

## **POLICY BRIEF**

**Effective Teacher Management  
in Crisis Contexts: Lessons  
Learned from the Kaduna  
State Teacher Recruitment,  
Deployment, and Retention  
Policy to improve education  
outcomes in Northeast Nigeria**

**The Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis (ERICC) Research Programme Consortium is a global research and learning partnership that strives to transform education policy and practice in conflict and protracted crisis around the world – ultimately to help improve holistic outcomes for children – through building a global hub for a rigorous, context-relevant and actionable evidence base.**

ERICC seeks to identify the most effective approaches for improving access, quality, and continuity of education to support sustainable and coherent education systems and holistic learning and development of children in conflict and crisis. ERICC aims to bridge research, practice, and policy with accessible and actionable knowledge – at local, national, regional and global levels – through co- construction of research and collaborative partnerships.

ERICC is led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with Academic Lead IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society, and expert partners include Centre for Lebanese Studies, Common Heritage Foundation, Forcier Consulting, ODI, Osman Consulting, Oxford Policy Management and Queen Rania Foundation. During ERICC’s inception period, NYU-TIES provided research leadership, developed the original ERICC Conceptual Framework and contributed to early research agenda development. ERICC is supported by UK Aid.

Countries in focus include Bangladesh (Cox’s Bazar), Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan and Syria.

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**Suggested citation**

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## Executive summary

Although basic education is officially free and compulsory in Nigeria, an estimated 19.7 million children and youth are out of school, most of whom are in northern Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> Even when they are enrolled and attend classes, students are not learning the required foundational skills and often receive poor quality instruction due to limited resources, poor school infrastructure and teacher shortages.<sup>2</sup> Attendance rates and learning outcomes in northern Nigerian states are among the poorest in the country,<sup>3</sup> driven by various factors including protracted conflict, economic hardship, and sociocultural norms that discourage attendance in Western education, especially for girls.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, deliberate attacks on local education systems by armed insurgents in Northeast Nigeria since the late 2000s have led to the death, abduction and displacement of students and teachers, widespread school closures and psychological harm to children.<sup>5</sup>

Teachers are critical to improving the quality of teaching and learning in Nigerian schools.<sup>6</sup> However, like many education systems in remote, low-resource and conflict-affected settings,<sup>7</sup> Nigeria faces challenges in identifying and retaining competent teachers and adequately staffing schools.<sup>8</sup> Recent studies conducted as part of education projects funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) found that few teachers had sufficient levels of professional knowledge and skills to be effective in their classrooms, even when they had the minimum teaching qualifications.<sup>9</sup> Low pay, poor supervision and limited opportunities for professional development and career progression also contribute to low teacher motivation, high absenteeism and attrition.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2022) *Factsheet 62 / Policy Paper 48: New estimation confirms out-of-school population is growing in sub-Saharan Africa*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382577>

<sup>2</sup> Adeniran, A., Ishaku, J., & Akanni, L. O. (2020). Is Nigeria experiencing a learning crisis: Evidence from curriculum-matched learning assessment. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 77, 102199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102199>; Universal Basic Education Commission. (2019) *2018 National Personnel Audit (NPA) report on public and private basic education schools in Nigeria*. Binani Printing Press; UNESCO. (2021) *Education Sector Analysis: Assessing the status of education in the federation and Oyo, Adamawa, and Katsina States*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. <https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/education-sector-analysis-federal-republic-nigeria-assessing-status-education-federation>

<sup>3</sup> Akogun, O., Adesina, A., Njobdi, S., Salmon-Letelier, M., & Diazgranados Ferrans, S. (2023). *ERICC Research Agenda for Nigeria* (ERICC Working Paper). ERICC consortium. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24231028.v1>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA). (2018). *Nigeria humanitarian response plan*. UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service. <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/642/summary>

<sup>5</sup> Sarwar, M., Homonchuk, O., & Nicolai, S. (2024). *Drivers of (in)coherence in the delivery of education in Northeast Nigeria* (ERICC Working Paper). ERICC consortium. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.25849012.v2>; The Federal Republic of Nigeria and The World Bank Group. (2015). *Northeast Nigeria recovery and peace building assessment: Volume I synthesis report*. World Bank Group Open Knowledge Repository. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25791>

<sup>6</sup> Metzler, J., & Woessmann, L. (2012). The impact of teacher subject knowledge on student achievement: Evidence from within-teacher within-student variation. *Journal of development economics*, 99(2), 486-496. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2012.01.002>

<sup>7</sup> Evans, D. K., & Acosta, A. M. (2023). How to recruit teachers for hard-to-staff schools: A systematic review of evidence from low- and middle-income countries. *Economics of Education Review*, 95, 102430. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2023.102430>

