

# Accelerating Literacy and Numeracy in Crisis-Affected Communities

Lessons from KNLC Teaching Method in Konduga, LGEA Borno State, Nigeria

Alhaji Malah Galti<sup>1</sup>, Adamu Ahmed Wudil<sup>2,3</sup> and Bello Muhammad Abdullahi<sup>3</sup>

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## BACKGROUND

Konduga Local Government Area (LGA) in Borno State, north-east Nigeria, is one of the most conflict-affected areas in the country, bordering the Sambisa Forest a longstanding base for armed insurgency. Over a decade of conflict has displaced communities, destroyed school infrastructure, and severely disrupted education delivery across the region. UNICEF reports that 72% of primary school completers in the BAY states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) cannot read a simple text.

Despite sustained investment from both government and development partners including teacher training through TaRL, KARI, and RANA methodologies, improved salary packages, and new infrastructure, learning outcomes remain critically low. Until now, no systematic baseline data existed at the school level for Konduga specifically.

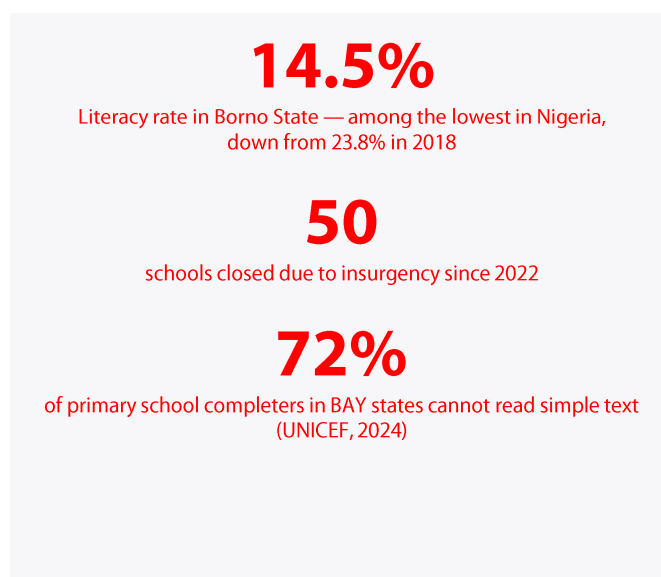
This study therefore makes two contributions. First, we document the baseline literacy and numeracy competence of all 29,521 learners across 39 public schools in Konduga LGEA using locally developed assessment instruments. Second, we develop and test the Konduga Literacy and Numeracy Competency (KLNC) teaching method — a structured approach that draws on elements of TaRL and Jolly Phonics while grounding instruction in constructivist and behaviourist principles.

We classify learner competency into seven progressive bands and compare outcomes before and after the KLNC intervention. We find that the KLNC method yields measurable improvement in both literacy and numeracy outcomes relative to existing teaching methods, at no additional cost.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education, Kashim Ibrahim University,

<sup>2</sup>International Islamic University Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA)



## METHOD

The study covered all 39 functional public schools in Konduga LGEA including 26 primary schools and 13 basic education schools. The total number of learners across school is 29,521 from Primary 1 through Junior Secondary School 3. Schools were organised into 13 clusters of approximately three schools each for supervision and quality assurance. Classroom teachers were trained to administer assessments, with one senior headteacher per cluster serving as supervisor.

Learning outcomes were measured using two locally developed instruments: **the Konduga Literacy Competence Rating Tool (KLC)** and **the Konduga Numeracy Competence Rating Tool (KNC)**. Both instruments were reviewed by experienced educators to ensure content validity.

The literacy instrument captures progression from foundational skills — reciting and identifying the English alphabet — through letter sounds, reading simple words, and interpreting sentences and short passages. At higher levels, learners demonstrate comprehension by answering recall questions. The numeracy instrument follows a parallel progression, from counting (1–10, 1–50, 1–100) through recognition of mathematical symbols to performing basic operations including two-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and place-value tasks involving hundreds, tens, and units.

Competency is classified into seven bands grouped under five categories, as summarised below.

