layered partnership architecture underpinning the project. At the regional level, coordination is led by organisations such as Associates for Change (Ghana). Technical support is provided by institutions like Cambridge University and Carleton University, while national partnerships in Nigeria include the Federal Ministry of Education, NERDC, the Borno State Government, and UBEC.

He acknowledged the critical role of international donors and technical agencies in sustaining momentum, ensuring resource mobilisation, and creating platforms for cross-country learning. Key partnership mechanisms include:

- i. Capacity-building workshops,
- ii. Evidence dissemination events,
- iii. Stakeholder dialogues,
- iv. And most notably, the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG), which formalises a multi-actor forum for research-policy-practice interaction.

Participants were encouraged to actively engage over the next two days through structured PLWG sessions, which offer an opportunity to shape research priorities, share contextual insights, and co-develop scale strategies.

Dr. Adeniran also encouraged stakeholders to leverage continuous communication via email and digital platforms to maintain engagement beyond the workshop. He emphasised that shared ownership and regular interaction are essential for building a truly responsive and adaptive ecosystem for FCV education reform.

4. Stakeholder Presentations

4.1 Federal Ministry of Education

*Delivered by **Dr. Claris Ujam**, KIX Africa 19 Focal Point and Deputy Director, Department of Educational Planning, Research and Development*

Dr. Claris Ujam delivered a goodwill address on behalf of the Honourable Minister of State for Education, Dr. Suwaiba Said Ahmad, whose unavoidable absence from the event was noted. She warmly welcomed all participants, particularly representatives from other ministries of education, and expressed appreciation to the international development community for facilitating the valuable partnership that made the workshop possible.



Dr. Ujam emphasized the Federal Ministry of Education's strong commitment to the National Education Sector Research Initiative (NESRI), a comprehensive policy framework structured around six thematic pillars. Among these pillars are STEM, which includes Medical Science, and Girl Child Education, both of which align with the Honourable Minister's core priorities. She reiterated the Minister's passion for advancing medical education and ensuring inclusive education for underserved girls across Nigeria.

The Ministry's ongoing efforts to address the issue of out-of-school children (OOSC) were discussed. **Dr. Ujam** highlighted a key concern: that international OOSC statistics often fail to reflect the national and subnational efforts made by ministries, agencies, and local actors to reduce exclusion. In response to this gap, the Ministry is strengthening its data infrastructure through the Nigerian Education Data Initiative (NEDI).

NEDI aims to consolidate data from NGOs, state actors, and federal agencies into a real-time, harmonised national dashboard that tracks progress on OOSC reduction and broader educational outcomes.

Dr. Ujam also spoke on the Ministry's emphasis on quality assurance and teacher development. She acknowledged the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) supported by CSEA as an important step toward meeting the needs of learners in conflict-affected contexts. In parallel, the Ministry is pursuing reforms to Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs), focusing on teacher education, continuous professional development, and teacher wellbeing. An innovative school grading system is also being developed as part of broader accountability reforms in the sector.

A major highlight of Dr. Ujam's presentation was the Honourable Minister's flagship initiative, LUMINA, a girl-focused education programme designed to educate and empower one million underserved girls by 2030, while also building the capacity of their mothers. The LUMINA model is structured in **three phases**:

- **Root Phase** (early foundation and mobilisation),
- **Stem Phase** (core academic and vocational engagement), and
- **Bloom Phase** (transition, empowerment, and sustained learning pathways).

The pilot phase of LUMINA will commence in 12 states across all six geopolitical zones. A national scale-up is envisioned, contingent on adoption and integration by state-level governments and education ministries.

In closing, Dr. Ujam reaffirmed the Federal Ministry of Education's readiness to partner with stakeholders present at the workshop, especially in refining and implementing innovative, context-sensitive solutions to educational exclusion in emergency settings.

4.2 Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford

of the Associate for Change (AFC), Ghana, and Formal Launch of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG)

The session was led by **Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford**, international education expert and founding member of Associates for Change (AFC), Ghana. Her presentation served both as a call to action and a formal launch of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG), a stakeholder mechanism aimed at deepening engagement around Education in Emergencies (EiE) and supporting the scale-up of proven innovations for addressing the needs of out-of-school children (OOSC) across fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Dr Casely-Hayford began by drawing attention to the persistent learning crisis across West Africa, particularly in Nigeria and Ghana, where foundational learning levels remain far below global standards. One of the key issues highlighted was the reluctance of qualified teachers to remain in the areas where they are most critically needed, especially communities affected by violence and insecurity. While acknowledging the increased visibility of EiE issues in the policy discourse, she stressed the need for stronger focus, sustained investment, and localised innovation.