<sup>8</sup> Bennell, P., Anyawu, S., & Dodo, M. (2014). *The supply of and demand for primary and junior secondary school teachers in Katsina State, 2014-25*. Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria (EDOREN). <https://edorennigeria.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/edoren-katsina-teacher-supply-and-demand-study-2014-12-04.pdf>

Humphreys, S., & Crawford, L. (2014). *Review of the literature on basic education in Nigeria: Issues of access, quality, equity and impact*. EDOREN. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4955.3768>

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, D., & Hsieh, J. (2014). *A diagnostic assessment of the professional development needs of teachers in Nigeria: the characteristics, knowledge and skills of teachers in Katsina State* (Report number 4 for GEP3). UNICEF; De, S., Nnodu, I., Hurrell, A., Megill, D., & MacAuslan, I. (2014). *Teacher Development Programme (TDP) evaluation framework and plan*. EDOREN. <https://edorennigeria.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/tdp-evaluation-framework-final-version.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Steenbergen, V., & Hill, P. S. (2016). *Primary school teachers in North-Western Nigeria: policy goals, objectives and challenges*. EDOREN. [https://edorennigeria.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/january-18th-2nd-edit\\_edoren\\_north-western-nigeria.pdf](https://edorennigeria.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/january-18th-2nd-edit_edoren_north-western-nigeria.pdf)

To address these challenges with teacher supply, competency and management, the Kaduna State government developed and adopted a teacher recruitment, deployment and retention policy in 2019, drawing on rigorous evidence and policy recommendations generated by an FCDO-funded research study in the state.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on the Kaduna State policy, in 2022 Adamawa State (another crisis-affected state in Northeast Nigeria) developed similar legislation to address their teacher management challenges. Credible evidence on the effectiveness, impact and adaptability of existing policies is important for policy transfer and adaptation in similar contexts. However, there is limited evidence to date on the degree to which the Kaduna State policy guidelines were implemented, their impact on the number and quality of available teachers, and the successes or limitations of the implementation process.<sup>12</sup>

This policy brief outlines the extent to which the 2019 Kaduna State Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention Policy has been implemented as intended. It highlights the factors that enabled or hindered the implementation process and provides recommendations for policymakers seeking to improve teacher management processes in Northeast Nigeria and other conflict-affected settings. This brief draws on the findings of an ERICC research study,<sup>13</sup> which assessed the implementation of the 2019 Kaduna State policy to determine its adaptability to new conflict and crisis settings in Northeast Nigeria. The findings are based on data collected by Oxford Policy Management in 2023 through surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with policy implementers, headteachers, teachers and school-based management committees in Kaduna State. It contributes credible evidence on the effectiveness of policy implementation, which is important for continuous improvement within states, and policy adaptation in other contexts in the region.

## A. Implementation status of the 2019 Kaduna State Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention Policy

The 2019 Kaduna State Teacher Recruitment, Deployment, and Retention Policy aims to develop equitable merit-based processes for identifying, selecting and deploying qualified teachers to schools based on needs. It also aims to improve coordination among the institutions responsible for teacher recruitment and management and support teacher retention through improved compensation packages and continued professional development.

However, due to limited financing and policy incoherence across state education agencies, the implementation of the policy was delayed until 2023 when Kaduna State launched its next formal recruitment exercise. As indicated in Table 1 below, while several recommendations around identifying

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Kontagora, H. L., Watts, M., & Allsop, T. (2018). The management of Nigerian primary school teachers. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 59, 128–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.10.002>

<sup>11</sup> Allsop, T. & Watts, M. (2018) *The use of evidence in developing primary education policies in North-Western Nigeria*. EDOREN; Akogun, O., Adesina, A., Njobdi, S., Salmon-Letelier, M., & Diazgranados Ferrans, S. (2023). *ERICC Research Agenda for Nigeria* (ERICC Working Paper). ERICC consortium. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24231028.v1>

<sup>12</sup> Akogun, O., Adesina, A., Njobdi, S., Salmon-Letelier, M., & Diazgranados Ferrans, S. (2023). *ERICC Research Agenda for Nigeria* (ERICC Working Paper). ERICC consortium. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24231028.v1>; ERICC consortium. (2024). Drivers of (in)coherence in delivery of education in Northeast Nigeria (ERICC Policy Brief). ERICC consortium. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.25849072.v2>

<sup>13</sup> Oballum, J., Olisenekwu, G. & Oliobi I. (2024). Review of the implementation of the Kaduna State Teacher Recruitment, Deployment, and Retention Policy to improve education outcomes in North-East Nigeria (ERICC Working Paper). [Forthcoming]

and selecting qualified teachers have been implemented thus far, the guidelines around teacher deployment and retention have yet to be implemented.

