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A Compendium of Success
Stories for the RANA Project





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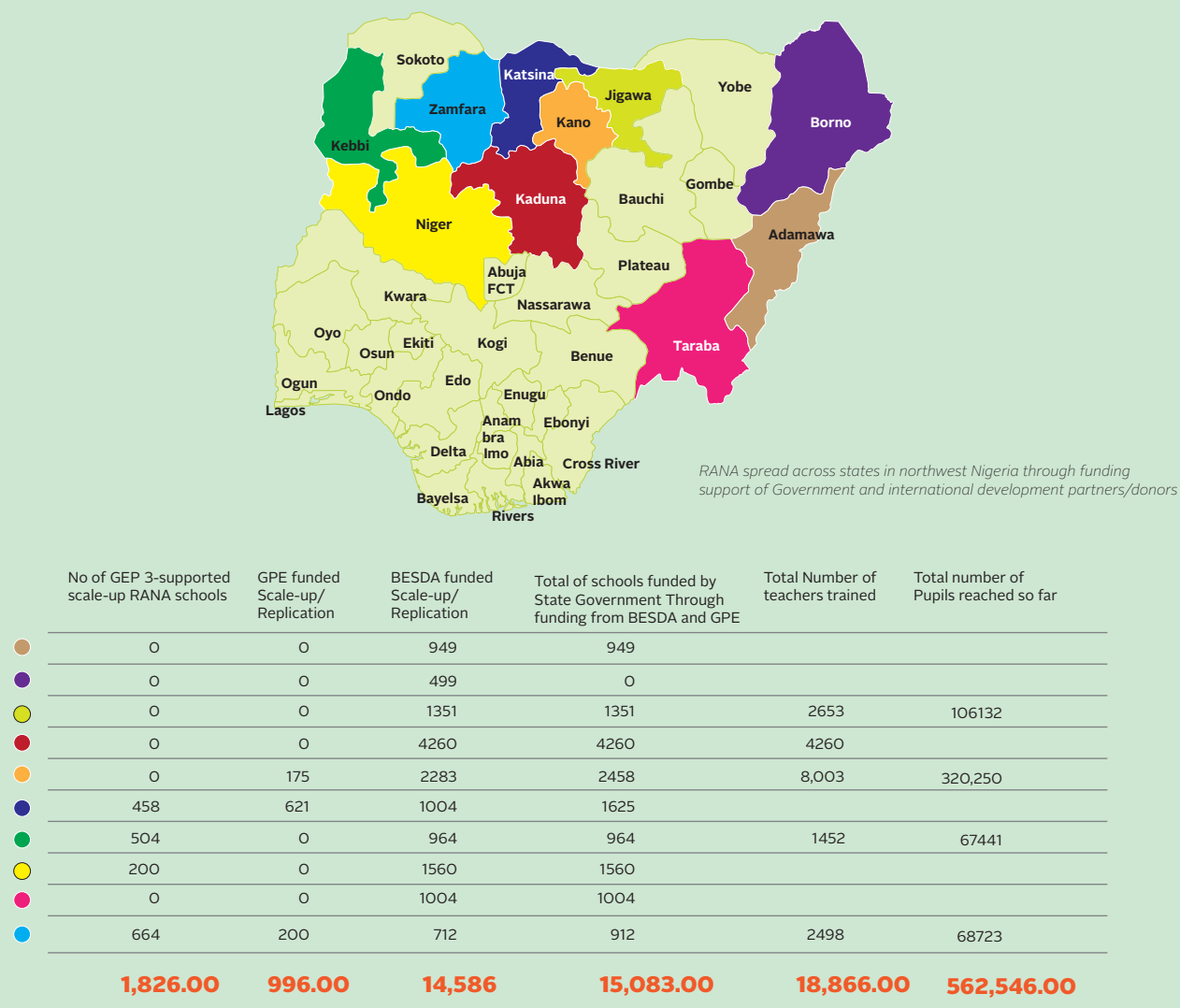


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From a pilot of 200 schools to over 17,000 schools: Lessons from the RANA Project for Scale-up and Sustainability of Early Grade Reading Program

The Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) is perhaps one of the most successful early grade reading interventions in Nigeria. From a small pilot in 200 schools of Katsina and Zamfara States for a period of three years, the intervention is currently reaching over 17,000 schools in 11 states, through collaborative scale up efforts by government and international donors. In the past two years about 1.5 million RANA teaching and learning materials were printed and distributed to schools. These remarkable strides came as a result of the sustainability-focused strategies adopted during implementation of the project. The project gained wide acceptance by stakeholders across the country and is now a household name in the education sector.



