

Coach

SPOTLIGHT: Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+)



Implementation country	Nigeria
Program target	Primary teachers and students in Grades 1–3 in traditional and non-traditional schools
Type of implementation	NGO-led (USAID, with implementation by Creative Associates International)
Scale of intervention	Approximately 1.6 million children in Grades 1–3 and more than 500,000 OOSC and youth attending some 11,000 Non-Formal Learning Centers (NFLCs), and Adolescent Girls Learning Centers (AGLCs) ¹
Years of implementation	2015–2020; extended to May 2021
Budget	US\$82 million ²

Program Goal

Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+) is a five-year activity that aims to provide access to quality education and improve reading skills for school-aged children and youth, especially girls, orphans, and children enrolled in non-traditional schools.

¹ Campos, Juanita, Janet K. Orr, Benedicta C. Agusiobo, and Hadiza Shettima. 2017. "Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+): Midterm Evaluation Report." United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N894.pdf.

² Rowand, Fiona, Mohammed Ibrahim, Benedicta C. Agusiobo, Ganya Adamu, Arowolo Ayoola Abimbola, Comfort Kaliyad Boman, and Hadiza Shettima. 2021. "Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+): End Line Performance Evaluation Report." United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XB17.pdf.

Educational Context

Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children of primary age in the world: nearly 8.7 million in September 2020. Concurrently, 81 percent of young adults in the country who have a primary education were unable to read. Poor-quality teaching and learning environments exacerbated this issue.³ Inadequate physical infrastructure, a scarcity of teaching and learning materials, and inadequate teacher training and professional development opportunities are some of the challenges that have resulted in low educational outcomes. Finally, regional disparities also exist, with the northern states performing well below the national average in education indicators including attendance and completion.³

Program Description

NEI+ is a five-year activity focused on strengthening the ability of Bauchi and Sokoto states in Nigeria to provide access to quality education and improve reading skills of more than 1 million school-aged children and youth, especially girls, orphans, and children enrolled in non-traditional schools. NEI+ addresses a set of factors that affect access to quality education and improved reading skills for students. NEI+ accomplishes its objectives by training formal and nonformal teachers and facilitators in teaching methodologies focused on building capacity to deliver student-centered lessons. Importantly, the program has developed teaching and learning materials, including textbooks (*Mu Karanta!* for Hausa; *Let's Read!* for English), teacher guides, and other teaching and learning aids apart of the program implementation. *Mu Karanta! Let's Read!* materials are implemented by teachers within the NEI+ initiative.³

Whole-Child Development

NEI+ is implemented by Creative Associates International using the organization's *whole child, whole teacher, whole school, and whole system approach*. This approach responds to key factors that impact learning, teaching, management, parental participation, and responsiveness to children's needs.

Design of Teacher Professional Development Component

Teachers receive a variety of support in the form of ongoing professional development opportunities as part of the NEI+ Program.

For Teachers:

- ✓ **Teacher guides.** Teachers are provided with *Mu Karanta! Let's Read! Teacher Guides*, which are structured according to the lessons that are to be taught by the teacher. These teacher guides form the core teaching intervention in the program.
- ✓ **Face-to-face workshops.** Teachers participate in eight days of face-to-face workshops that cover the principles and approaches of the *Mu Karanta! Let's Read* to ensure that teachers can use the teacher guide during the school year. The training carried out in the cluster is designed in accordance with this teacher guide to ensure that the teachers thoroughly understand the approaches.⁴ Each trainee teacher gets an opportunity to practice in front of peers, receive constructive feedback, and identify opportunities to improve her/his delivery

³ Rowand, Fiona, Mohammed Ibrahim, Benedicta C. Agusiobo, Ganya Adamu, Arowolo Ayoola Abimbola, Comfort Kaliyad Boman, and Hadiza Shettima. 2021. "Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+): End Line Performance Evaluation Report." United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XB17.pdf.

⁴ For more information on school- and cluster-based continuous TPD, see *Structuring and Supporting School- and Cluster-Based Continuous Professional Development* guidance package in the Coach Design Toolkit.

of lessons in the teacher guides.⁵ The training also includes a practicum in which teachers practice lessons from the guides with pupils.

