



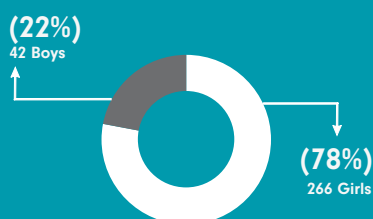
# Emerging Barriers and Responses to Girls' Education in Jigawa State

Report Summary | 2022

## Introduction

In Jigawa State there are multiple barriers to girls' education, some of which have been heightened by the attendant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial constraints are a primary reason for school dropouts, including a lack of money for associated costs. Additionally, there is a lack of parental support for girls' schooling – sometimes due to a preference to secure their futures 'through marriage' and a bias placed on the value of boys' education to provide greater financial returns. However, despite this tension, most focus group discussants in Jigawa still strongly advocated for girls to attain basic and post-basic education. Jigawa State Government is also working towards addressing these barriers to education, while the school survey, focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews conducted within this study provide more insight into girls' education experiences.

## Profile of Schools and Respondents



The Jigawa State survey exercise involved 308 student respondents, made up of 78% girls and 22% boys.

23 public schools and four private schools were sampled across six LGAs: Ringim and Gumel in Jigawa North West, Jahun and Dutse in Jigawa South West, and Hadejia and Kafin Hausa in Jigawa North East. One-third (9), of the schools surveyed, were girl-only schools while the remainder (18) were co-education facilities.

Total number of respondents  
**308 Students**

**27 Schools**

23 Public schools

4 Private schools

were sampled across 6 LGAs

The average age of respondents was  
**16 Years**

Most schools surveyed were day schools, with 83% of respondents surveyed living with both parents, while 9% lived with a caregiver or in a single-parent household (8%).

## Impact of COVID-19 and Insecurity on Girls and their Learning Experience

**Dealing with stay-at-home orders:** When schools were shut down and interstate travel was banned, 86.5% of girls were worried or afraid, and 76.2% of boys expressed the same concern. Most student respondents were afraid of falling ill or having the health of someone close to them deteriorate. Other concerns female students identified were "being forced to have sex/raped" (23.7%) and "being kidnapped" (22.6%). "The most difficult thing about not being able to attend classes in school" for 3 out of every 4 students was the general negative impact on their academic performance, while half of the students were concerned about being held back if exams were delayed or rescheduled. Girls were more likely to express this as a difficulty.

**Prevalence of gender-based violence and coping mechanisms:** Anecdotal accounts from parents, caregivers and teachers in the sampled LGAs point to a rise in cases of domestic violence and rape. However, the data from the local Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) shows a slight drop (7%) in annual reports of rape cases amongst young girls and women between 2019 and 2020. This is likely due to accessibility issues that affected reporting during the lockdown. While incidents went up, the primary avoidance

tactics deployed during lockdown to cope and prevent attacks during the lockdown period were that female student respondents majorly stayed indoors (60%) or kept away from people (19.4%), and their male counterparts did the same.

**The learning experience during the lockdown:** Less than a quarter of students state-wide accessed digital learning platforms. Instead, students' primary support came from household tutoring from a family member (48.1%) or managing remote learning themselves. Additionally, focus group discussants in Dutse and Hadejia, noted various community and independent initiatives to support students during the lockdown. This included organising Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) holders to host tutorial sessions and setting up ad-hoc learning centres in local mosques. While unstructured learning arrangements have their limitations, their existence indicates a sense of local support towards education. Girls who reside in more developed towns in the South West LGAs of Dutse and Jahun were more likely to feel supported with their school assignments and tutorials than their counterparts in the North West and North East regions.

# Post-lockdown Implications on Girls' Education

**Retention challenges:** In Jigawa, early marriage (47.8%) was the single most frequently cited reason for girls dropping out of school, followed by financial hardship (12%), and then pursuing business (11%). Students, caregivers and parents confirmed that dropping out of school because of early marriage is a continuing trend. Other varied reasons mentioned include a lack of interest in education, academic challenges, unwanted pregnancies, and relocation. They noted the tough decisions parents and legal guardians were pushed to make, given the strong cultural link between marriage, long-term personal security, and social acceptance in their state.

**Perceived safety:** Given Jigawa State's lower exposure to insecurity compared to the national average, the majority of sampled students (59.1%) reported feeling "safe" or "very safe" at school. Hostels, sanitary facilities and open areas within the school premises were the places where girls felt most exposed, given that many schools are unfenced, poorly lit, and inadequately guarded. Trust for the responsiveness of government security operatives was higher in the more central, better-served LGAs of Jahun and Dutse (50%), compared to 15.6% in the North East and 25% in the North West regions.



## Institutional Response

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, a key state priority and policy trend has been the protection of vulnerable persons. Jigawa State's Social Protection Council, chaired by the Deputy Governor, has presided over the framing and passing of key legislation, including the Child Rights Act (December 2021) and the State Persons with Disability Law (2017). The strong leadership, sustained resourcing and receptiveness of donor support by key state officials, have contributed to the progress made to systematically address the vulnerabilities of various social groups.

There is growing trust and visibility of trauma centres as well as a growing public awareness of the laws and policies which protect vulnerable persons. In February 2021, Jigawa State's Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP) was introduced. To complement this and provide further support to vulnerable victims, including young girls, the Jigawa State Ministry of Justice is rolling out a proactive scheme to address the under-reporting of incidents. It includes providing transportation allowances, police escorts and professional medical care to witnesses, to address bottlenecks that would hinder their participation in legal proceedings.

## Recommendations and Mitigation Measures

- Jigawa State Government is developing a targeted policy on girls' education to complement ongoing supply-side initiatives. This includes the government's female teacher development programme, which selects girls from pilot schools and equips them to pursue a career in teaching. Efforts should be made to speed up the approval process and full implementation should be supported.
- PERL has supported the government with the formation of the Girls Child Education Coordination Platform, which brings together governmental and external stakeholders to address issues affecting girls' education by driving the implementation of relevant policies. The approval of the draft Girls' Education Policy should be expedited to enable the Platform to follow through on its implementation
- The Jigawa State Government should continue support to sustain the Girls Child Education Coordination Platform and to enable the Platform, to optimally deliver its mandate.
- While there is no comprehensive designated programme to coordinate school safety in Jigawa, the Jigawa State Security Council's sub-committee on school security has interim measures to increase security. This includes the training of school management boards on intelligence gathering and reporting and providing more trained security personnel to be deployed to schools. The findings from this survey indicate that greater investment and diverse initiatives are required to improve safety in schools and increased confidence among girls and their parents.

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