Some of the lessons learnt and core strategies that were pivotal to these successes are as follows;



Robust Stakeholder Engagement:

Wide stakeholder engagement across levels of implementation and governments appears to be the foundational pillar for the massive adoption and scale-up of the project. The deliberate effort and resources invested in stakeholder engagement and management through different fora such as study tours, trainings and meetings helped to ensure objective and balanced discussion of successes, challenges and to develop strategies for improvement. These efforts also helped to generate wide acceptability and ownership of the project that will continue throughout the project lifecycle and beyond.



Contextualisation and Standardisation of Materials and Trainings:

All RANA materials are in line with the local context of the environment where they are used for teaching and learning purposes. The materials are also well structured with scripted lessons to ease teaching where there is limited capacity. In terms of the cost for printing and distribution, the materials are quite sustainable as only one book is required by each pupil for the three terms in a session. In relation to trainings, the cascade has been standardised in line with available resources and technical capacity of government for scale up and sustainability.



Innovative Monitoring and Evaluation Approach:

The project introduced the use of mobile-based data collection for school monitoring and support system in the Nigerian education sector which has shown significant impact in promoting accountability in schools and learning. The capability of the system to track whether a school support visit took place, using the GPS function in the tablet-based monitoring tool was a reference point that triggered the adoption of this initiative by most states.



Improved Learning Outcomes:

Despite experiencing several challenges in the operating environment such as, overcrowded classrooms, poorly motivated teachers, severe infrastructural deficits that were beyond the control of the project, the learning achievement recorded by the pilot in Katsina and Zamfara, and project scale-up in Kebbi and Niger was significantly encouraging. The pilot intervention showed the percentage of girls who have basic literacy skills (defined as reading 11 LSPM) almost doubled over the life of the program, from 29.1 percent in 2016 to 55.2 percent in 2018. The percentage of girls who could read and understand grade level text (defined as reading 31 words per minute) also improved, although only from 13.7 percent to 19.1 percent. Similarly, the project scale-up to 323 schools in Kebbi and Niger in the expansion phase of the project (2018-2019) showed substantial learning achievements in terms of letter sound, syllables, and word reading. Across the schools, the percentage of pupils who can identify at least 1 letter sound or syllable almost quadrupled from 18.5% at baseline up to 68.4% at endline. Further, the proportion of pupil who can read at least one word correctly tripled from 15.5% up to 53.5% across all pupils. The learning result of from the scale up by the project has proven that the learning outcome in the pilot is replicable and can be much better if required learning inputs are adequately provided.

Rekindling Lost Hopes: A Story of Zakari Ya'u Ismail

1

Sixteen-year old Zakari Ya'u Ismail had thoughts of becoming a medical doctor to support a lot of people, especially his immediate family members, to have a healthy life. But his dreams suddenly seemed remote and unattainable after all efforts to enroll him in public school to acquire western education failed for lack of money. His father is a local farmer and his mother, a petty trader. Both parents can barely afford to put food on the table for the entire family, not to mention supporting academic needs of their children.

Growing up, Ya'u and his siblings dropped out of school because of poverty. They would hawk on the streets and work with their parents on neighbors' farms to earn a meagre income for household upkeeps. Three years ago, Ya'u alongside other children from his hometown of Biya community in Tsafe Local Government Area (LGA), were enrolled to acquire Islamic education in Madarastatul Ilmul Kur'an Integrated Qur'anic School (IQS) in another community called Maduduki community, Zurmi LGA of Zamfara State.

