


TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF MARGINALISED GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN:

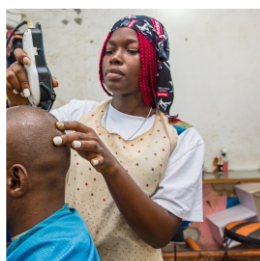
ENGINE II Implementation Approaches and Success Stories

 **I AM A LEADER**
I AM ENGINE




TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF MARGINALISED GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN:

ENGINE II Implementation Approaches and Success Stories




OUR STORIES



ENGINE II AT A GLANCE


18,000 REACHING GIRLS 17-23 YEARS (IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL)

WORKING IN **4** STATE; LAGOS KANO KADUNA AND FCT



18 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

79 schools and **194** communities

 SECOND CHANCE EDUCATION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRLS

PARTNERING WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS




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ACRONYMS

AME	-	Agency for Mass Education
AEA	-	Abuja Enterprise Agency
AHI	-	Action Health Incorporated
COVID-19	-	Coronavirus Disease
CVAP	-	Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
DFID	-	Department for International Development
ENGINE II	-	Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises
ERC	-	Education Resource Center
FCT	-	Federal Capital Territory
GEC	-	Girls' Education Challenge
GGASS	-	Government Girls Arabic Secondary School
GGSS	-	Government Girls Secondary School
GCs	-	Gender Champions
G&C	-	Guidance Counsellors
H2H	-	House to House
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
ISG	-	In-School Girl
JIBWIS	-	Jama'atul Izalatil Bid'a Wa Iqam-Atussunnah
JAMB	-	Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board
KHAN	-	Kindling Hope Across Nations Initiative
LCTM	-	Learner Centered Teaching Methodology
LGA	-	Local Government Area
LCF	-	Learning center Facilitator
LSTEF	-	Lagos State Employment Trust Fund
MFI	-	Micro Finance Institution
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
NASFAT	-	Nasrul-lahi-li Fathi Society of Nigeria
NCE	-	National Certificate of Education
NECO	-	National Examination Council
NMEC	-	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education
NYSC	-	National Youth Service Corps
OSG	-	Out-of-School Girl
PES	-	Primary Education Studies
PTA	-	Parent- Teacher association
SSCE	-	Senior School Certificate Examination
SWODEN	-	Society for Women Development and Empowerment of Nigeria
TCF	-	Tabitha Cumi Foundation
TPDD	-	Teachers Professional Development Days
T&L	-	Teaching and Learning
WASH	-	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

PREFACE

In Nigeria, girls face several social, cultural and economic constraints to accessing quality education and economic opportunities. The most significant constraints include high poverty rates, limited access to finance and markets for income generation. Others are early marriage and pregnancy, lack of life skills and vocational skills trainings, illiteracy, distance to school, poor school infrastructure facilities and inadequately trained teachers. In addition, security concerns, lack of guidance and counselling, inadequate reproductive health education and services, lack of community support and conducive environment and gender inequalities and norms in and outside classrooms negatively affect girls' opportunities. These constraints are exacerbated by systemic weaknesses and a one-size-fits-all approach to challenges which often differ from one state or community to the other.

Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) II is a three and half year (April 2017 – September 2020) adolescent girls' education programme funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), through the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC). ENGINE II was designed to address the barriers that limit marginalised girls' access to education and business opportunities and to create an enabling environment for them to thrive. Mercy Corps leads the implementation of ENGINE II in Nigeria, along with four Civil Society Organisations including Society for Women Development and Empowerment of Nigeria (SWODEN) in Kano, Action Health Incorporated (AHI) in Lagos, Kindling Hope Across Nations Initiative (KHAN) in Kaduna and Tabitha Cumi Foundation (TCF) in the Federal Capital Territory.

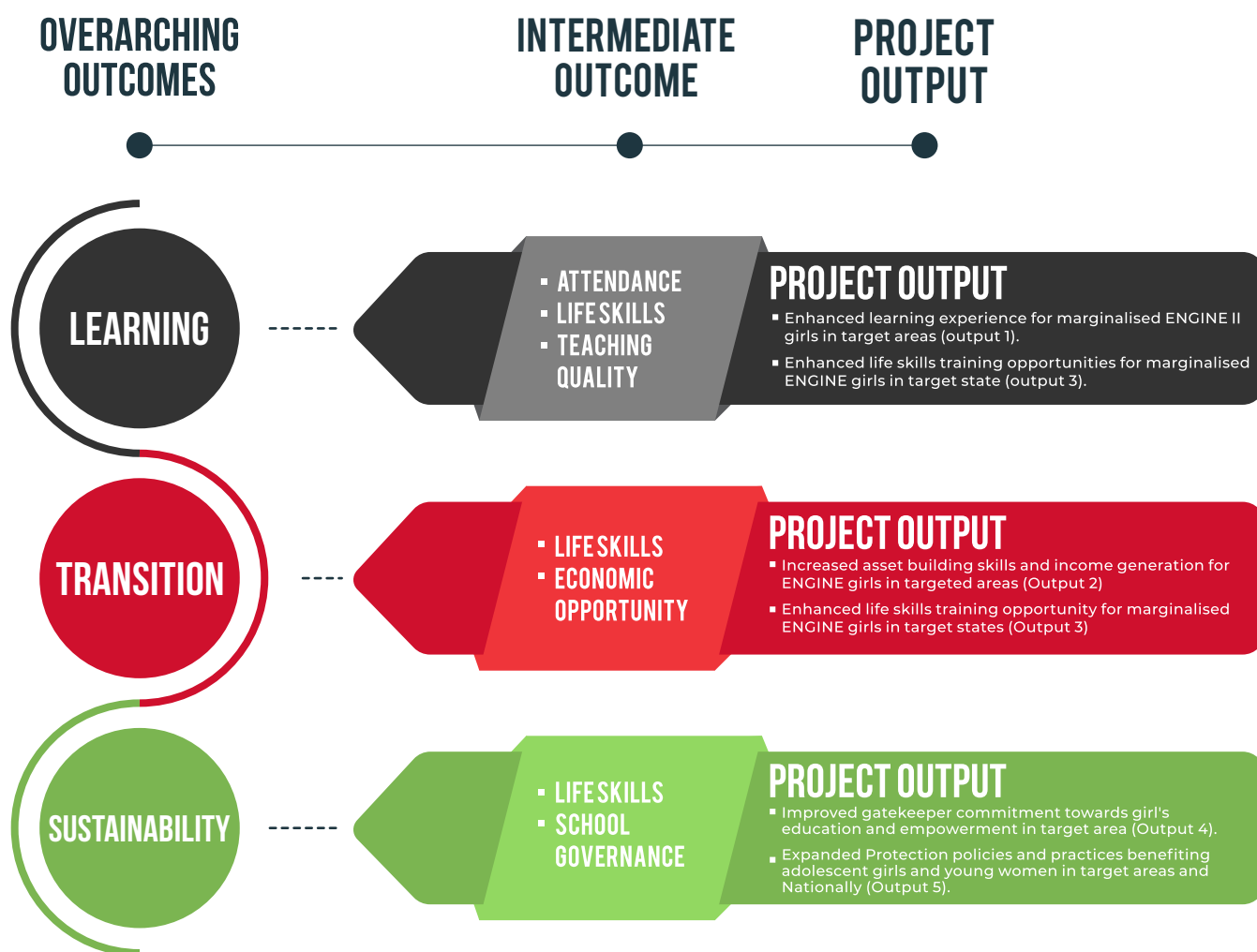
The ENGINE II programme has had success in improving learning outcomes and enhancing economic opportunities for marginalised girls across its four focal states - Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory. Structured around three core outcomes **Learning, Transition and Sustainability**, ENGINE II implemented an integrated approach to:

- 1) enhance learning experiences,
- 2) increase income-generation and asset building skills,
- 3) enhance life skills training opportunities,
- 4) improve gatekeeper commitment and perception towards girl's education, and
- 5) expand policies and practices benefitting adolescent girls and young women.

This booklet summarises the successes achieved by ENGINE interventions, with a focus on stories that highlight behaviour change in real life. The stories cover the five outputs of the programme and illustrate how programme strategies, stakeholders' engagement, innovation and adaptive management have delivered opportunities that improved the lives of marginalised in-school and out-of-school girls.

Capturing these stories gives us great pleasure. Not only are we able to share the results collected in the programme's communities, but we have also been able to prove the effectiveness of the ENGINE II's theory of change, which provides a model for empowering marginalised girls and young women in Africa that can be replicated on a larger scale.

ENGINE II OUTCOMES



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prioritising Safety, Dignity, and Minimizing Harm to Participants and Staff

ENGINE II recognises that participants and staff may face various risks particularly where confidentiality and safety are not observed. To address these concerns, ENGINE II prioritised the safety, dignity, confidentiality and security for all programme participants in these interventions and in this document.

All information gathered followed clearly laid down protocol and safeguarding including inter agency referral protocol and information sharing. Consent was sort for all pictures used and participants were explained to in details of how these stories and photos will be shared. No photos and names of survivors have been used in the document and ENGINE II will ensure no such information is shared.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL PARTICIPANTS; FROM DROPOUTS TO PRIZE WINNERS

The Nigeria Compulsory Free Education Act (2004) has established free tuition for primary and junior secondary education. However, most schools use diverse means to charge hidden fees. This is what happened to Nike, Yinka and Bukola, who had one thing in common; they all dropped out of primary school in their final year because their parents could not afford to pay their school fees anymore. They had no other option but to adjust to their new reality. Each girl got married and had children before the age of 18. They settled into their role as mothers and homemakers.

As young girls who had high hopes and ambition to further their education, as soon as they heard about the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE) programme, they decided to enrol. Thanks to the community sensitisation activities carried out by the ENGINE II team and through one-on-one engagement by the community-based Learning Centre Facilitators (LCFs) engaging with husbands, it was not hard for them to obtain their partners' consent to take up education. Although challenging at first, these girls developed life skills, built social assets to support themselves to learn how to read, write and do arithmetic.

In 2019, Nike, Yinka and Bukola participated in the Lagos State Agency for Mass Education (AME) "EKO N KO EKOO" Quiz Competition. They went through two preliminary stages with over 400 other adult learners to reach the finals. **They won the English/Literacy category and received prizes for their achievement.**

Mrs. Fatima, their teacher at the learning centre says, *"I am proud of my girls. Who will believe that they can go from being drop-outs to winners of this prestigious quiz competition? ENGINE gave them a second chance! Nike and her friends have now graduated from the learning centre and they have received their certificate from AME."*

Looking into the future, Nike says, *"I am delighted I joined ENGINE. I can now read, write, do addition and subtraction, which helps my business, and I learned how to communicate well with my customers. In addition, I learned how to save and was able to open an account with Access Bank. I learned a lot."*

Yinka on the other hand is looking to expand her business: *"I have learned how to save, and I am grateful because my life is different. Now I own a business where I make soap, cream, olive oil and insecticide. I hope to expand someday and supply orders in large quantities."*

Bukola applies the skills learned from the programme to her business. She is getting ready to enrol into formal school. She is excited about learning again and she is now able to teach others. *"The literacy and numeracy skills that I learned in the programme has enabled me to teach my 6-year-old child in primary school. I couldn't do this before. It also helps me in my business, and I can now read and calculate very well"*.



Bukola guiding her child through her studies

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE's community engagement strategy recognises **the family as the first point of support and encouragement for a girl to achieve her potential**. In line with this strategy, volunteer Learning Centre Facilitators (LCFs) frequently visited homes to secure girls' families' commitment to the learning goals.

ENGINE II collaborated with the Agency for Mass Education (AME) in all the implementing states to **enrol out-of-school girls into existing AME Learning Centres**, in line with the National Education Policy.

In communities where there was no AME learning centre within walkable distance, ENGINE II and AME officers inspected and approved community donated spaces to be used as learning centres. Learning Centres Facilitators were selected on a voluntary basis from AME's pool of volunteer facilitators and retrained.

FATIMA: FROM POVERTY TO A BETTER LIFE

At the age of 16, Fatima dropped out of school because her parents could not afford to pay for her school fees. Shortly after, she got married and she now has three children and a home to manage. With education seemingly out of the way, she was looking to start a fashion designing business. However, she never got the opportunity to hone her tailoring skills into an income generating business. As a result, Fatima depended solely on her husband.

Fatima learned about the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE II) programme through her village Head. Excited about the opportunity to return to school, she enrolled as an out-of-school beneficiary in one of the 27 Agency for Mass Education Learning Centres supported by ENGINE II in FCT and dived into the learning activities. As a result of ENGINE II's strategy based on individual and family level accountability, Mr. Haruna, Fatima's husband, supports his wife's learning at the learning centre with his tricycle and helped with child care when she is in class.

Before long, Fatima realised she enjoyed the financial literacy and life skills sessions the most. This improved her self-esteem and revived her desire to refine her sewing skills to turn it into an income generating business. Thanks to ENGINE, she could benefit from vocational training and business expansion opportunities provided by the Creative Hub – one of the cooperatives created by ENGINE, made up of girls who were skilled or had interest in fashion design and interior decoration.