Using comparative insights from the project countries, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria, Dr. Casely-Hayford noted that in many violence-affected areas, children are often unable to complete a full six-year basic education cycle. As a response, countries like Sierra Leone have compressed foundational learning into a three-year accelerated structure spanning 15 years, while the government of Burkina Faso has committed domestic funds toward educating OOSC.

She called for the scaling-up of effective foundational learning models such as the Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs) and proposed the integration of psychosocial support for both teachers and learners to support continuity and well-being in fragile learning environments. In addition, she cited alarming statistics, such as the deaths of teachers and prolonged closures of schools in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, and stressed the importance of grounding policy decisions in rigorous contextual analysis. Key policy and research questions were outlined, including:

- How long have schools remained closed in affected areas?
- What proportion of children have been excluded or displaced?
- What models of EiE delivery have proven effective, and how can they be scaled?

Dr. Casely-Hayford announced an upcoming multi-country webinar on July 17th, during which findings from Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria would be disseminated. She expressed concern that despite the implementation of multiple interventions, the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria and Ghana has continued to rise. She observed that development partners such as USAID and UNICEF had been instrumental in funding interventions, but warned that donor funding alone was not sustainable, and that national governments must commit a minimum of 7% of the basic education budget to EiE-focused innovations.

A variety of scalable solutions were proposed, including:

- Deploying senior secondary school graduates (certified by the government) to support teaching in underserved areas,
- Expanding radio education in both English and local languages,
- Investing in teacher incentives to retain staff in conflict-impacted zones, and
- Promoting contextualised AEP models tailored to the needs of different regions.

Dr Casely-Hayford also presented curated policy briefs and situational analyses developed across Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria, and encouraged participants to explore evidence-based models and toolkits available through the AFC website.

4.2.1 Launch of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG)



Dr Casely-Hayford formally launched the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG), a core component of the broader scaling strategy. She outlined the objectives of the PLWG, including evidence-informed policy formulation, engagement across sectors, and coordinated tracking of education recovery efforts across fragile contexts.

The leadership structure of the PLWG was announced as follows:

Chair: Dr. Folake Olatunji-David (FME)

Co-Chair: Dr. Claris Ujam (FME)

Co-Chair: Dr. Garba Gandu (NERDC)

Members:

1. Dr Uba - Director, Colleges of Education (FME)
2. Hajiya Larai (Director, Education Support Services)
3. Mr. Adamu Gurama – UBEC I
4. Dr Chima Jonas - NERDC
5. Dr. Abubakar Tijani - Borno State Government Representative
6. Dr. Mohammed Yakub Askira - Executive Director – KABHUDA
7. Dr. Ransome Stephen - Executive Director – HOHVIPAD
8. Dr Emenike Umesi - Director of HR, NEMA
9. Dr. Yahaya Abdulrahman - NCCE
10. Tobi Ransomed - Plan International
11. Dr. Nguyan Feesa - PLANE
12. Mrs. M. U. Khalid - NMEC
13. Engr. A. Dansharif, PhD, FNSE - North West Development Commission
14. Oluwashola E. Samuel - FME - Youth Representative
15. Adamu Benjamin Abuyonanka - AIPFF-AFRICA
16. Ahanonu Odinakachi - CSACEFA
17. Dr. Leslie Casely-Hayford - Associates for Change (AfC)
18. Dr Adedeji Adeniran - CSEA
19. Dr Oluwatosin Edafe - CSEA

It was noted that the PLWG would convene regularly before and after the national budget cycle, serving as a think tank to shape inclusive education financing and implementation frameworks. The importance of youth representation within the group was emphasized to ensure that EiE interventions are grounded in lived realities and youth-led innovation.

To conclude, Dr. Casely-Hayford called for interfaith prayers and offered her own closing remarks. The PLWG was then formally inaugurated as a Ministry of Education-led mechanism with technical support from research partners, NGOs, and development stakeholders.

In her closing statement, Dr. Folake Olatunji-David expressed appreciation to Dr. Casely-Hayford for her visionary leadership and support in establishing the PLWG. She affirmed her personal and professional commitment to the task ahead, noting that modalities for future meetings would be discussed and shared with members.