In May 2018, rays of hope swept through Maduduki community where Ya'u currently lives with other host community less-privileged children, who never attended formal school. Madarastatul Ilmul Kur'an IQS center was one of the IQS centers selected as recipients of RANA Haske IQS intervention. The intervention includes literacy, Science and Numeracy as part of classroom activities and strengthens capacity of the IQS facilitators to deliver quality instructions using fun ways that made learning a lot easier and exciting for the children. In January 2019, the IQS noticed gradual and consistent rise in academic performances of the IQS learners. Ya'u stood out among them and became an exemplary learner. The introduction of chants and roleplays as core ingredients in the lessons motivated Ya'u to learn with great enthusiasm and speed.

"I like read-aloud stories and songs in our lessons. Not only that they are interesting, but they also help me to understand how to read and write...my favorite chant in Numeracy lessons is Oyoyo Oyoyo . It helps me to solve basic arithmetic..."; Ya'u said as he giggled enthusiastically.



The teachers identified Ya'u as an outstanding learner who needs their support to realize his dreams. They vowed to assist him with extra lessons to improve his reading and writing skills. They have also made commitments to explore opportunities through advocacy to key stakeholders to ensure he continues his education in formal school. Ya'u is very happy with the programme and support from his teachers. He is optimistic that one day, perhaps, he will achieve his dreams of becoming a medical doctor.

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a light pink long-sleeved button-down shirt, stands in the foreground holding a dark notebook with a colorful cover that has the word "NOTEBOOK" printed on it. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. In the background, a group of other children are sitting on the ground in front of a wall made of rough-hewn stones. Some of the children are holding papers or books. The scene is outdoors in a rural setting.

“

*I will like to thank RANA
for rekindling my hopes
of becoming a medical
doctor and I will continue
to study until I achieve
my dreams,*

- Hauwa Ahmad

The Inspiring Story of a family's only Girl-Child; Hauwa Ahmad

The first thing one notices about Hauwa is her calm demeanor and reserved nature. Growing up as the only girl child in a family of six, 13-year-old Hauwa Ahmad stayed at home to help her step-mother with domestic chores while her brothers were enrolled in school. Despite the huge responsibility placed on her as the only girl child in the family, Hauwa did not relent in her pursuit to receive an education. In 2018, she was enrolled at one of the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) -Haske1 implementing Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQS), Makaratan Allon Gidan Liman, Jatau in Kafin Madaki Local Government Area (LGA), Bauchi State, where she started learning how to read. Within a short period of time, Hauwa became a star pupil in the IQS which is remarkable because when asked, she said there was no help with her homework from family members and she does not own any textbooks. Hauwa finds learning fun because the RANA-Haske1 programme introduced dramas, songs, chants and proverbs as part of the methods for instruction in class. When asked about her future ambition, she says *"I would like to be a Medical Doctor when I grow up, so that I can help to save lives"*.



While Hauwa's learning achievement improved significantly, she continued to face challenges at home which made her late to school every morning and absent in some cases. However, Hauwa's love for learning did not go unnoticed by her class-teacher and the Proprietor Mallam Sani Imam who intervened and helped to resolve the challenges she encountered at home, by discussing with her father and other members of the Centre Based Committee (CBMC) in the community.



Beaming with pride when told about her academic prowess, Hauwa's father now understands the importance of supporting her and promises to ensure that she is mainstreamed into the formal education system to enable her to achieve her dreams.

The CBMC have also stretched out their support with hope that, if she succeeds with her ambition of being a Medical Doctor someday in the future, it will benefit the entire community. Perhaps, Hauwa will set a pace for her peers and be an example for many homes in Jatau community, where educating a girl child within limited resources is seen to have less benefit.

The Haske intervention as part of the RANA programme, continues to push boundaries in improving reading, numeracy and livelihood skills of pupils in non-formal schools. More out-of-school children in the target communities now show interest in attending school due to the fun methods of classroom instruction introduced by the programme.