As a result, **Fatima now manages her thriving fashion and interior design business while maintaining her network as part of the Creative Hub.** Fatima now contributes to the upkeep of her family and feels more confident in the future of her two girls. *“Now I am making money, and I am no longer afraid that my girls will drop out of school.”*

In the meantime, Fatima continued attending her literacy and numeracy classes, which have helped her to develop better customer communication skills and carry out basic bookkeeping. She completed her basic and post-basic non-formal classes and has received her certificate from the AME. Fatima is always proud to display her certificate as a constant reminder that dreams do come true. She looks forward to enrolling in the continuing AME education centre to prepare for qualifying examinations into the university next year.

Fatima goes far beyond being an ENGINE programme participant. Her shop hosts 10 girls who she is now training and coaching in fashion design. She has also become a Girl Ambassador in her community and she runs a safe space for girls where she teaches life skills, menstrual hygiene and protection. With her growing business, new self-awareness and supportive husband, Fatima is now more confident to face the future, building an environment within which she and other girls can thrive.



Fatima with her sewing machine

KEY APPROACH

Teaching financial literacy and life skills in the learning centres form the base of ENGINE II's integrated approach of creating economic empowerment opportunities for marginalised girls to prevent them from dropping out of school after their reenrolment.

Through this approach, ENGINE II developed pathways for beneficiaries: (i) who showed interest in turning talent into skills; (ii) whose existing businesses could not cope with their household and school demands, (iii) who are interested in the services industry. The type of support included **Level 2 vocational training, business expansion grants/equipment and internship placement.**

Life skills training served to boost girls' confidence and develop skills such as negotiation and goal setting, which are critical in making decisions about their economic and educational advancement.

THE IREAD CAMPAIGN – FOSTERING ENTHUSIASM FOR READING AND LEARNING NEW WORDS

To fight against the low literacy rates that affect Nigeria, and particularly its northern regions, the ENGINE II programme developed a campaign tagged “iREAD campaign” to revive the reading culture and learning of new words in English. The approach aims to make reading fun and create enthusiasm through collaboration between the teachers and learners.

Through iREAD, ENGINE II organised advocacy and awareness campaigns on the importance of reading, and encouraged the teachers and learners to come up with vocabulary-enriching exercises. The teachers motivated the students to randomly search for new words to read at any time and then report them in class to receive feedback. Girls embraced the challenge as they searched and read words from posters, billboards, newspapers and any learning materials they could find, while documenting new words to share with the teachers and other learners in class. The teachers documented the reading fluency and the ability to search for new words and reported noticeable improvements in the use of grammar, pronunciation and word identification by the participants.

The approach spurred healthy competition among learners within the same schools, by awarding “Reading Star” certificates to the students who were most committed to read and learn new words, but also across schools, as the iRead initiative spread beyond ENGINE II learning centres.

Sadiya, a 17-year old student in the third-year of Senior Secondary School, declared, *“Participating in the iRead challenge has improved my English vocabulary. I do better in literacy now.”*

In light of her impressive efforts, Sadiya won the “Reading Star” certificate and, when asked how she felt being awarded such a certificate, Sadiya said, *“I could not express my joy, but it was an overwhelming feeling of gratitude. My parents were overjoyed when I got home. I flaunted my certificate to everyone who would care to see, and I have laminated it and kept it in a safe place”.*

Her improved reading and word search skills helped her cope during school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was able to subscribe from home to four different English dictionary applications on her phone and got books from her neighbours to read and learn new words.



All smiles as Sadiya emerges the reading Star!

KEY APPROACH

Literacy skills are very important in improving the life outcomes of marginalised individuals, especially literacy in English, as this is the official language in Nigeria for business and administration.

ENGINE II focused on developing **foundational and functional literacy skills using phonics**. In addition, facilitators were encouraged to begin by using words in the local language and, step-by-step moving to English letters, words and sentences.

Primers, story books (at different reading levels), videos covering demonstration of all the English sounds and phonics mobile apps were deployed to support this learning method.

The iRead campaign gave the opportunity to the girls to display the skills acquired and to further develop their knowledge through peer-to-peer exchanges and healthy competition.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES: IMPORTANT INTERVENTION FOR CONTINUED EDUCATION

After she lost her father, Hauwa could not continue her secondary school studies due to the difficult economic situation of her family. Being out of school, Hauwa did not have the opportunity to learn life skills or the capital to start any form of business. Her mother and siblings relied on other relatives and well-wishers to meet their daily needs.

Given her challenging situation, Hauwa was identified and enrolled into the ENGINE learning centre where she began to learn literacy, numeracy, financial literacy and life skills. These sessions built her confidence and empowered her to take a decision that would change her life. Emboldened by the progress she had made in her academics, Hauwa registered to take the qualifying exams to enter university. At first attempt, she did not pass. However, with the life skills and peer support she received at the learning centre, she registered again and at the second attempt, she passed her exams and got a placement to study biochemistry at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria.

Moved by her efforts, a teacher and gender champion in one of the ENGINE II supported schools, linked Hauwa to **scholarship opportunities** awarded by a faith-based organisation. Girls who received this scholarship were each awarded NGN 120,000 (Nigerian Naira) in three instalments over the course of the year.

Hauwa is now attending university and recognises education as a strong pillar of support. To give back, she is now a Girl Ambassador in her community mentoring a group of adolescent girls.

Hauwa says her motivation to follow through is based on her desperation to fight poverty and illiteracy. She said, *“I stood firm with ENGINE to escape from poverty and illiteracy which I know would only take away the hope of living a good life. Now I love everything about my school!”*



Hauwa with her friends on campus

KEY APPROACH

Many marginalised girls drop out of school because they cannot afford to pay essential fees, such as transition exam fees, application fees and enrolment fees, which are usually bulk and time-bound payments. The provision of scholarships and bursaries is critical to enable girls jump these hurdles and transit to the next cycle of their education.

In line with this, ENGINE II provided **scholarships and bursaries for girls to re-enter formal education as well as to enrol for transition exams (SSCE and UTME) at the end of senior secondary school. Bursaries were also provided to support girls' enrolment into tertiary institutions (acceptance fees, Post-UTME fees and tuition).**

AISHA: TRANSITION AND JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Sustaining the transition to the next stage of education or into the workforce is one of the key outcomes of the ENGINE II programme. To ensure that girls fulfil their potentials in education and decent work, participants are supported to transition to higher grades/education, internship, employment, work and business expansion or diversification.

