

IDRC KIX OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH (OOSCY) MAPPING: UNDERSTANDING THE PROFILE OF OOSCY IN NIGERIA

Policy Brief

Introduction, Background & Context

Increasing access to quality education for all children remains a global agenda. Global population of Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY) is 258 million (UIS Factsheet, 2019). For Nigeria, this number is currently estimated at 10.5 million which is the highest in the world (UNICEF, 2022). While various policies and initiatives have been implemented in increasing access to education over the years, OOSCY numbers remain disturbingly high. Given this worrisome trend, government is revamping its policy toolkit with new education innovation such as Accelerated Education Programme (AEP). The AEP is designed to increase access to education for children in rural and deprived areas, who are excluded from education by various barriers including poverty, conflict, early marriage, etc. It is important therefore, to look into the effectiveness of AEP as one of the interventions available in pursuit of increased access to education for the marginalised. The policy brief summarizes the new findings on OOSC profiles and the AEP implementation in Northeast Nigeria, as part of the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Research.

The Knowledge and Innovation (KIX) Exchange Research

The KIX research seeks to investigate and generate evidence on the viability of accelerated education and girls-focused models for increasing education access to rural and marginalized children in West Africa, focusing on the on-going accelerated education

programs and girls-focused models, considered to have scalability potentials in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. To achieve this, 5 research questions (RQ)¹ on the OOSCY problem were formulated.

This OOSCY mapping exercises is therefore the first key study conducted in pursuit of the first RQ which attempts to profile and measure the prevalence of the OOSCY in the educationally deprived part of the country, some of which have witnessed alternative education interventions.

The OOSCY Mapping Exercise

To determine the scale or magnitude of the OOSCY problem and the profile of the OOSCY, a mapping exercise was conducted in Borno state, Northeast Nigeria. The state has high prevalence of OOSCY problem, given the prevalence of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) on account of conflict in that region. Two accessible Local Government Authorities (LGAs), security-wise, were enumerated selecting communities of various characteristics including host communities, IDP Camps, Accelerated Education Programme (AEP) intervention communities and non-AEP intervention communities. The profiles of the OOSCY in these communities with respect to gender, age, disability, education status, were captured. As much as possible, the profiling of the OOSCY was done in adherence to the

¹ See appendix for the research questions

Common Methodological Framework (CMF) provided by the Global Initiative on OOSCY. Factors accounting for the exclusion of these children, both the demand side and the supply side, were also investigated. This exercise serves as a precursor for the inquiry into the effectiveness of the AEP innovation in reducing the number of OOSCY proposed to involve a tracer study and a longitudinal study. The findings on this mapping exercise are therefore presented in this policy brief.

The OOSCY Mapping Methodology

The methodology adopted in this exercise involved a mixed method approach which employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods in investigation the research question on the scale and magnitude of the OOSCY in Nigeria. Tools/instruments peculiar to both were developed for the inquiry. A survey questionnaire was developed for the quantitative inquiry while interview instruments were developed for KII and FGD to capture qualitative data. The mixed method approach enables the triangulation of findings from data generated via both approaches. The quantitative data in this study were gathered through a household survey. A multi-stage sampling approach involving systematic random sampling of households was used to arrive at representative samples during the survey while some non-probability sampling approaches were employed for the qualitative interviews and FGDs.

Results and Discussion

Pre-existing data on OOSCY in Nigeria

A background of pre-existing national data provides a reference for comparison with the findings of the OOSCY mapping. Such data available on OOSCY in Nigeria include the ones from Universal Basic Education Commission

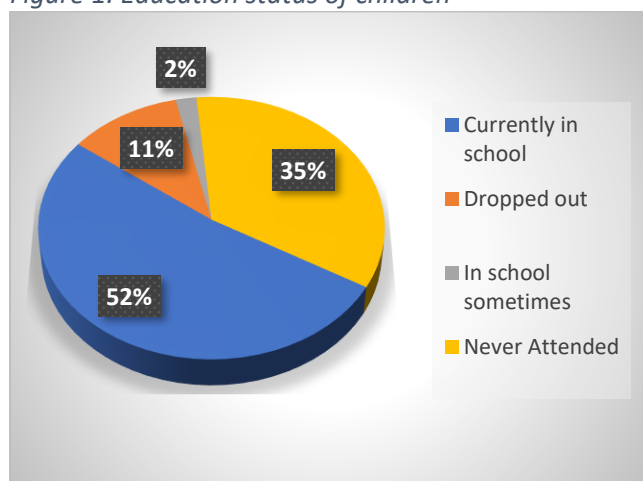
(UBEC), Ministry of Education (MoE), Demographic Health Survey (DHS), National Education Data Survey (NEDS) and Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS). While all of these datasets have varying qualities, only the Multi Indicator Cluster Studies (MICS) conforms to the CMF, ticking all boxes along the 5 dimensions of OOSCY since it reports the out-of-school situation at the pre-primary school level. According to the most recent MICS² released in 2017/2018 for Nigeria, 27.2% of primary school age children are out of school and 25.8% of secondary school age children are out of school. The proportion of OOSC of primary school age who are neither attending a primary nor pre-school from the northeast geo-political zone stands at 39.8%. For Borno state, the proportions of OOSC are 16.3% and 14.4% for primary school age children and secondary school age children respectively.