“

I'm happy to learn in school because I know one day I will teach my own children

- Hauwa Ahmad

*Haske aims to improve the quality of Basic non-formal education in Integrated Qur'anic Schools in Bauchi, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara States with focus on sustainability. It is a new intervention that integrates whole language, phonics, fun mathematics and experiential learning for functional literacy and livelihood. Haske is implemented by FHI 360 as part of UNICEF's Girls Education Project Phase 3 (GEP 3) funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and Educate a Child (EAC) Programme.

Reaching for Academic Excellence: the story of a teaching method that works well

In recent times, integration of basic education in non-formal Qur'anic schools in northern Nigeria has been an evolving process. The government, in collaboration with international donor organisations, is providing support in the form teaching and learning materials and infrastructure for these schools. Different trainings are also being provided to Proprietors and facilitators of Integrated Qur'anic school on basic methods of instruction, school management and administration¹. Nurul Islam Integrated Qur'anic school in Tiffi community, Ningi Local Government Area of Bauchi State, is one of such non-formal schools.



According to Samaila Mamman, a facilitator in Nurul Islam IQS, he found teaching basic literacy and numeracy as a nightmare because of limited strategies and skills for engaging learners. The situation began to improve when he was selected to attend three separate trainings organised by the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) intervention for non-formal schools known as “Haske”. When asked, he said *“Teaching was difficult and boring, but after the training I received from RANA-Haske, it is now fun to be in the class teaching. The facilitators’ guide given to me serves as a great guide in the classroom and the training received makes working with it easy”*.

Haske which means brightness in Hausa, is a new intervention that integrates whole language, phonics, fun mathematics and experiential learning for functional literacy and livelihood. RANA -Haske is implemented by FHI 360 as part of UNICEF’s Girls Education Project Phase 3 (GEP 3) funded by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and Educate a Child (EAC) Programme.

During the Haske trainings, Samaila learnt the rudiments of teaching using a facilitators’ guide and several teaching aids made from locally sourced materials. As a result of his newly acquired skills and knowledge which he now applies in teaching, the pupils presently enjoy all subjects on literacy, numeracy and livelihood skills. In his testimony, Samaila said his greatest accomplishment during this period, is to see 12 out of 18 of his pupils who had no form of education before joining his class and could not read a single word, now reading passages fluently. His pupils are also more excited about school activities and their learning achievement have improved significantly. Most of these pupils are interested in mainstreaming into formal schools and the community is putting in all efforts to make it possible.

“These achievements motivate me to seek for more knowledge so as to give the pupils nothing but the best that they deserve” Samaila Mamman.



“

The effort I put into teaching is based on my passion for academic excellence and RANA gave me the platform to do so and this is the only way I can give back to my community and I want to see them attaining greater heights in the nearest future

- Samaila Mamman

Glimpses of Hope: Baawa community constructs new learning spaces to complement RANA Haske IQS intervention

4

The Community leader and residents of Baawa community, located along the highways of Kankara LGA in Katsina State, believed that lack of quality education, inadequate infrastructure and weak community structures to support the government had contributed to the high rate of crime that affected the area. The community has only one Integrated Qur'anic School (IQS) that accommodates about 60 learners which is highly inadequate compared to the entire population of school age children in the community. As a result, a significant number of the youth in the community did not attend school and were involved in activities that pose security threat to the community.



In July 2018, the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) Project¹ expanded its scope of work and launched education intervention for Integrated Qur'anic Schools called 'Haske' programme. The goal of the Haske is to improve Hausa-language literacy and numeracy outcomes in Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQS) through improved teaching and learning materials, teacher training, school support, community mobilisation and monitoring and evaluation. The programme introduced new basic Hausa literacy, science and numeracy to be taught as core subjects in the IQS centers.

As the Haske lessons commenced in the IQS in Bawaa community, facilitators applied the fun ways of teaching Haske lessons such as songs and drama; it didn't take a month when the program captured the attention of most children and the attendance in the IQSs increased. The IQS proprietors reported that the learning spaces are already becoming overcrowded and overstretched. Some of the learners who are not able to come to school early had to take lessons standing from outside the classroom.