**Table 1. 2019 Kaduna State Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention: Policy implementation scorecard**

Complete	Ongoing	Not started
<p><b>Teacher needs assessment</b></p> <p>Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify teacher gaps across the state by subject, grade, school and locality.</p>	<p><b>Teacher qualifications</b></p> <p>Establish a minimum teaching qualification of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) for all newly recruited and existing teachers or a bachelor's degree in an education-related field.</p>	<p><b>Teacher deployment</b></p> <p>Deploy adequate numbers of qualified teachers to schools to fill teacher gaps and maintain an effective pupil-teacher ratio, considering desired locations specified in job applications, teacher rank and tenure at the current school.</p>
<p><b>Vacancy advertisement and application processes</b></p> <p>Advertise all vacancies and implement an online application process to streamline the recruitment process.</p>	<p><b>Teacher selection</b></p> <p>Ensure merit-based selection of the most qualified candidates based on performance in screening examinations and interviews.</p>	<p><b>Teacher compensation</b></p> <p>Adopt the national Teacher Salary Scale with regular and timely merit/vacancy-based promotion of teachers, and provide specific allowances for teachers posted to underserved schools/regions (rural and special needs schools) to support teacher retention.</p>

## B. Factors that enabled and constrained the implementation of the policy in Kaduna State

The study identified several factors that enabled or constrained the implementation of policy recommendations and guidelines.

### 1. Enabling factors

**Committed leadership.** The commitment of the immediate past state governor Mallam Nasir El-Rufai to evidence-based quality improvements played a crucial role in driving reforms. This political buy-in was crucial in addressing the challenges of overlapping responsibilities, weak coordination among state agencies, and historical interference in teacher recruitment.

**Stakeholder engagement.** Broad stakeholder engagement fostered policy coherence and cooperation among key actors. Involving representatives from state and local government, colleges, universities, teacher associations and communities at various stages of the recruitment process

improved inter-agency coordination, built public trust and ensured fairness and representation of diverse interests.

**Technology integration.** Digitising the recruitment process through online vacancy announcements, application systems and email updates improved efficiency. This streamlined candidate application and selection, reducing reliance on costly and error-prone processes.

## 2. Constraining factors

**Limited resources.** A mismatch between state-level policy mandates and available funding hindered implementation. Although the State Universal Basic Education Board coordinates teacher recruitment, the fiscal responsibility for teacher compensation lies with local governments. This led to the delay of the planned launch of the recruitment exercise in 2022 due to insufficient funding in local government budgets.

**Rural digital divide.** Although technology integration enabled efficiency gains in the recruitment process, rural applicants were at a disadvantage due to limited internet connectivity, forcing them to travel to urban areas to submit applications or participate in screening examinations amidst continued insecurity across the state.

**Lack of 'hardship posting' incentives.** The non-implementation of recommended financial incentives to compensate for long and expensive commutes, limited rental accommodation and security concerns make it harder to post and retain teachers in rural or conflict-affected locations.

**Cultural and language barriers.** Qualified teachers may be unwilling to take up postings in communities where they do not identify with the majority religion or speak the local language, particularly given the states' history of ethno-religious conflict.

## C. Promising strategies for implementing effective teacher management policies in Kaduna State and Northeast Nigeria

**Prioritise state-level policy advocacy.** Engage with the governor and other state-level executives to secure strong political buy-in on policy recommendations. This will ensure alignment and policy coherence and provide support and protection to actors executing reforms that may face resistance from vested interests.

**Enhance vertical and horizontal coordination between various state-level agencies and local government authorities.** Regularly convening state and local-level actors during the policy development phase can ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear and timely policy implementation is feasible given available resources.

**Explore alternative financing mechanisms for teacher salaries and incentives to ensure the sustainability of teacher recruitment and retention efforts.** Investigate partnerships with the private sector, civil society organisations and international development agencies to fund teacher salaries, incentives and continuing professional development. This will help ensure the sustainability of teacher recruitment and retention efforts.

**Implement a hybrid recruitment model to create a more inclusive recruitment process.** Recruitment processes can incorporate both online and offline modalities to address the digital divide and continued insecurity that disadvantage certain candidates. This could involve setting up internet access points in rural areas, providing the option to mail-in submissions, offering allowances for candidates travelling to examination locations or creating location-specific quotas and deadlines to ensure no applicants are disenfranchised.

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework should include a strategy for collecting baseline data, conducting formative assessments of stakeholder perspectives, continuously tracking measurable outcomes and impacts, and using data and insights to inform policy adjustments.