4.3 Presentation by Dr. Folake Olatunji-David

Chair, Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG), and Director, Basic Education Department, Federal Ministry of Education



Dr. Folake Olatunji-David, Chair of the newly inaugurated Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG) and Director of the Basic Education Department at the Federal Ministry of Education, delivered a presentation on the Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP) as Nigeria's flagship response to the persistent crisis of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY).

She began by extending warm greetings to all stakeholders and affirmed that, regardless of fluctuating statistics, every out-of-school child represents an urgent national concern. She noted that OOSCY are not confined to conflict-affected zones alone but also include youth in relatively stable environments who are excluded due to poverty, early marriage, displacement, or other barriers.

Dr. Folake warned that in the absence of access to education, many young people risk being socialised into harmful or anti-social behaviours, a reality which adds urgency to finding lasting, inclusive solutions. She referenced previous consultative meetings in Lagos, convened with support from PLANE and other partners, that laid the groundwork for what has now become the ABEP strategy.

Dr. Folake explained that ABEP targets OOSCY aged 10 to 18, with a flexible curriculum designed to fast-track learners through the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in just three years, down from the conventional nine years. The programme specifically caters to adolescents affected by displacement, early marriage, child labour, or prolonged exclusion from school.

Under the enhanced ABEP+ model, developed in collaboration with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the curriculum now integrates foundational skills acquisition, expanding the focus beyond literacy and numeracy to include vocational pathways.

Key design features include:

- Flexible scheduling to accommodate learners' realities
- Gender-inclusive learning environments
- Use of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) methodology

However, **Dr. Folake** acknowledged that TaRL traditionally assumes that learners have reached at least Primary 4, which presents a challenge for severely undereducated adolescents. She stated that adaptations to the methodology are currently being explored to address this gap.

Dr Folake noted that implementation of ABEP is led by state governments, who oversee delivery through non-formal learning centres, including community halls and youth centres. She further clarified that formal infrastructure is not a prerequisite; instead, existing community spaces are repurposed to serve educational purposes. She also noted the strong involvement of non-formal education agencies, civil society organisations, and the National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education (NCAOOSE) in the delivery of ABEP across various states.

Despite its promise, Dr Folake noted that ABEP faces several implementation challenges, including:

- Insecurity in conflict-affected zones
- Limited funding and infrastructure
- Low transition rates to formal schooling
- Gaps in facilitator training and trauma-informed pedagogy
- Gender disparities and inclusivity barriers

She emphasised that ABEP centres, if properly supported, can serve as a bridge between marginalisation and reintegration, both into education systems and the wider economy.

4.3.1 Q&A Session

During the Q&A session, several important issues were raised:

1. Vocational Training in Community-Based Centres

A participant asked how vocational training could be effectively delivered in ABEP centres, given their often makeshift infrastructure. In response, Dr. Folake clarified that ABEP centres are designed to provide foundational education, while more advanced vocational instruction is facilitated through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centres and technical colleges.

2. Engagement of Private Schools

A representative from the private education sector asked how low-cost private schools could support ABEP objectives. Dr. Folake revealed that the Federal Ministry of Education is initiating a partnership with an umbrella body of private schools. The arrangement would allow selected out-of-school children to be sponsored into low-fee private schools, with meal support included.

3. Provision of Learning Centres in Underserved Areas

Another participant inquired about areas with no existing school infrastructure. Dr. Folake responded that the Ministry is mapping high-OOSC locations and establishing new community-based learning centres with federal funding support.

4. NGO Collaboration and Coordination

A final question concerned how NGOs could collaborate more effectively to avoid duplication. Dr. Folake noted that umbrella coordination platforms already exist, and encouraged NGOs to align through these bodies for joint planning and resource pooling.

In conclusion, Dr. Folake reiterated the Ministry's commitment to expanding ABEP nationwide, ensuring no child is left behind. She expressed confidence that with strong partnerships, data-driven decision-making, and targeted investments, the programme can evolve into a transformative model for inclusive basic education across Nigeria.

4.4 Presentation by Hajira Larai

(Director, Education Support Services)



Ms. Hajira Larai delivered a concise but impactful presentation.

She noted that they had been holding training workshops to build capacity across 20 states, and that resources had been provided to support these efforts. She cited additional achievements and emphasized that these successes would not have been possible without partners like UNICEF.

Ms. Larai reaffirmed a strong commitment to working tirelessly to build a resilient education system that empowers children and communities to thrive, while also helping to reduce the number of out-of-school children (OOSC).