- ✓ **Coaching and feedback.** Teachers receive coaching support through regular classroom observations by School Support Officers (SSOs), Head Teachers, and Master Trainers, who provide feedback on how the teachers are using the teacher guides. Each teacher receives two classroom observations per term.
- ✓ **Professional learning communities.** All participating teachers are encouraged to take part in teacher learning communities (TLCs), in which teachers focus on how to improve their delivery of the Mu Karanta! Let’s Read! strategies and teacher guides. The meetings take place twice a month at the school level for 40 minutes each.⁶

For Pedagogical Leaders:

- ✓ **Within the program, several actors provide ongoing pedagogical support to teachers.** These actors include Master Trainers, Trainers, SSOs, and Head Teachers.
- ✓ **The program follows a cascade training model.** In the first stage, the Master Trainers are trained in the development of the NEI program. The second stage involves the Training of Trainers (ToT) chosen by states to lead teacher training at the cluster level. These trainers also provide follow-up support after the face-to-face training.⁵

Alignment with Coach Principles

Coach	Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+)	
Tailored	✓	Teachers receive tailored coaching and support through regular classroom observations. SSOs conduct 2 classroom observations per term; Head Teachers conduct 1 observation per month. Teachers receive tailored feedback based on these observations.
Focused	✓	The program is focused , as it is designed in conjunction with the Mu Karanta! teacher guides for Grades 1–3. Training activities focus on teaching the skills that teachers need to effectively deliver the lesson content in the guides.
Practical	✓	Throughout the eight-day training workshop, teachers are engaged in practical , interactive activities, including “mini-lesson demonstrations” by trainers following the I Do, We Do and You Do Strategy. Teachers also participate in teacher learning communities (TLCs), in which they reflect on their classroom practices and engage in meaningful discussion. Finally, SSOs and Head Teachers provide concrete, constructive feedback to individual teachers after classroom observations and encourage the teacher to reflect on the lesson before providing 2–3 action items to improve. ⁶

⁵ United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2016. “Mu Karanta! Let’s Read! Teacher Training Manual.” United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Northern Education Initiative Plus program. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N786.pdf.

⁶ United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2016. “Mu Karanta! Let’s Read! Guide to Coaching and Professional Learning Communities.” United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Northern Education Initiative Plus program, Washington, DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N787.pdf.

Ongoing	✓	Teachers participate in ongoing training and receive follow-up support during the school year. In addition to the 8-day initial training, 2 refresher training sessions are organized, along with periodic coaching and feedback sessions and regular participation in TLCs. SSOs conduct 2 classroom observations per term. Head Teachers conduct 1 observation per month.
---------	---	--

Program Results

- 1 End line program evaluation results indicate that reading standards have improved, with all the classes (for which grades were available) passing at the level set by the government, and an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) conducted by NEI+ for Primary 4 (P4) showing gains from the baseline in Hausa.
- 2 Findings also indicate that the NEI+ program was effective in supporting teachers to provide more interesting lessons designed to make children keen to join their peers in the classroom. Awareness-building campaigns on the importance of education for girls have been successful. Despite ongoing poverty, many parents now understand that education has a positive long-term economic effect compared to their daughters staying out of school to sell goods on the street.⁷

Want to Learn More?

- To learn more about the NEI+ program on the ground and its impact, [view these videos](#).
- To learn more about the program in the field, read [stories from the Bauchi state](#) and [stories from the Sokoto state](#).
- To learn more about read more about the journey of a NEI+ trained classroom teacher, [read her story](#).
- To learn about the teaching and learning materials developed and used as part of the program, consult the [NEI+ teacher training manual by Mu Karanta!](#)

⁷ Rowand, Fiona, Mohammed Ibrahim, Benedicta C. Agusiobo, Ganya Adamu, Arowolo Ayoola Abimbola, Comfort Kaliyad Boman, and Hadiza Shettima. 2021. "Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+): End Line Performance Evaluation Report." United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington, DC. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XB17.pdf. [DW: Please make sure that all lines are spaced equally apart.]

Program Documents Available

To view additional details related to the NEI+ program, select a link below.

<i>Background information</i>	<i>Teacher and coach materials</i>	<i>Evaluations of the program</i>
<p>An overview of NEI+ activity by Education Development Center (EDC)</p> <p>An overview of NEI+ by Creative Associates Intl.</p>	<p>Mu Karanta! Let's Read! teacher training manual</p> <p>"Mu Karanta! Let's Read! Guide to Coaching and Professional Learning Communities"</p> <p>A student teacher resource book</p> <p>A classroom observation instrument used within the program (pp 35–37)</p>	<p>An end line evaluation of the program</p> <p>A midline evaluation of the program</p>

For more information on the program and its implementation, visit Northern Education Initiative Plus (NEI+)’s website.

 [Access Coach Tools and Resources](#)

Contact us at coach@worldbank.org and visit us at www.worldbank.org/coach