To address the challenge of overcrowding, a team of residents, local leaders and center-based management committee in Baawa community with support of a philanthropist, constructed new learning spaces to encourage more attendance of their own children to school. According to the community leader, the additional block of classroom was built to encourage their children, especially the Almajiris and the out-of-school children to attend school and refrain from criminal activities that had plagued the community. Children in Baawa community now attend school regularly and learning is taking place. The facilitators' attest to the improvement in pupils' learning achievements and how Haske lessons have helped to keep children in school.



“

We thank the [Haske] programme for bringing a change to our schools, we are seeing the achievements,

- Baawa Community leader.

“

I started with 60 children but after the training and introduction of new Haske lessons [by RANA], I now have 100 frequent attendants – comprising 40 boys and 60 girls. The children are having more fun during the lessons...but, the center spaces are not enough to accommodate the children,

- Malam Nazifi Abdullahi, Nazifi Abdullahi
IQS proprietor in Bawa community.

“

With RANA materials and facilitation strategy, there is a lot of improvement in terms of moral, hygiene with high interest from the host community children to be enrolled in our IQS centers

- Ahmed Ahmed Doki, Director
Katsina State Agency for Mass Education.



KADUNA STATE: The Story of Exceeding Project targets by many folds with Encouraging Beneficiary Testimonies

5

The Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) intervention in Kaduna, alongside Kano and Jigawa States was initiated on the special request of the U.K Department for International Development (DFID) as part of technical assistance for enhancing early grade reading. The programme document had a provision for training 20 Teacher Development Trainers (TDTs) on RANA Literacy Package for Kaduna state with an estimated reach to 640 in 2018/2019 academic year at average of 32 Schools per TDT. However, when the participatory and adaptive stakeholder engagement of the project met the education reform agenda in Kaduna State, **RANA was adopted as a reading programme for the state reaching the entire 4,260 schools in 23 LGEAs of the state. Leveraging the World Bank funded BESDA intervention and the state budget for basic education, Kaduna State trained additional 87 TDTs, 214 Teacher Facilitators and 6,822 Teachers as well as printed 282,000 pupils' book and 4,260 teachers' guide to reach all its public primary schools.**



4,260
Schools



23
LGAs



87
TDTs



214
Teacher
Facilitators



6,822
Teachers



282,000
Printed Pupils' Book



4,260
Teachers' Guide

Testimonies of state officials and programme beneficiaries provide insights on the motivations and impressions from the engagement:

“The Director schools of the state, Habib Idris Alhassan informed that *“the decision to expand to the entire state was reached after a RANA orientation activity we attended in Sokoto and were impressed with the methodology and believed our pupils will definitely learn from it and Hausa being the common language in the state so, it will benefit all pupils”*

A TDT Abubakar Saddeeq Aliyu from Zaria informed that *“Alhamdulillah, I would say based on the training strategies we received and stepped down, I’m confident all the teachers trained have the passion and zeal to work on this project, in fact, most of the schools trained have started teaching using RANA methodologies especially in Zaria, Hunkuyi and northern Kaduna centers where I observe most often and pupils are learning.”*

“Another TDT from Kudan LGEA, Nafisat Suleiman says, *“RANA project is well received in the state by teachers and pupils and will be a huge success even from looking at their training structure. Teachers are using the RANA songs and some of the activities, you find out that pupils are enjoying and happy with the program.”*

Gamat Grace Bala, a TDT from Kaura LGEA expressed deep satisfaction with the program. She stated that *“It’s a good program, good in the sense that learners’ will now begin to learn from the language of their immediate environment and it will help them even as they learn to read English as stated in the curriculum with myself as an example, I started learning to read in Hausa and it was so much easy transiting to English. The training was a very good one. Teachers were really happy with the program you could see even from their faces and their participation and on the part of Pupils is not going to be a challenge as Hausa is easily learned within the community even before going to school.”*

As RANA continues to show consistent gains and great promise for sustainable growth in improved learning outcomes, the far-reaching support it receives at various levels of the state education system will produce long lasting impact in Kaduna States.