Aisha, a 22-year old out-of-school programme participant, benefitted from ENGINE's transition support. Upon joining ENGINE, Aisha was selected and enrolled into intensive coaching classes to learn and prepare for transition exams. She diligently attended the coaching classes over a period of six months and passed the National Education Council (NECO) examination with credits including Mathematics and English. She then used her results to apply and gain admission to study Primary Education Studies (PES) at the College of Education.

"I was very excited when my NECO result was printed out. I had to move from one house to another showing it to my friends and telling them my story. I didn't give up, it's a dream come true for me!"

To ensure Aisha's retention in school, the programme also supported her with a business grant to expand her vegetable oil business. Thanks to this, Aisha received 50 litres of vegetable cooking oil to sell and has now increased her customers. This allowed her to pay her registration fee of NGN12,000 (Nigerian Naira) at the College of Education.

Aisha is one of 743 girls already supported by the programme to either sit or resit transitional exams in 2019 and 2020. The results available show that over 60% of the girls supported passed the exams with credit in at least five subjects including Mathematics and English Language.



Aisha with her LCF and gender champion.

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II asserts that a transition and completion strategy is necessary to improve asset-building skills and income generation. With poverty identified as the leading cause for school dropouts, ENGINE believes **that education and health interventions designed for adolescent girls are more effective if integrated with livelihoods and economic empowerment.**

In order to do so ENGINE i) established a process for identifying and enrolling participants into intensive coaching classes to prepare them for transitional exams; ii) supported girls with bursaries to re-enroll into school; iii) distributed business expansion grants; and/or iv) linked programme participants to Vocational Training Institutes (VTI) to increase their income generation for retention.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: LEVERAGING COMMUNITY ASSETS TO INCREASE THE LIFE CHANCES OF MARGINALISED GIRLS

To address the issue of school retention and dropout rates, ENGINE II, in collaboration with local stakeholders, provided financial literacy, life skills and business support to participants who were already in business and/ or showed interest in developing one.

An outstanding example of this approach has been observed in Mallagum community where, with the support from ENGINE, the Government of Secondary Schools and community stakeholders provided a farm for the girls' school to address the issue of retention.

Chatt is one of many out of school participants who re-enrolled into formal school and, with her friends in the learning centre, choose to manage the farm *"We were brought together and asked what most of us could do. It was mostly between sugarcane farming and yam farming. We decided among ourselves that yam farming brought more profit and we decided to do yam farming."*

ENGINE supported the cooperative with yam and melon seedlings and the Principal of the girls' school, who is a gender champion, provided one acre of land to the cooperative as his own contribution.

Chatt and the other girls worked hard to cultivate the land, crop tend and harvest their first set of yam tubers. The girls then sold the yams, and proceeds were shared amongst them. A portion of this money was kept in the savings account of the cooperative.

In the meanwhile, Chatt and her friends continued their studies and ENGINE supported them to register for the National Examinations Council exams.

For Chatt, her dream of becoming a teacher now looks feasible. She is growing her business and looks forward to a bright future. *"My life has changed now. My friends and I are running a business and I have a safe space where I can always go and discuss with my peers, thanks to ENGINE II and the government."*



Cooperative girls farming at the Mallagum.

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II has developed a tailored approach to economic empowerment prioritising viable businesses that girls are interested in.

In line with this, **ENGINE II used its strong relationship with the community, government and key stakeholders to provide business support to girls** such as land, free mentorship and subsidised training. This led to the set-up of cooperatives around farming (ginger, yams and finger millet) and animal husbandry.

In addition, life skills and financial literacy sessions provided the framework and knowledge base for participants to begin to identify opportunities and take advantage of natural resources that can be turned into a business.

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF NETWORKS TO BUILD WEALTH

Grace is the first and only daughter of a family of four children raised by a single mother, as her father died when Grace was just 10. Life was tough for her after her father's death. Her mother remarried and moved in with her new husband, leaving Grace and her siblings to fend for themselves. Grace stepped up in her new role as a mother. In Grace's words, *"I had to become a mother quickly. Every day I would go to the farm to work for people from morning to night. I was paid with some of the farm produce, and at the end of the day, I could make up to N1000 after selling the produce. I took the money to the market to buy cups of rice, oil and maggi to cook for my brothers and me. This is how we survived."*

Grace learned about ENGINE II through a gender champion in Jikwoyi during a house-to-house visit where she was encouraged to join the programme. She took up the offer and enrolled in the AME learning centre to follow classes on Fridays and Saturdays where she developed a strong interest for the financial management sessions as she learned how to save money *"From the money that I used to make before, I used the profits to enrol myself in a fashion house. So now, I'm a tailor."*

When the opportunity came to be part of the **"increased assets building skills and income generation intervention"**, Grace was selected as part of a cohort of 25 girls from different communities in the FCT to be part of the Creative Hub Women Cooperative Society. The Creative Hub is managed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Abuja Enterprise Agency (AEA) trained facilitators who coached girls with existing skills and taught them about product quality enhancement and standards. Among other things, the Hub trained the girls on how to finish their products properly, package them according to global export quality standards, and how to advertise them.

"We observed that they had good products, but they were not up to standard, enough to access new markets. We wanted them to have products they can showcase outside the shores of Nigeria, and to do that; they must have basic training", one of the Trainers said. Through the Creative Hub, Grace and her colleagues have produced many items such as souvenirs for big events across the country. They have also exhibited their products at many local and international trade fairs.

In March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, Grace and her colleagues took the opportunity to begin to mass produce facemasks. The demand for the masks that Grace was producing soared and she had to teach 10 other girls in her community how to make them to support her business. Grace and her team were able to supply masks to individuals in their community and made customised ones for some organisations. *"I sold about 20 masks every day and made about N4,000 during the early period of the pandemic. The girls I taught also made their own money,"* Grace said.



Cooperative girls showcasing their products.

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II encouraged girls with skillsets or business ideas to form cooperatives. Initially, the girls started saving money to start businesses individually or as savings groups with the support of their Learning Centre Facilitators (LCFs). Eventually, these savings groups turned into cooperatives with viable businesses.

ENGINE II supported the girls to register these cooperatives with the various states ministries and agencies of commerce or its equivalent. Members of the cooperatives also receive business mentoring around financial management, business structuring and diversification.

GIRLS TRANSFORMING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Ladidi is an out-of-school participant of ENGINE II programme. Her resourcefulness and passion earned her the role of a Girl Ambassador. Ladidi and her friends formed a cooperative group in their community called “**The Tunga Girls Cooperative**” with the objective of building social capital to supporting each other to grow their business. In no time, Ladidi took up the leadership role of the cooperative, life skills and financial literacy trainings expanded the group’s imagination.