Educational Status of children

Figure 1 presents the schooling status of children (age 4-17) as part of the OOSC profiling that was conducted in locations in Borno. While slightly more than half of the children are currently enrolled in school, the combination of the proportions of children who are out of school, that is, the dropped out and those who have never attended school is 46%, which is almost half of the entire population in the age bracket. This corroborates the findings in the NEDS, 2020 for Borno (NEDS 2020, p.19). Although not disaggregated by primary and secondary school age cohorts as done in the MICS data, this high proportion OOSC reveals the fact that the problem of OOSC is more prevalent at the conflict affected areas which is the target location of this study. Children found to be at the risk of dropping out (i.e. the category who are in school sometimes) constitute 2%.

² This is available on <https://africaopendata.org/dataset/nigeria-multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-2018>

Figure 1: Education status of children

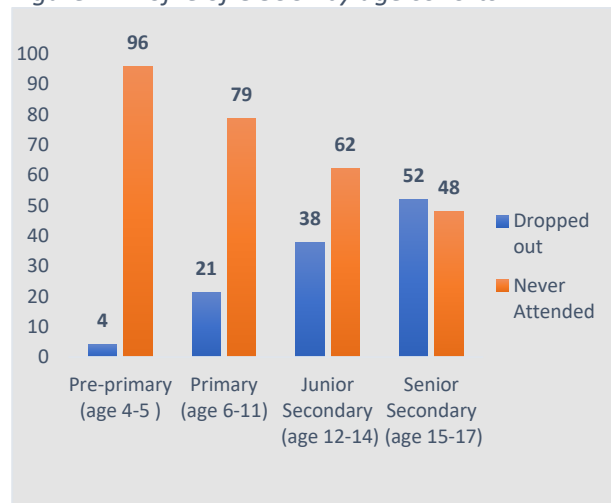


Source: Household Survey Data, OOSCY Mapping 2022

Prevalence of OOSCY by age cohorts – based on mapping data

As presented in Figure 2, the prevalence of children who never attended school before drops as children advance in age. The highest is seen within the age 4-5 cohort. By age 15-17, the prevalence has only reduced to 48%. The fact that such a high proportion of OOSC have never witnessed schooling for the first time in life by this age is a situation that calls for a concern. On the other hand, however, an increasing trend is seen for dropped out children as age cohort advances from ECCDE³ age to senior secondary school age. By the senior secondary school age, more than fifty percent of OOSCY (52%) are dropped out. In other words, there is a higher prevalence of dropouts within the 15-17 age cohort than those who never attended school. Also, the dropout incidence is highest within this age cohort relative to other age cohorts.

Figure 2: Profile of OOSCY by age cohorts



Source: Household Survey Data, OOSCY Mapping 2022

Prevalence of OOSCY by gender

It was found that more boys than girls are out-of-school. Factors like increased campaigns for girl's education through intervention programmes by NGOs as well as Covid-19 disruptions could have accounted for this gender dynamics. Although the difference is just marginal, it reflects a tendency for high prevalence of out-of-school among boys over time. Table 1 shows that the total number of children (1413) who have never attended school is about triple of those who have dropped out (456). It seems that boys have a better retention in school than girls as dropout proportion for boys (48%) is less than that of girls (approximately 52%).