RANA songs used to mobilise out-of-school children and increase attendance in Zahra Noma Primary School: A story of Yusuf Malan Alfa

6

Zahra Noma is a small village in Maiyama Local Government Area, lies approximately 52 kilometers away from Birnin Kebbi, the capital of Kebbi State. It has one community primary school, which hosts a block of three functional classrooms for grades 1 to 3 pupils. The school is in the heart of the community, such that it is within a reasonable distance for all the children living in the community to attend. Despite its proximity to most homes in the community, the school had often recorded extremely low daily attendance of pupils.

Kasumu Zahra, a grade 2 teacher said; “ In the past, it was a very difficult task to teach the children as they found it difficult to comprehend what was being taught; clearly, that made them to lose interest in coming to school”.



In July 2018, the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) Expansion Project¹ was introduced in Kebbi State, and Zahra Noma Primary School was included in the 267 schools which were supported during the first phase with training provided to teachers and instructional materials distributed to schools. RANA simplified reading and numeracy instructions, using chants and songs, roleplays and dramas which created child-friendly and fun-filled learning environment. Despite teachers increased capacity and pupils' improved learning achievements in the school, the situation of poor attendance lingered until a young boy, Yusuf Malan Alfa, came across pupils and teachers singing the RANA

songs during a lesson; he became interested in learning all the songs and sang them in the village to mobilize children from their homes to attend school. Yusuf, despite being perceived by most community members as a mentally challenged boy is loved by children and community members. He moves around the community every morning, singing RANA songs to gather the children together to the school.

The teachers attest to Yusuf's effective method of mobilisation as the school's attendance increased significantly since he started offering this support. An example of this was seen in the grade 2 attendance record where 50 pupils (37 boys and 13 girls) now attend school regularly due to RANA's fun methods of teaching and Yusuf's efforts; a situation that was quite the opposite in the school attendance record prior to this development.

To further support learning in the school, Yusuf uses the cash he gets as gift from people to purchase and donate writing materials (notebooks and pencils) to the school for distribution to children who cannot afford them. Although Yusuf is older than the children in the early grade, he was enrolled as a pupil to participate in learning activities and build his foundational skills.

I remember vividly well, before the coming of RANA project and support from Yusuf, it difficult to record a daily attendance of 20 pupils in each grade...”, “says Ibrahim Sanni Zahra, the school head teacher.

“

I am happy with what I'm doing, and I wish to continue assisting the community

- Yusuf Malan Alfa.



The community members appreciate Yusuf's contribution through RANA in ensuring their children attend school. Yusuf is motivated by the results and acknowledgment of his support and has vowed to continue using his talent to increase enrollment in the school and address the issue of out-of-school children in Zahra Noma community.

RANA Haske IQS Intervention Inspires Community Initiative to Expand Learning Spaces for Children

7

Kambama community in Shagari Local Government Area of Sokoto State is located approximately 28 kilometers from the local government headquarter and 88 kilometers from Sokoto town, the state capital. The natives are substantially engaged in fishing and farming (agriculture and livestock) to meet their social and economic needs. Kambama community is a new settlement that was displaced by flood as a result of continuous expansion of the waterbody of the Shagari earth dam beyond its coast boundaries. The displacement resulted in limited availability of land for farming and sustainable economic activities, as a result, the natives struggled to make ends meet and earning a living made it difficult for them to access the everyday comforts of life.



Despite the challenges they face, the community members prioritize education to the extent that they decided to build classrooms for the IQS to take in more children who were all eager to learn. The community members decided to call on all fathers, mothers and well-meaning community members to contribute to the project. Farmers brought their farm produce; housewives brought the livestock they had and all the donations were sold to purchase cement and fine sand for the building to commence.

Makarantan Malam Madawaki Kambama is one of the two Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQS) established in the community, where the children of the community are taught Qur'anic studies since 2001. In 2018, the center was selected for support under RANA Haske intervention. The intervention introduced new core subjects, including Reading, Science and Numeracy, as part of learning activities and trained the IQS facilitators on fun ways to make learning easier. The center has about 60 children who are currently receiving basic literacy, numeracy, science and livelihood lessons under the Haske IQS intervention. This has promoted learning outcomes and increased attendance of the children at the IQS center.