With support from **the Community Leader, the cooperative has trained over two hundred ENGINE II and non-ENGINE II girls in their community in various skills such as tailoring, cosmetology, perfumery and soap making.**

The cooperative group is structured as follows: Amina and Sadiya are in charge of training on tailoring while Aisha and Faizah are in charge of cosmetology and making hair cream. Ladidi, being the chairperson is in charge of the group finances.

Ladidi says *“ENGINE II taught us to set goals, prioritise and plan. This is the foundation of our business.”*

The community is incredibly proud of the innovative ideas from the cooperative, as they all now benefit from an increased number of girls who can economically support themselves and their families. The cooperative group has instituted a community of practice promoting girls’ education and empowerment.

The Tunga Girls Cooperative has started thinking of business expansion and diversification and has ventured into poultry farming. Beginning with twenty birds, the Cooperative now has 100 birds and plans to lease lands to reach 400 birds.



Ladidi and Her Friends.

KEY APPROACH

One of the most effective ways for people to learn and take action benefitting their well-being is through peer-to-peer influence. Peers are individuals from the same age group, sex, marital or social status.

On the ENGINE II programme, girls’ fora/clubs are established within programme communities and schools to enable peer-to-peer mentoring and networking amongst programme and non-programme beneficiaries.

The peer-to-peer approach was also deployed within the learning centres, peering fast learners with slower learners, and for teacher training in small school/community-based clusters. These proved very effective as peers are more likely to open up about their weaknesses to each other.

LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE HELPED TO RESTORE MY SELF-ESTEEM

Rebecca is married with children and was reluctant to enrol into the ENGINE II learning centre because she could not read or write. Nevertheless, after the continuous community sensitisation on the importance of education, Rebecca decided to enrol. She loved the functional literacy, financial and life skills classes the most because, though she could not read or write, listening in class and interacting with other girls helped her develop her self-esteem, self-confidence, and other essential life skills.

With the encouragement of her Learning Centre facilitator, she developed her literacy skills. At home, she would practice by reading her Bible. According to Rebecca, *“Every time I saw an educated woman, I said to myself, Oh Rebecca! I wish it was me. But after two years of learning, I can now help my children with their homework instead of waiting for their father to come and teach them when he comes back from work.”*

ENGINE II gave Rebecca the opportunity to learn tailoring and, after she graduated, provided her with start-up grants to set up her business. She says, *“My confidence has improved because I am productive and contribute to my family financially. I feel recognised because I now have a voice.”*

Rebecca is now an advocate of girls' education in her community. She advises girls and young women to get an education and life skills training to help them fulfil their dreams and meet up with the expectations of today's world. *“I believe the only way to socialise freely is to be educated, because your customers or family members may be educated and you are able to mix with them.”*

Rebecca shares that she is planning to write the West African Examination Council's Senior Secondary School Certificate Exams (WAEC/SSCE). She is confident she will pass and gain admission to study Law at the Kaduna State University.

“I am full of hope. I can take care of my parents as I have always dreamed. Life couldn't have been better, thanks to the day ENGINE II discovered me,” she says.



KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II recognises the importance of self-esteem and self-confidence for girls to thrive. However, in order to develop such self-determination, girls need to be part of an enabling environment that gives them the space and the opportunity to learn and do business.

One of the characteristics observed among the girls participating in the programme was that they had low decision-making power and self-esteem.

Therefore, the ENGINE II community sensitisation approach targeted not only girls, but also girls' gatekeepers such as husbands, mothers, religious and community leaders to **address gender stereotypes and change perception towards the importance of girls' education and economic empowerment.**

The programme also targeted organised associations such as market and trade associations to serve as pressure groups for behaviour change.

BREAKING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN WORK OPTIONS

Zainab, is a 24 year old mother of two, who struggled to earn a living from her clothes and shoe trading business. She started the business in her community but hardly made enough money to take care of herself, let alone make profits. *"Doing business is hard in this line of trade. There are many people doing the same thing and people owe us money all the time."*

In desperation, Zainab sought help from her aunt who works at Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos. Her aunt introduced her to the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE II) programme, advising her to enroll. Zainab embraced the opportunity and enrolled in a learning centre. Her favourite subjects were numeracy, life skills and financial literacy. *"ENGINE II is like going to school," she said. "They taught us how to manage our businesses, save money and attend to customers. We also learned English and Maths."*

As Zainab progressed in her learning, she took up interest in the asset-building opportunity that the ENGINE II programme offered. *"We were asked to fill in a form, choosing a skill we have or want to learn. Also, we were asked if we had a business already or if we wanted to learn a new skill. Since hairdressing and tailoring skills are crowded with women, I chose fridge repair. I thought a male-dominated skill would make sense for me, and I liked the idea of fridge repairs as a job. People condemned me. They told me that I was giving myself stress. But I did not answer them because I knew when I became a successful fridge repairer, they would be the ones to praise me and bring their fridges for me to repair! So I didn't listen to them, I just focused on my work as we were taught in our life skills classes,"* shared Zainab.

She was then linked to a veteran fridge repairer in her community and received equipment for her fridge repairs as well. Now she enjoys working with her fellow artisans at the workshop. *"I like this work because it is service based. It's different from trading in shoes and clothes. Once I do my work, I get paid immediately. With the support of ENGINE, I have my certificate from the Agency of Mass Education (AME) and a way to make a living. Also, my community leader and gender champion check on me regularly to see if I have any problems, which is very helpful."*



Zainab in her workspace

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II's integrated approach provided opportunities for girls to break gender stereotypes through the gender training provided to girls and their influencers. Beneficiaries enrolled in out-of-school and in-school learning centres and were taught numeracy, literacy, life skills and financial management. They were also provided with opportunities to build assets and income generation. All of this was helped by a robust family and community support system.

HAJIYA ASMAU: A CHAMPION FOR GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

At age nine, Hajjia Asmau lost her father and had to drop out of school. Hajjia Asmau's mother was unable to take care of the family and had to marry her off to a much older man before she attained puberty. Before she lost her father, her dream was to be a lawyer but she had to give up that dream to raise a family.

Hajjia Asmau is now 49 years old and volunteers as a **Gender Champion** in her community. Her motivation in taking up this role is linked to her passion for education. *"I have realised that school is of high importance. It is very useful. Today everything is on the computer. To use ATM or make phone calls and send text messages, you must know how to read and write. When I heard that ENGINE was helping girls learn how to read and write, I helped them gather girls."*

Hajjia, like other gender champions, has been central to ENGINE II's community engagement strategy. Gender champions are individuals who are passionate and committed to the welfare, safety, fair treatment and equal opportunity for girls, women, boys and men in their community.

During her regular monitoring visits to the learning centres, Asmau found out that school attendance had dropped because the husbands of the girls were restricting their access to school. She swung into action leveraging on her status as a woman leader in the community.

