



## EdData II—Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity

### Research to Advance Education Access

**RARA is conducting research on education access to provide policy makers with the information needed to make evidence-based decisions.**



Photo: R. Drake Warrick

*A data collector from the Bauchi State Universal Basic Education Board interviews a malam to gather basic information about Almajiri, the learning centers where they are housed, and the malams who run these learning centers.*

Despite significant increases in the number of children participating in formal schooling in Nigeria, too many children remain out of school, especially in the north. To address this issue, the Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is conducting research in the areas of early grade reading and education access in Northern Nigeria.

RARA is conducting research to better inform the Nigerian government as it develops new strategies to increase educational access for out-of-school children, especially girls and Almajiri (Islamic boarding school pupils), in Bauchi and Sokoto states.

#### **Research Process and Main Activities**

RARA research on education access tests several hypotheses regarding parental decision making and school participation. In addition, the research is evaluating various strategies for monitoring barriers to school participation, assessing the impact of perceived insecurity on participation in formal schools, and assessing the extent of youth participation in Qur'anic learning centers (both mobile and boarding facilities).

#### **Contact information**

R. Drake Warrick, Chief of Party  
rwarrick@rti.org

Each RARA research study is designed to provide stakeholders with the information needed for data-driven policy development and decision making. Individual research activities are described below.

Before beginning the research activities, RARA convened an Access Technical Working Group in each state. The group is composed of officials from the Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs), Arabic and Islamic Education Boards, Ministry of Religious Affairs, State Agencies for Mass Education (SAME), and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). These groups provide guidance, raise awareness and support, and share findings. Group members also serve as data collection trainers and data collectors.

### Analysis of Access Interventions

Several programs are currently being implemented in Bauchi and Sokoto to address access issues for girls, vulnerable populations, and Qur’anic school learners. Through interviews and a literature review, RARA analyzed these programs to determine how they affect target populations and their relative effectiveness in achieving desired results, particularly in ensuring persistence in school. RARA identified intervention focus areas and examined the systems developed to identify beneficiaries, transfer resources, and monitor participation in the programs. The interventions were designed to improve access to education; however, RARA found that, in most cases, monitoring and impact assessment were too limited to effectively track program outcomes.

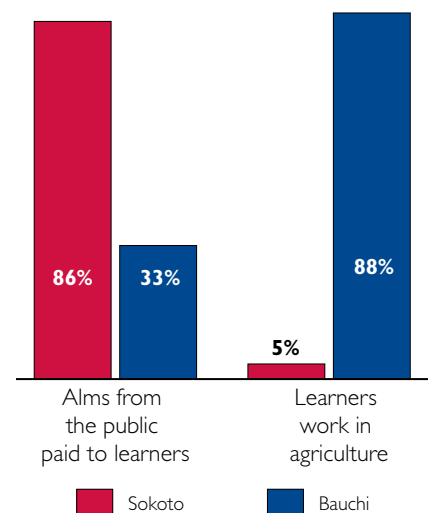
### Integrated Qur’anic Education Study

RARA is assessing education access outcomes associated with integrating conventional school subjects (such as reading and mathematics) into Qur’anic learning centers. The SAME in each state identified Qur’anic schools to be integrated, and RARA is collecting data on both learner participation in integrated lessons and the number of pupils who enroll or drop out. RARA is also conducting interviews with these learners’ parents or guardians to learn the factors involved in their decisions to enroll or un-enroll their children in integrated study. This information will be used to inform policies and practices regarding the integration of Qur’anic learning centers.

### Almajiri Mapping Study

RARA is working closely with the state ministries of education, SUBEB, SAME, Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA), and religious organizations to conduct a first-of-its-kind survey of Qur’anic learning centers in Bauchi and Sokoto states. The purpose of the research is to better understand the population and characteristics of these institutions, their teachers (known as malams), and learners (known as Almajiri) in order to better meet their formal education needs. The survey includes interviews with more than 2,600 malams, who provide information such as the number of learners attending the learning centers and their age and state of origin. RARA is also gathering information about the malams and the schools, including their sources of revenue (see graph). RARA research on Almajiri learning centers will help inform interventions aimed at improving education access.

**Principal Revenue Source for Almajiri Center, by State**



### Household Survey

RARA is conducting a household survey to measure overall school participation, determine parents’ perceptions of education quality, and identify the frequency with which learners face barriers to school participation. RARA is working with NBS and the Access Technical Working Group to develop survey instruments, and NBS is leading data collection and analysis. The resulting report will provide a clear picture of perceptions of education quality, which will in turn inform actions to address concerns.

### Civil Society Organization Capacity Mapping

RARA is identifying civil society organizations that support education in Bauchi and Sokoto states. Through research and visits with the organizations, RARA will compile a resource describing the groups’ work and institutional capacity.