

Supporting the Nigerian Safe Schools Initiative (SSI)

Promoting safe and uninterrupted access to education for school children

Challenge

As of September 2016, there were more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons in the states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, which are most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. Boko Haram strongly rejects western education and attacks public and private schools.

In April 2014, more than 200 girls aged between 16 and 18 were abducted from a secondary school in the Nigerian town of Chibok by Boko Haram insurgents. Hundreds of schools and other educational facilities have been destroyed, school teachers killed and students kidnapped. Between 2009 and 2015, attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria destroyed more than 910 schools and forced at least 1,500 to close. This has left more than 600,000 school-age children without access to learning due to the conflict.

This endangers the educational objectives of the government and denies the human right for education for a large number of Nigerian boys and girls.

Approach

The Federal Government of Nigeria decided to complement its efforts to improve security in the North-East with targeted development interventions. The main objective is to deliver basic services in healthcare and education, help families whose lives have been ruined by the conflict, rebuild livelihoods, and reconstruct infrastructure.

Project Name	Promoting the Safe Schools Initiative
Commissioned by:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Region	Borno, Yobe & Adamawa
Lead Executing Agency	The Nigerian Ministry of Budget and National Planning
National Partners	The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Finance; National Emergency & Management Agency; Federal Ministry of Education
Duration	December 2014 – December 2016
Financial Volume	€ 2.5 million

In this context, the Nigerian Government, together with the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, announced the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) in May 2014.

The initiative seeks to improve the protection and safety of students, family members and teachers. It focusses on:

- Rehabilitating the security infrastructure at schools and establishing community-orientated security concepts;
- Transferring students from high risk areas to safe schools and providing complementary trauma counselling; and
- Providing education for internally displaced persons in camps and communities.



Photo left: Group of female SSI students during a GIZ visit at Minna school © GIZ

Photo right: SSI-supported students on their way back to class © GIZ



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Photos left: SSI-supported students studying with their peers at Minna Federal Government College © GIZ

The SSI is governed by a Steering Committee, which has a mandate to provide overall guidance for the implementation of the project. In addition, a Technical Committee offers recommendations and advice to the Steering Committee on how best to execute the Initiative. GIZ is represented in both committees.

The initiative is co-financed by the following parties:

- The Federal Government of Nigeria;
- Nigerian Business Leaders (private sector);
- The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ);
- The Norwegian Government;
- The African Development Bank (AfDB);
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID); and
- The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID).

The German contribution provides support to the student transfer component of the Initiative.

Impact in Numbers ...

More than 2,400 students have been transferred and given admission to government schools in safe parts of the country, where they receive comprehensive support. Support to the SSI helps to protect the students against further trauma and allows them to receive access to education. Approximately 70% of transferred students are female.

... and stories

Boko Haram has been burning and looting schools since 2009. By January 2015, 254 schools had been burned, and 276 were partially destroyed in Boko Haram attacks in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, according to the National Emergency Management Agency.

Adamu Sani was unable to continue schooling once Boko Haram burned down his school in Mubi South, Adamawa state. Displaced by the conflict, he and his family found their way towards Yola, the state capital. It was there that he heard of the Safe Schools Initiative, and his hope in continuing school was restored. The Safe School Initiative transfers students from high risk areas in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states to safe schools in other parts of the country. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has contributed 2 million EURO towards this component.

The student transfer component involves more than 2,400 students – at least 800 students from each of the three most affected states. All of the students like Adamu, fled Boko Haram violence that disrupted their access to education. Transfer of students began in early 2015. Adamu was among those students transferred within the first few months of the year. He is one of 63 students at his school that were admitted through the SSI.

Adamu, now in Senior Secondary Form 3 at a Federal secondary school in Minna, Niger state, says the transfer allowed him to learn more, and to grasp more opportunities than he would have at his school in Mubi South. Though being so far from home has been at times difficult, Adamu says: "If you want to be someone, you have to work hard despite the difficulties. I have benefitted greatly from the programme."

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