Her first action was to engage other community leaders, including the village head and religious leaders, to secure their support. Then she followed up with house-to-house visits speaking to husbands. *"I usually go from house to house to speak to the husbands of my girls to encourage them to allow their wives go to school. I use the story of my life as an example of how a woman can suffer without education and become poor if they lose their breadwinner. I look after the girls like my own children. Many times, I offer to take them to school. I will wait until they finish and return them home."*

Thanks to ENGINE II's individual and family accountability approach, attendance improved in Asmau's community. Furthermore, through gender champions' efforts in Gwagwa-Jiwa, many out-of-school girls who were married and had children at an early age were reenrolled into the learning centres.



Hajjia Asmau with ENGINE girls

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II's innovative community engagement approach defines community and its actors at various levels.

At the family level, husbands, mother in-laws, siblings, parents and step-parents, and children form the critical support group.

At the school level, the learning centre facilitators, teachers, principals, school counsellors (popularly called G&Cs), peers and PTAs constitute a community. This sense of ownership and belonging encouraged house-to-house visits.

At community level, influential individuals who lived around the learning centres were selected as gatekeepers, in charge of addressing emerging issues from the learning centres. The programme eventually referred to them as "Gender Champions". The programme trained Gender Champions on topics such as gender, protection and community engagement to help them conduct house-to-house visits and one-on-one meetings to facilitate girls' attendance at the learning centres.

ENGINE II's sustainability is hinged on stakeholder support and ownership of the programme. Beneficiaries are now directly linked to the gender champions who will continue to act as a support system.

IYA EKO: THE WOMAN LEADER AND GENDER CHAMPION

Khafayat Owokoniran, popularly known as Iya Eko, is a respected economics teacher in her local public school and has been a leading voice in her community. Her work, combined with her passion for girls' education, brought Iya Eko close to many vulnerable girls and their families.

"Parents always come to me for advice if they have problems with their children not performing well in school. They report the child to me and sometimes when the girls are disturbed about something like cases of abuse, they also come to me for help. Everybody knows me"

Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE II) has been working with people like Iya Eko who have goodwill and have built a good reputation in their communities. Trust is fundamental to change perceptions, cultural bias and norms. Iya Eko is one of the many gender champions that were trained in Lagos state on protection, gender-based violence and community engagement.

She leveraged the knowledge gained from the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection (CVAP) training on the referral system to address protection concerns. Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, she reported the case of a 17 year old survivor who escaped being raped.

She is impressed by ENGINE II's model that balances academics and economic needs of the girls. *"The girls in my cluster were not just re-enrolled into school, but ENGINE assessed their existing source of livelihood and expanded their business. The girls were told that the reason their business was expanded is to ensure that they have no reason to drop out of school. Some girls who had tailoring skills received sewing machines and some girls who do makeup received equipment for their business. One of our girls who desired to be a painter was attached to an industrial paint maker."*

Iya Eko feels empowered by her new knowledge. *"I have learned a lot of things. When a girl comes to me now for help, I ask her what she can do or if she has any skill and I look for how to attach her to a mentor or vocational training institutes",* she said.



Iya Eko in the community

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II sustainability framework is partly based on the training of key stakeholders and community members on gender equality and protection guidelines. Among other things, the programme trained selected Gender Champions and key Government stakeholders on Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection (CVAP) response, prevention and risk mitigation.

This was fundamental because it ensured the spread of knowledge within the participant communities around CVAP, as well as appropriate assistance to victims/survivors of abuse, including medical care and referral to justice.

To further strengthen the referral system in place, ENGINE II mapped out local support structures to be engaged in case of abuse. In addition, ENGINE II provided training on survivor centred approaches, psychological first aid and the referral system to improve collaboration among the structures and increase the effectiveness of the assistance provided. These referral systems have been adopted by Kano and Kaduna state governments where ENGINE II worked.

PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH HOUSE TO HOUSE (H2H) SENSITISATION

Mallam Auwal is a teacher in one of the Government Secondary School of the small rural community of Gubuchi and also the selected ENGINE II Learning Centre Facilitator.

Mallam Auwal has been in the community for all of his career and this has earned him the trust and confidence of most parents. He says, *“At the beginning of the ENGINE II programme, members of the community were wary about allowing their children stay after school hours to attend learning sessions. Immediately after school, they ask their daughters to come back home.”*

Concerned about the turnout of girls at the learning sessions, he knew he had to intervene, as participants from the community needed the extra lessons to boost their performance in school especially in English and mathematics.

Mallam Auwal considered many options and decided to leverage on his social capital, since he knew most of the girls, their parents, mallams (informal Islamic religious education teachers) and husbands.

He started conducting house-to-house visits, explaining to the girls’ parents, husbands and mother-in-laws the benefits of staying in school for additional classes. They were initially hesitant but with persuasion, they accepted. *“It is because of you we will allow her stay”*, most parents will say.

Mallam Auwal, encouraged by the response from parents, took his commitment to another level. He would wait for all classes to be over to prevent Facilitators from overshooting their time and ensure every participant got home safely by pairing girls to walk together.

He says, *“To achieve this, I have the support of the school principal who also stays in school to ensure the learning centres and sessions run as planned.”*



Gender Champion on a H2H sensitisation

KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II house-to-house community engagement strategy targets individuals and family members that have “decision making power”.

The programme encouraged LCFs and principals to visit homes in order to understand the circumstances of each participant and discuss with their parents or husbands about academic and non-academic progress. With this approach, parents and caregivers felt recognised and were motivated to make more sacrifices to keep their children in school.

Only 45% of girls in northern Nigeria attend school. Poor attendance and poor learning outcomes negatively influence Parents and Caregiver decisions on education. Many parents and guardian see schooling as a waste of time as their children are not learning to read nor develop any business skills. Schooling is mostly seen as a stopgap before marriage. ENGINE worked across 194 communities to address these negative norms.

WALKING IN THEIR SHOES, THE STORY OF MR. HABILA

Mr. Habila Daniel is a very passionate teacher who believes in supporting girls' education, contrary to the majority of men in southern Kaduna who believe that marriage, and not schooling, should be a priority for girls. Mr. Habila actively engages in enrolling girls into his learning centre, helps them with their assignments and visits their homes to assure their parents of their safety in school. ENGINE engages teachers to go beyond their core duty of teaching to mitigating risk of drop out, addressing issues through follow up.

On one of his routine checks, Habila found out that two of his brightest students, Rahama and Habiba, had not registered for their transition examinations: The West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WAEC/WASSCE) because they did not have the funds to register. *“As the closing date approached, I decided to visit the girls' homes to speak with their parents/guardians about how much potential the girls have, and why it should not go to waste”,* Habila said.