Table 1: Out of school population by gender

	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
Dropped Out	235	52	221	48	456	100
Never Attended	681	48	732	52	1,413	100
Total	916	49	953	51	1,869	100

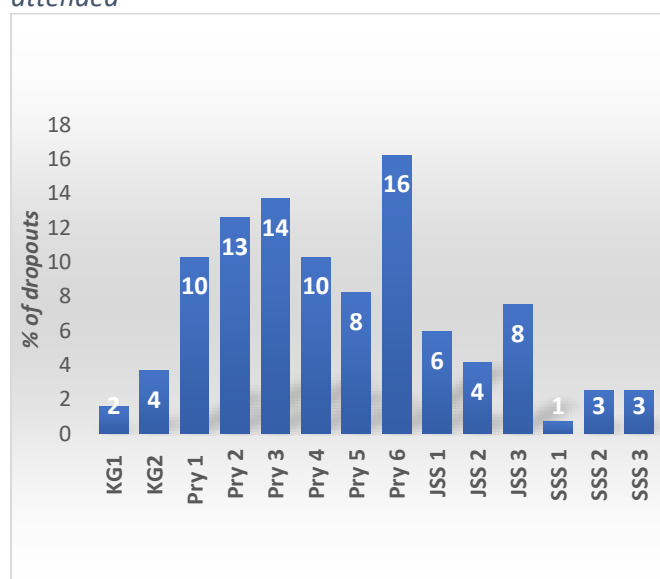
Source: Household survey data, OOSCY mapping survey, 2022

³ Early Childhood Care and Development Education

Dropout incident by grade last attended

A focus on the dropout phenomenon in the educational system is important as it x-rays the system's non-retention problems. Figure 3 shows that drop out incidence peaks at the ultimate grades of the lower primary (primary 3), upper primary (primary 6), lower secondary (JSS 3) and upper secondary (SSS 3). In the Junior Secondary, drop out incident is highest at JSS 3 (8%). Table A in the appendix shows the gender breakdown of this result. Equal proportion, 50% of boys to girls is seen dropping out at primary 3. Higher proportion of girls (53%) compared to boys (46%) dropout at primary 6. Similarly, 58% of girls and 42% of boys drop out at the Junior Secondary School. This is attributable to the low premium given to girls' education and early marriage practices.

Figure 3: Proportion of dropouts by last grade attended



Source: Household Survey Data, OOSCY Mapping 2022

Factors accounting for school dropout rates

Thematic analysis of comments from FGD with the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) on the reasons for dropout reveals that chief among the factors that contribute to dropping out of school is the lack of finance to support child's education. Others include lack of school

materials, preference for Islamic studies, health problems and migration. The demand on children to participate in economic activities of the family was also found to lead to children dropping out. Cases of children who dropped out just because they dislike schooling were also found. This may have connection with other reasons like corporal punishment in the school and insecurity that also featured in the region.

'At risk of dropping out' population – Overage children

The measurement of OOSCY carefully accounts for the children who are at risk of dropping out. Indicators of this risk include absenteeism from school,⁴ being overaged and poor academic performance as manifested mostly by class repetition, among others. The 2% earlier reported to be at risk of dropping out is based on irregular school attendance. However, Table 3 in the appendix derived from quantitative data, presents this risk by overage. It shows the cross tabulation of current grades being attended by children of various age cohorts. The overage instances are color coded in red fonts. As seen, there is a prevalence of overaged children across all grades. Late entry into basic education is a possible reason for this observation, apart from class repetition. Primary 1 has the highest prevalence of overaged children, having 125 and 68 children of junior secondary school age and senior secondary school age, respectively. This might be relatable since it is the inception grade for primary school entrants. We also see a high prevalence of overage children at primary 6, which is the ultimate grade in the primary school. This may be attributed to inability of children to pass the Common Entrance Examination, needed for children to proceed into the secondary school, apart from other possible reasons.

From the qualitative side of the inquiry, when interviewed about the factors that expose these

⁴ This is the indicator used to profile the 2% in Figure 1

children to this risk, the comments from teachers and head teachers reveal that poverty, lack of parental guidance and lack of financial support are the major reasons that expose children to the risk of dropping out of school. Far distance to school also featured in the comments. Other comments include low capacity of schools to absorb intending enrollee, relocation of parents, loss of parents, separation of parents, insecurity and lack of schooling materials. Some of the statements are quoted below:

“Because most of their parents are poor, they cannot afford to send their children to school despite that Education is free at this level”
(Headteacher, Dala Almenderi, Jere LGA)”.