Presentation by Dr Chima representing Dr U.C. Uba

(Director, Colleges of Education Department, FME)

Dr. Chima began by thanking the Honourable Minister of State for Education (ably represented) for her earlier presentation. He proceeded to read a paper prepared by his director, Dr. U.C. Uba, which focused on Psychosocial Support (PSS).

He noted that terrorism had severely impacted students, with many unable to attend school due to exposure to violence. Children who have experienced such traumatic situations are psychologically affected and therefore require special attention. He explained that, previously, school-based support systems focused largely on guidance and counselling, but this had now shifted more toward career guidance, leaving a gap in trauma-responsive care.



Dr. Chima stressed that psychosocial support is essential in helping children deal with trauma, noting that their psychological conditions are not the same as those of unaffected children. He emphasized that teachers must be specially trained to handle learners affected by trauma. He also noted that teachers themselves, especially those working in high-stress environments or with large student populations, face significant mental and emotional strain and can benefit from PSS.

He identified emotional and behavioral challenges among learners as well as global disruptions as key issues impacting education. He outlined components of effective PSS, which include creating safe learning environments and incorporating recreational and creative activities.

Dr. Chima discussed the benefits of implementing PSS, such as improved school attendance and student retention, but acknowledged several challenges, including funding constraints and teacher resistance, with some educators seeing it as additional workload and resisting the required training.

He concluded by recommending the integration of PSS into the curriculum, noting that this was already underway. He called for increased funding, teacher training, and efforts to reduce stigma. Importantly, he noted that even after violence ends, PSS remains essential in addressing the aftermath and long-term trauma experienced by learners and educators.

5. Key Themes and Discussion Highlights

The stakeholder presentations brought to the fore several cross-cutting themes central to addressing the educational needs of children in emergency and fragile contexts across Nigeria and the broader West African region.

Scaling Effective and Context-Responsive Innovations: There was a recurring emphasis on the need to scale evidence-based education solutions that have proven successful in improving learning outcomes and school retention among out-of-school children (OOSC). Models such as the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP), Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), and the ABEP+ strategy were highlighted as viable mechanisms for bridging learning gaps. Participants underscored that effective scale-up must go beyond replication - it must involve contextual adaptation, multi-level collaboration, and long-term sustainability planning.

Strengthening Psychosocial Support Systems: Several speakers, including Dr. Chima and Dr. Folake, identified psychosocial support (PSS) as a non-negotiable element of quality education in violence-affected areas. They advocated for the integration of trauma-informed practices into teacher training and the broader curriculum. This would better equip both learners and educators to navigate the psychological aftermath of conflict and displacement.

Data Harmonization and Policy Alignment: Dr. Ujam, representing the Honourable Minister of State for Education, reiterated the importance of improving data quality and visibility through platforms like the Nigerian Education Data Initiative (NEDI). It was noted that harmonized data dashboards capturing NGO, ministry, and community-level efforts are essential for informed planning and resource allocation.

Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Programming: Speakers across various sessions called for intentional efforts to reach marginalized populations, particularly girls, over-age learners, and children with disabilities. Initiatives like LUMINA were cited as examples of scalable girl-focused models that can empower both children and caregivers. Flexibility in curriculum delivery, scheduling, and learning environments was strongly recommended.

The Centrality of Partnerships: Throughout the day, the role of partnerships emerged as a major theme. From local NGOs to international funders and technical collaborators, participants acknowledged that no single actor can resolve the complex challenges of EiE on their own. Dr. Deji and Dr. Edafe emphasized that coordination among regional networks, such as the KIX Africa 19 Hub, and government ministries was essential for innovation scale-up and systems strengthening.

Financing and Resource Mobilization: A critical challenge highlighted during discussions was the issue of insufficient and inconsistent funding. Dr. Leslie made a strong call for governments to commit at least 7% of basic education budgets to support education in emergencies. Participants discussed the role of innovative financing mechanisms and public-private partnerships in meeting the growing demand for educational services in FCV settings.

Youth and Community Participation: Several contributors, including Dr. Leslie and representatives from the Ministry of Education, stressed the importance of community engagement, including the participation of youth and mothers in program design and implementation. It was agreed that local ownership and culturally sensitive approaches enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of education interventions.

6. Conclusion

The Stakeholder Engagement Workshop provided an important platform for deepening understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding Education in Emergencies (EiE) in Nigeria. Through a series of high-level presentations and research overviews, participants explored critical themes such as the burden of out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY), the value of Accelerated Education Programmes (AEPs), and the role of psychosocial support, teacher development, and inclusive strategies.