Rahama and Habiba

Habila rode on his motorbike for over 20 minutes, in search of Rahama's family home. It was then that he discovered Rahama is an orphan who lived with her grandmother and other family members in a small home. He met and spoke with her grandmother and convinced her, despite the financial challenges, to do her best to fund Habiba's education. Feeling more confident, he got on his motorbike again, and went in search of Habiba's home. It took him 30 minutes to reach her family home. In shock, he thought to himself... *“On every school day, Rahama and Habiba trek this distance to access school!”*

In the past, Mr Habila had punished girls like Rahama and Habiba when they arrived late to school. This trip changed his opinion of Rahama, Habiba and other girls in his school who would frequently arrive late. Now he deeply appreciates the sacrifices the girls make each day to get to school. Habila is now a Gender Champion and an advocate. He leads initiatives that make school a safe and nurturing place for girls.

Among other things, Habila championed removing all forms of punishment for girls who come late to school. The school has since then adopted the **“no punishment for student policy”**.

Due to his intervention, both families made extra efforts to help Rahama and Habiba register for their WAEC/SSCE examinations. Rahama's parents were able to raise the full payment, but Habiba's grandmother was only able to raise half of the required funds. Habila decided to help raise the rest to complete the payment. Rahama and Habiba have now taken the exam and hope to pursue their studies.

KEY APPROACH

In many schools Nigeria, students often are punished for coming late to school. This is due to long distances from home to school and the need for girls to finish domestic work before heading to class.

ENGINE II recognises that gender is an important factor in the pattern of educational marginalisation. ENGINE II supported government and non-government advocates to champion new perspectives, behavioural and attitudinal change towards the girl child.

ENGINE II taught teachers and school leaders to wear 'gender lenses' in handling disciplinary issues in schools. **Positive discipline techniques were advocated to replace corporal punishment** to create a stimulating learning environment where girls feel free to actively participate in class without any fears.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS LOW ATTENDANCE

Mallam Hafiz, is the principal of one of the ENGINE II supported secondary schools. Confronted with low attendance rates in the learning centres, Hafiz discovered the problem was mainly due to hunger. Participants would rather go back home to have lunch than wait after school to attend learning sessions. To address this, the principal hosted a meeting between Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and members of school governance to explore possible solutions.

Undaunted by the various concerns that could arise from parents, he believed there must have been a way to address the issue of low attendance. *“Most of the parents in the communities are farmers. I thought that, even though they are poor, they are able to afford for their girls to bring extra meals to school. These meals can be prepared from basic crops they farm.”*

To encourage the girls to bring food to school, parents decided to contribute NGN 150 (Nigerian Naira) per participant to purchase food flasks. The fund raised was enough to purchase food flasks for all 20 participants in the school to bring food to school. This simple gesture improved girls' attendance to learning centres.

Parents are now happier and willing to support their daughters with food packs so they can comfortably stay after school to attend classes at the learning centre.



Mallam Hafiz in school

KEY APPROACH

School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) support the efficient and effective administration of schools. It is the official platform for stakeholder involvement and import into school governance.

ENGINE II collaborated with SBMC/PTAs to carry out various interventions at school level, including building toilets, classroom seats and classroom blocks. They also took charge of sourcing funds within their community to improve the school environment.

This approach was complemented by different capacity-building session to improve the capacities of SBMC/PTAs to find solutions to the many concerns in the school. SBMC/PTAs received trainings on gender equality, school development plans (SDP) and on the national guidelines to ensure inclusivity in appointing the membership of the SBMC.

STRENGTHENING POLICY REFORMS THAT ENFORCE PROTECTION AND GENDER FRIENDLY SCHOOLS AND LEARNING CENTRES

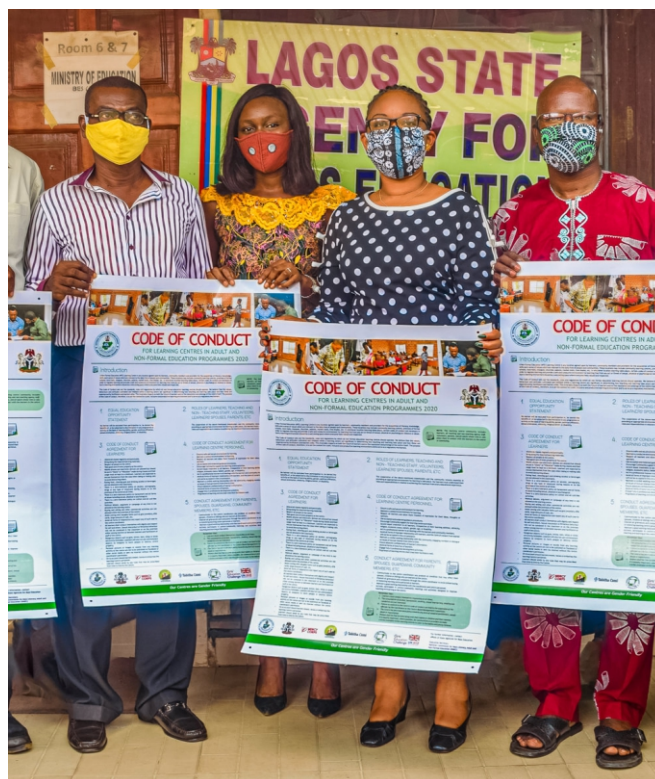
The National Education Policy mandates the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) with the overall management and standards setting for non-formal education in the 36 states of Nigeria and the FCT. To achieve this mandate, NMEC, through states Agency for Mass Education (AME) has set up non-formal education centres across Nigeria where a second-chance education is provided. ENGINE II collaborated with the Commission at the federal level and the Agency for Mass Education at the state level to support out-of-school participants' learning.

To improve the learning experience in these centres, ENGINE II in partnership with NMEC developed a **Code of Conduct for learners and teachers**. This code of conduct has now set the context and standard for a safe, gender sensitive, inclusive and productive learning environment.

Executive Secretary of NMEC, Prof. Abubakar Haladu says; *"This document is very important to us because non-formal centres in the country have a written course in the way they carry out their activities, but this seems to be the first time a code of conduct is written in order to guide and regulate the conduct of non-formal education activities in the country."*

In Kaduna, Kano and the FCT States, the government and its schools have adopted ENGINE II supported **Code of Conduct and School Charters** as minimum behavioural standards that reinforce safety and protection for learners.

ENGINE II is proud of this work and has printed initial copies to be circulated across AME centres in Nigeria. NMEC led the technical development process and translation of the code of conduct.