“Mostly parents often send their children for hawking during school hours in order to contribute economically to the family”
(Community Leader, MMC)

“Most of them do not have money to cater for the children school needs and the schools are far from the community” **(Community leader, Jere LGA)**

Number of Transitioned AEP learners – school level data

AEP intervention in these communities has proven successful in helping OOSCY mainstream into formal education. Table 2 presents the number of children who transitioned from AEP into formal school sourced at the school level. These are AEP learners who have been mainstreamed at different cohorts of programme implementation and have transitioned through the grades up till the time of this data gathering. With the support of State Agency for Mass Education, mainstreaming happens through a merit-based screening into appropriate grades. We see from the table that out of the total enrolment (TE) of 12614 girls from primary 2 to primary 6 in the schools sampled, 4262 of them are transitioned

learners from AEP. Similarly, out of the TE of 11,700 boys from primary 2 to primary 6 in the schools visited, 3734 of them are transitioned AEP learners. This is about one-third of the class for both gender, which would have been out of school had this intervention not happened. Also, in demonstration of gender equity and social inclusion, these AEPs have reasonably catered to the inclusion of the girl child in education as we see more girls than boys successfully mainstreamed after the implementation of the AEPs.

Table 2: Transitioned AEP learners

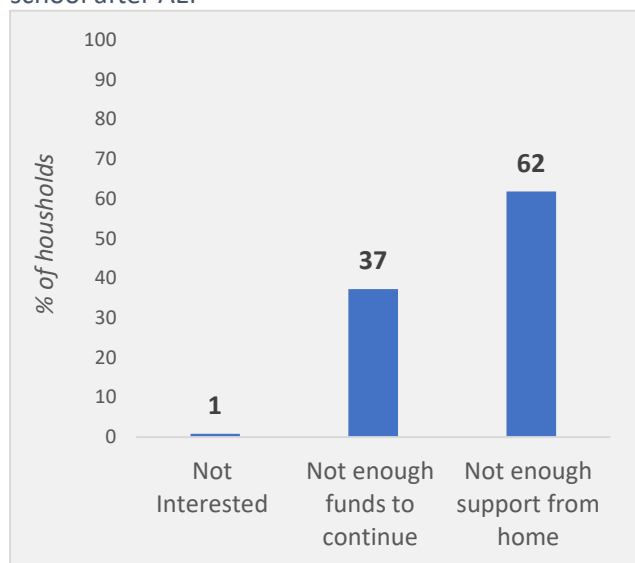
	Total Enrolment (TE)		AEP Transitioned			
	Girls (TE)	Boys (TE)	Girls (AEP)	Girls (% of TE)	Boys (AEP)	Boys (% of TE)
P2	2488	2306	518	21	530	23
P3	2309	2135	1001	43	743	35
P4	3035	2241	904	30	784	35
P5	2528	2688	832	33	813	30
P6	2254	2330	1007	45	864	37
	12614	11700	4262	34	3734	32

KII with Teachers/Headteachers, OOSCY Mapping 2022

Transition challenges

AEPs enhance the re-integration of OOSCY into formal school. However, this transitioning is not without its own constraints. As shown in Figure 5, most respondents say that the reason for not transitioning to formal education after AEP is because there is not enough support from the home front as indicated by 62% of households. Some 37% of the respondents say the child could not transition into formal education because of lack of enough funds to continue. A negligible 1% of children do not continue into formal education after completing AEP because they are not interested in formal education.

Figure 4: Reasons for not transitioning into formal school after AEP



Source: Household Survey Data, OOSC Mapping 2022

Demand side drivers of OOS

Demand side factors that cause children to be out of school are factors from the home front. The demand side factors that contribute to OOSCY found on this research include poverty, lack of parental support and lack of motivation, domestic chores, matrimonial challenges. Matrimonial challenges such as separation of parents were mentioned.

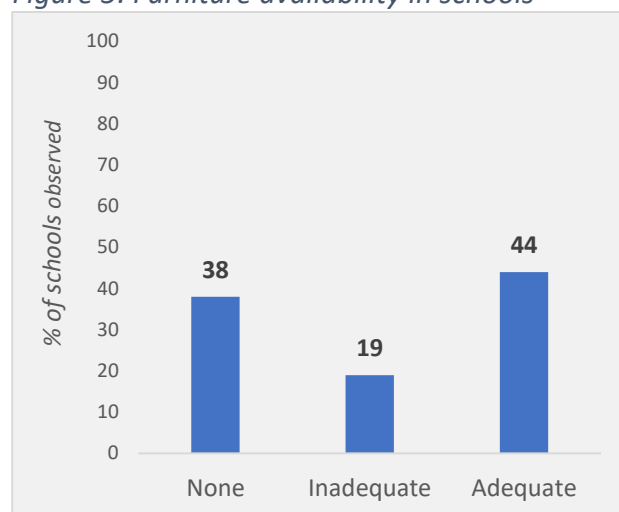
Supply side drivers of OOSC

The supply-side barriers to education include absence of teachers, distance to school, availability of school infrastructure, quality of teaching, security, teachers' availability and attendance, etc. The chief among these factors as found on this research is the lack of learning materials. Others include distance to school (found to be up to 3-5 km), inadequate supply of teachers, unfair punishments, discrimination amongst students and nonconductive environment.