The launch of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG) was a key highlight, signaling a collective commitment to translating research evidence into responsive education policies and programs. Voices from the Ministry of Education, development partners, civil society organizations, and education professionals all emphasized the urgency of inclusive, flexible, and trauma-informed approaches to learning, particularly in conflict-affected states like Borno.

The stakeholder engagement workshop concluded with a unified resolve among stakeholders to strengthen partnerships, align efforts, and promote shared ownership of the EiE research initiative. These outcomes laid the groundwork for the more interactive co-creation activities that followed in Days 2 and 3.

7. Next Steps and Key Recommendations

Building on the momentum of the Stakeholder Engagement, participants agreed on the following strategic next steps and priority actions to support the research initiative and promote the scale-up of effective educational innovations in fragile, conflict, and violence-affected (FCV) settings:

- Convene regular virtual and physical meetings of the Policy Learning Working Group (PLWG) to drive ongoing dialogue, monitor progress, and ensure that stakeholder voices remain central throughout the research and implementation cycle.
- Expand documentation and dissemination of successful educational innovations, including Accelerated Education, psychosocial support models, and flexible learning modalities, to inform policy and practice at the national and state levels.

- Strengthen partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, and development partners to promote resource mobilization, technical support, and inclusive participation.
- Integrate psychosocial support (PSS) into pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, ensuring educators are equipped to meet the mental health needs of learners and themselves in high-risk environments.
- Accelerate the operationalization of the Nigerian Education Data Initiative (NEDI) to capture harmonized data from across federal, state, and NGO stakeholders, improving planning and accountability for OOSC interventions.
- Promote flexible and inclusive education delivery models, such as the APEB+ and non-formal community learning centers, that respond to the unique needs of displaced children, adolescent girls, and youth outside the formal system.
- Secure sustainable financing for EiE initiatives, with strong advocacy for government budget allocations and strategic donor engagement to support scale-up and system resilience.
- Foster youth and community representation in planning, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant and driven by the voices of those directly affected.
- Leverage digital tools, local languages, and mother-tongue media (e.g., radio and mobile learning) to expand access and support continuity of learning, especially in hard-to-reach and insecure areas.

Annexes

Agenda

SCHEDULES	ACTIVITIES	SPEAKERS
9:00-10:00 AM	Arrival of participants and registration	
10:00-10:30 AM	Welcome Remarks Introductions of Participants Overview of meeting Objectives and expected Outcomes Good will messages - FME, NERDC, UBEC, NCCE, INNOVATORS, Special Adviser (Education) To H.E, Executive Governor of Borno State, CSO	Dr Adedeji Adeniran
10:30 -11:20 AM	Presentation: Project Overview and Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">Challenges in education sector (out of school, learning crises)Emerging Innovations(ABEP, G4G etc) Partnerships	Dr Oluwatosin Edafe Dr Folake Olatunji-David Dr Adedeji Adeniran

11:20 – 12.00noon	Minister's speech Signing of MOU Launch of the PLWG	Prof Suwaiba Ahmad (Minister of State for Education) FME/LUMINA & CSEA
12:00 – 12:30AM	Tea Break/ Group Picture	All participants
12:30 – 1:00pm	The role & importance of PLWG Nigerian Education Sector Initiatives Education in Emergencies (EiE)	Dr Leslie Dr Claris Ujam Hajiya Larai (Director of Education Support Services)
1:00 – 2:00pm	Presentations by Education Innovators: Education innovations and the evidence of their success (AEP, Girls focused Programmes), LUMINA, Accelerated Basic Education Programme (ABEP), Role of Non-State Actors in Education in Emergencies, Psychosocial support for teachers and learners,	KABHUDA, HOHVIPAD & LUMINA, Dr Chima Egbujuo (NERDC), Dr Folake O.D (Director, Basic Education & GPE focal person, FME), Dr Uchenna Cecilia Uba (Director, Colleges of Education, FME).
2:00 - 2:30PM	LUNCH/Networking Break	All participants

2:30 – 3:00pm	Panel Session Thematic discussion on preparing for potential education in emergencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated Education Programme • Education on radio and using digital devices • Social-Emotional Learning Programme • Psychosocial support for teachers/facilitators/instructors and learners 	
3:00pm – 3:30pm	Feedbacks/ Q&A	

List of Participants

S/N	NAME OF PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	PHONE
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Selected Photographs from the sessions









Link to all images

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18eFT9AdcF72YgZ_wcAFXeOL_10gpYOPqL?usp=drive_link