"We appreciate all the support so far because we are in need of education, both adults and teenagers so that we can read and write. We value education in our community because only the few educated people participate when we have visitors who cannot speak Hausa", says the Hakimi of Kambama community.

With the significant improvement in attendance, the center-based management committee, parents and caregivers in the community were inspired to continue the building project. Recently, they received a donation of N100,000 from an individual philanthropist who was impressed by the efforts and initiative of the community members. They have used the said amount to buy roofing materials which is almost completed. They also plan to build toilets with the anticipated UNICEF grant.



“

You [RANA] have done more than enough in providing basic education for our children, especially for our girls. We have noticed our children now have keen interest in education... we are motivated to construct additional learning center to ensure that they are educated”,

- Yusuf Malan Alfa.

Breaking through the language barrier:

A Story of passion and commitment of a Community Reading Promotion Master Trainer.

8

Lemu is a community in Gbako Local Government Area, one of the eight oldest Local Government Areas (LGA) in Niger State. Lemu community lies 36.6 kilometers North West of Bida community, the headquarter of Nupeland. The residents are predominantly farmers and petty traders who export and sell their products in neighboring communities and markets to earn a living. Regardless of the cordial business relationships with the neighboring Hausa speaking communities, majority of Lemu indigenes speak the native Nupe language and find it very difficult to speak Hausa language. The inability to speak Hausa language posed a challenge to communicate effectively and transact businesses with other neighboring communities. All the schools in Lemu also do not use Hausa as a language of instruction, due to lack of qualified Hausa language teachers.



In May 2018, the Reading and Numeracy Activity (RANA) Expansion project, launched intervention on community mobilisation and gender sensitive approach to promote reading culture outside of the classrooms. As part of this intervention, selected Master Trainers/community mobilisers were trained on how to establish community reading hubs; organise reading festivals, competitions, school open days and to develop Community Literacy Action Guide (CLAG) which are all targeted at promoting reading in the communities.

Hajiya Ramatu Bawa was one of the sixteen successful candidates trained by RANA as a community Master Trainer. Having over 19 years of experience as a teacher and school supervisor, Hajiya Ramatu's Hausa language proficiency was not strong just like other natives of Lemu; but she was not deterred by this. Her enthusiasm and desire to support learning pushed her to enroll in private classes to learn the basics of Hausa. She then proceeded quickly with advocacies to key community stakeholders to mobilize and advocate for creation of community reading hubs in Lemu.

"We have problem with speaking Hausa; (even myself) I do not know how to speak Hausa. We only speak Hausa and little English. But when they brought the programme, we started learning Hausa", says Hajiya Ramatu.

Using the skills and knowledge she gained from the training provided by RANA, and her desire to help children in Lemu to learn how to read and communicate in Hausa language, she was able to garner support from community members to establish 10 reading hubs, where over 250 children are currently participating in Hausa reading activities weekly. As a result of the community reading hub activities, more out-of-school children have also been mobilized to enroll in schools across the community. Community members also increased their support by constructing additional learning spaces to address overcrowding in Integrated Qur'anic Schools (IQS).



“

We have achieved our aims for the reading hub because if we have not started, we would not get to the point we are now. And bringing the mothers to the hub also improved the learners' attendance in the IQS centers”,

- Hauwa Ahmad

“I started the reading hub with just 30 children, but now they up to 250 who are attending. I want to thank RANA for selecting and training me in community work. It has given me the opportunity to meet with people and learn new knowledge. I can now communicate and even teach the children in Hausa Language”, says Hajiya Ramatu.

Mothers who attend the reading hubs are also leveraging the opportunity to listen, learn and improve their Hausa language skills. Hajiya Ramatu expanded the opportunity to over 50 mothers in the community who are currently enrolled in Hausa basic literacy class, organized within her compound. The mothers are learning how to read and write Hausa language. Hajiya Ramatu expresses her happiness to the funders of Haske programme and the entire staff of RANA, who helped her to contribute meaningfully to her community.



@darussanrana



<https://bit.ly/2ODwr75>