The pupil teacher ratio found in some cases was as poor as 1 teacher to 200 pupils. The state of school infrastructure was also found to be deplorable as only in 44% of schools observed were there adequate furniture. There is also evidence of inadequate supply (or the lack

thereof) of staff common room, toilet and sanitation facilities, ventilation, computers, electricity supply, water supply, etc.

Figure 5: Furniture availability in schools



Source: School and community checklist, OOSC Mapping 2022

Impact/Achievements of AEP in the Community (Intended)

While responding on the impacts of the AEP in the community, many of the responses of community leaders affirm that the impact was positive. Community leaders acknowledged that AEP has enabled the children in the community to read and write. AEP facilitators recognised the role of AEPs in helping the children in the community to transition back into the formal system. The comments gathered from the SBMC/PTA FGD also corroborate these claims as they highlighted improved educational access for the children in the community. Some of the responses are hereby quoted:

"The children in this community were able to read and write as a result of this intervention"
(Community Leader, MMC)

"The program has brought great progress to the community because OOSCY can have access to education and even attend formal schools"
(SBMC/PTA, Mega Molai, Jere LGA)

“Children learned a lot especially reading in Hausa and doing simple mathematics” (AEP facilitator, Abuja Shinkafori, MMC)

“It has supported them with their school needs and given them Education and has given them awareness on the need for education. The caregivers have also received awareness on the value of education and child right to Education” (AEP facilitator, Zaijir Texaco, MMC)

Impact/Achievement of AEP (unintended)

The SMBC/PTA FGD participants commented on the roles that AEPs have had in the community asides its direct impact on education. One of the changes seen is the reduction in early marriage for girls and child labour generally in the community. In the words of one of the discussants in the FGD:

“Seriously this program has helped our children because early marriage has reduced” (AEP Facilitator, Dala Lawanti, Jere)

The impact of AEP on girls and gender equity is also acknowledged. One of the key informants puts it as:

“As results of this intervention parents were able to send all their children to school without any discrimination by sex, they are all considered equal” (AEP facilitator, Old Maiduguri, Jere)

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, recommendations targeted specifically towards five categories of stakeholders including the government/policy makers, programme implementers, civil society organisations (CSO) as well as school and communities are hereby presented.

For Government/Policy makers

- **Improve access to school**

School mapping should be deliberately targeted to communities where there is inadequate supply of schools.

- **Adopt age cohort diagnosis approach in addressing OOSCY problem**

The Accelerated Basic Education Programme of the Federal Government should factor in the age cohort realities into the programme design and implementation.

- **Ensure a standard Pupil Teacher Ratio in the schools**

More teachers should be recruited and deployed to schools so there will be adequate teachers to cater to the learning needs of children in a decent pupil teacher ratio.

- **Improve educational facilities and infrastructure**

An investment into the upgrading of school and educational facilities as well as infrastructures should be embarked upon to promote a conducive and effective learning environment.

- **Commitment to scale and sustain ABEP over the next 5 years with budgetary funding to sustain the gains achieved on AEPs:**

To ensure the results of past AEP interventions, the following are hereby suggested:

- (i) Institutionalization of AEP
- (ii) A budgetary allocation towards ABEP

For Education Innovators/CSOs

- **Programmes design should cater adequately for gender equity**

With the evidence of more out-of-school boys, implementation of programmes should be carefully done to ensure more OOS boys are targeted in order to forestall an explosion of the out-of-school boys' proportion.

- **Build a comprehensive database on OOSCY**

A rich and updated EMIS system at the local government level should be maintained with some degree of collaboration with the education innovator. This would enhance the capturing of adequate and up to date data on OOSCY, intervention programmes and programme outcomes.

For Schools and communities

- **Continuous sensitization of parents and caregivers**

A strong collaboration should be maintained with community heads in pursuit of orientation for parents on the importance of their children's education without any gender bias.