KEY APPROACH

ENGINE II's systems strengthening approach to policy and governance requires constant interface and dialogue with government. ENGINE II's learnings, experiences and good practices are constantly shared with the highest levels of government to influence policy priorities, direction and implementation. ENGINE interventions are designed to contribute to existing state development plans.

ENGINE II developed a Code of Conduct, School Charters and a Do No Harm pledge which contain minimum behavioural standards to ensure schools and girls safety. These guiding documents have been officially adopted for use in formal and informal education across states of intervention.

CONCLUSION: GOOD GOVERNANCE - THE BEDROCK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ENGINE II adopted a “**systems strengthening approach**” to governance to complement the Nigerian Government’s efforts to address the education challenges faced by adolescent girls. In order to do so, ENGINE II adopted a multi-level approach engaging and partnering with school, community and state level structures. The programme, through its integrated implementation, modelled the **principles of participation, responsiveness, consensus building, effectiveness and efficiency, social inclusion and equity in service delivery.**

At the school level, SBMCs and PTAs were trained and provided opportunities to jointly address the challenges faced by their schools, thus contributing to the implementation of School Development Plans for safer and secure learning environment for girls. Teachers and LCF were trained in Learner-Centred Teaching Methodology (LCTM) for effective delivery and to creatively maintain the interest of the girls during lessons. The Guidance Counsellors (G&C) were trained on protection, incidence tracking and psychosocial support for learners. To improve the school environment for marginalised girls, ENGINE developed a **Code of Conduct**, which details minimum behavioural standards to be expected by all stakeholders – students, parents, teachers, school leaders - in the school setting, and serve as the foundation for gender-friendly and safe schools.

At community level, ENGINE II facilitated and/or strengthened existing platforms for community and government dialogue. As seen in the success stories, ENGINE II community engagement strategy aimed to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviours around education and livelihood opportunities for marginalised girls. Awareness raising and sensitisation actions were accompanied by community-led implementation activities in order to build ownership, individual and family accountability. Trained and sensitised by ENGINE; LCFs, Gender Champions and Head Teachers/Supervisors engaged in house-to-house and one-to-one meetings targeted at girls’ families to build that supportive environment which is necessary for girls to thrive.

At the State level, ENGINE II identified enabling policies and collaborated with the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) with statutory responsibilities for service delivery to influence good practices for girls’ education. Partner MDAs became the coordination structure for all ENGINE II interventions. Education managers and officers at all level were directly involved in implementation.

The Honourable Commissioner of Education - Kaduna State said, “*Human Capital development is critical to education development. ENGINE II has trained and mentored a lot of our officers who were given higher responsibilities to ensure the knowledge they have gained is cascaded.*”

ENGINE II implementation was embedded into the Government’s implementation structures, platforms and processes, as the programme avoided creating additional committees or external working. This ensured the sustainability of the approaches adopted, promoted local ownership of the activities conducted, and built a “low cost” model for the programme’s interventions.

Protection and safeguarding were critical elements of ENGINE II. Although all implementing states have passed the Child Rights Act and other instruments that criminalise all forms of abuses against girls and women, ENGINE II supported the Ministry of Education and its parastatals to establish sector-specific processes and instruments for minimising, reporting and effectively handling all incidences of abuse. This led to the development of a Child Vulnerability and Adults Protection (CVAP) reporting protocol and referral system and the establishment of an organisational structure for handling incidences. **All formal and non-formal schools in ENGINE II implementation locations (Kano, Kaduna, Lagos and the FCT) have adopted the CVAP protocol and referral systems.** ENGINE II implementing partners were also supported to develop and/or update their organisation’s safeguarding policy as part of the systems strengthening effort.

Below are some important testimonials from key stakeholders.

Mrs. Elizabeth, Director at the State Ministry of Education (MoE) *“ENGINE II was part of the MoE team. They were allocated an office within the MoE’s Teachers Service Board (TSB). We provided spaces for meetings and gave ENGINE access to our teachers as facilitators. At the school level, our schools were learning centres and our principals were involved in supervision. Our teachers have been empowered to facilitate learning through the learner-centred teaching methodologies, which they have stepped down to other teachers. We are replicating already. ENGINE II developed life skills training manual for teachers and Guidance Counsellors (G&C) was used to implement the UNFPA Second Chance Education Programme. ENGINE II trained Gender Champions have supported our LCFs, the girls and communities. We have gained tremendously from the various capacity-building opportunities.”*

Mrs. Elizabeth continued, *“What ENGINE did differently from other projects was the level of our involvement. ENGINE II sourced human resources for its intervention from the Ministry. We achieved a lot. Today, in the MoE, we have adopted the reporting protocol and referral system for the reporting of all forms of abuses. We have adopted the CVAP manual and facilitators guide that the G&Cs and principals are using in facilitating gender and general assemblies. ENGINE II is working with the Quality Assurance Board to adopt all resources, which will continue to be used in schools, long after ENGINE II. The most important support, is the state adopted initiative of making sure all our teachers sign the “Do No Harm” to maintain safe learning environment in schools across the state.”*

Ibrahim Danbaki, Senior Education Officer said, *“The Agency for Mass Education was already doing what ENGINE came to do, but ENGINE II showed us new ways to make the work easier for the teacher and the learner. This has yielded better results. We are now moving from teacher to learner-centred teaching methodology. Learning is fun with the use of participatory approaches that help assimilation and retention. For the first time, our AME facilitators are trained in Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection and signed the “Do No Harm”. Interestingly, state partners were allowed to take the lead so that learnings can be scaled.”*

Nasir Abdullahi Kwalli of the Kano State Secondary Schools Management Board (KSSMB). *“ENGINE implemented 50% of programmes with us and the other half with AME. We have been with them since inception. A lot of our girls have benefitted immensely from the programme. It is our mandate to ensure that girls have access to quality education, especially marginalised girls, and that makes ENGINE II our strategic partner. We have identified various platforms for scale up of the initiatives we have learned”.*

“Kano State Agency for Mass Education provided 90% of facilitators and more than 300 staff benefitted from the ENGINE capacity development, which is different from what was obtained with other Development Partners. Beyond ENGINE II, we will continue to identify OSGs, visit girls in their homes and communities, enrol them to our centres and provide certification for them that will qualify them to be mainstreamed in any tertiary institution of their choice”. Abba Muhammed Tofa, Deputy Director, Agency for Mass Education, Kano

Overall, ENGINE II approaches and successes are premised on the ability to adapt and contextualise implementation to field realities working with varied stakeholders. ENGINE prides herself in building a hub of local capacities that can take on the intervention at all levels – school, community and system levels.

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