- **Economic empowerment programmes for households in the community**

Community initiatives towards economic empowerment for households is recommended to be able to circumvent the poverty barrier to education, which is the underlying cause of OOSCY.

References

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APPENDIX A: RESULTS FROM THE OOSC MAPPING SURVEY

Table A1: Schooling status of all children across the study areas

Age Cohort	Schooling status									
	Currently in school		Dropped out		In school sometimes		Never Attended		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	% of Age cohorts
ECCDE age (4 - 5 years old)	148	24.42	19	3.14	4	0.66	435	71.78	606	14.97
Primary school age (6 - 11 years old)	1,071	55.41	175	9.05	39	2.02	648	33.52	1933	47.74
Junior Secondary School age (12-14 years old)	555	61.53	122	13.5	24	2.66	201	22.28	902	22.28
Senior Secondary school age (15 -17 years old)	322	52.96	140	23	17	2.8	129	21.22	608	15.02
	2096	52	456	11	84	2	1413	35	4049	100.00

Source: Household data, OOSCY mapping survey, 2022

Table A2: Prevalence of OOSCY by age cohorts

Age cohort	Dropped out		Never Attended		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
ECCDE	19	4.19	435	95.81	454	24.29
Primary	175	21.26	648	78.74	823	44.03
Junior	122	37.77	201	62.23	323	17.28
Senior	140	52.04	129	47.96	269	14.39
Total	456	24.4	1,413	75.6	1,869	100

Source: Household data, OOSCY mapping 2022

Table A3: Drop out numbers by last grade attended before dropping out (Age 6 – 18)

Last grade attended	Female		Male		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	% (Last Grade Attended)
KG1	4	57.14	3	42.86	7	1.60
KG2	3	18.75	13	81.25	16	3.66
Primary School 1	24	53.33	21	46.67	45	10.30
Primary School 2	27	49.09	28	50.91	55	12.59
Primary School 3	30	50	30	50	60	13.73
Primary School 4	26	57.78	19	42.22	45	10.30
Primary School 5	21	58.33	15	41.67	36	8.24
Primary School 6	38	53.52	33	46.48	71	16.25
Junior Secondary 1	13	50	13	50	26	5.95
Junior Secondary 2	7	38.89	11	61.11	18	4.12
Junior Secondary 3	19	57.58	14	42.42	33	7.55
Senior Secondary 1	1	33.33	2	66.67	3	0.69
Senior Secondary 2	6	54.55	5	45.45	11	2.52
Senior Secondary 3	4	36.36	7	63.64	11	2.52
Total	223	51.03	214	48.97	437	100.00

Source: Household data, OOSCY mapping survey, 2022

Table A4: Over-age children

	ECCDE age (3-5)		Primary school age (6-11)		Junior Secondary School age (12-14)		Senior Secondary School age (15-17)		Total	
	Fre q.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Pre-Primary	2	1	3	0	1	0	4	1	10	0
Primary School 1	99	65	207	19	125	22	68	20	499	23
Primary School 2	42	28	289	26	88	15	65	19	484	22
Primary School 3	5	3	293	26	75	13	92	27	465	21
Primary School 4	4	3	159	14	65	11	7	2	235	11
Primary School 5			97	9	96	17	16	5	209	10
Primary School 6			60	5	102	18	38	11	200	9
Junior Secondary 1			2	0	15	3	15	4	32	1
Junior Secondary 2					8	1	11	3	19	1
Junior Secondary 3					2	0	14	4	16	1
Senior Secondary 1					1	0	5	1	6	0
Senior Secondary 2					1	0	1	0	2	0
Senior Secondary 3							3	1	3	0
Total	152	100	1,110	100	579	100	339	100	2,180	100

Source: OOSCY Survey Data, OOSCY Mapping 2022

APPENDIX B: KIX RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Year	Research Questions
Year 1 (9 months)	RQ:1: What is the scale and prevalence of out-of-school girls and boys of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds?
Year 2 (12 months)	RQ 2: What is the effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptability of the education innovations in relation to the OOSC population? RQ3: What is the scale and prevalence of out-of-school girls and boys of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds? RQ 4: what is the required educational investment of the innovation within the context of the state educational investment? How cost-effective are the educational innovations in the context of Africa and to move to scale? RQ 5: how are the education innovations influencing girl's empowerment/behaviour, gender equality and social change?
Year 3 (10 months)	What policy and planning structures exist for state and non-state collaboration to scale innovations within each country?