Category	Bands	Literacy	Numeracy
<b>Beginner</b>	Bands 1	Recite alphabet A–Z in rhyme	Counting from 1 to 10
	Band 2	Identify letters A–Z in sequence	Counting from 10 to 50
	Band 3	Recognise letters A–Z at random	Counting from 50 to 100
<b>Low Intermediate</b>	Bands 4	Say letter sounds (phonics)	Recognise operational signs; state their functions
	Bands 5	Read 2–3 letter words	Solve 2-digit addition and subtraction
<b>Intermediate</b>	Bands 6	Read simple sentences	Solve 2-digit multiplication
	Bands 7	Reading paragraphs and short passages with basic comprehension	Solve 3-digit operations (+ – ×) with place value
<b>High Intermediate</b> (Qualified Learner)	—	Vocabulary development, comprehension, responding to questions	Simple fractions; real-world applications
<b>Advanced</b> (Transitioned Learner)	—	Engages with grade-level texts	Engages with standard curriculum content

**Table 1: Categorization of the Literacy and Numeracy competency based on bands**

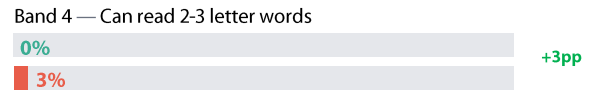
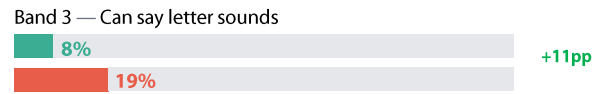
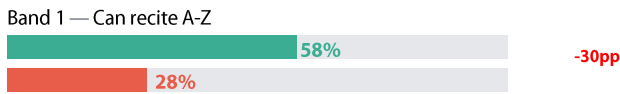
Each learner was assessed individually by their classroom teacher, who recorded the highest band at which the learner could demonstrate competence. Results were tabulated at the school level and analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the distribution of learners across competency bands, separately by education level (P1–3, P4–6, JSS 1–3) and by subject (literacy, numeracy). Following the baseline assessment, the KLNC method was implemented from January 2026 through daily structured sessions, with post-intervention competency measured using the same instruments.

## KEY FINDINGS: BASELINE VS POST INTERVENTION

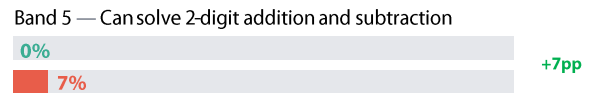
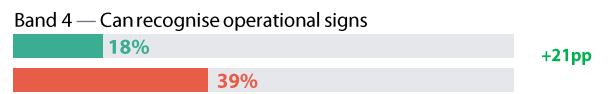
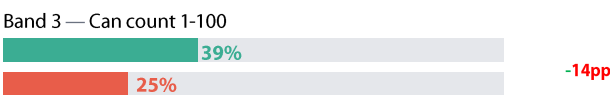
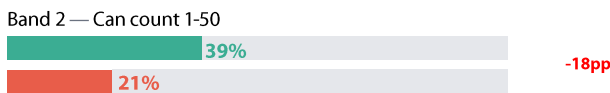
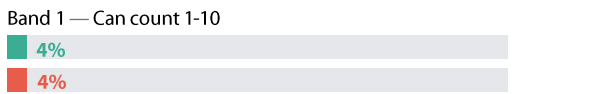
■ Baseline
 ■ After KLNC intervention

% of learners at each competency band

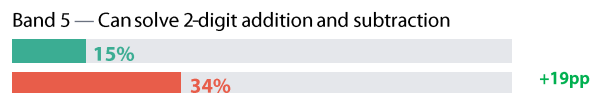
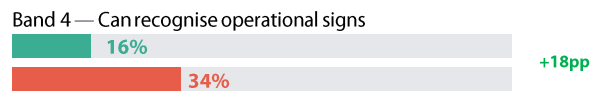
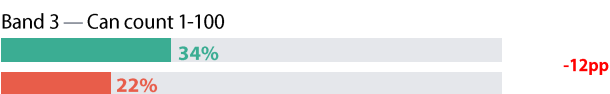
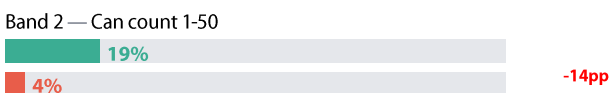
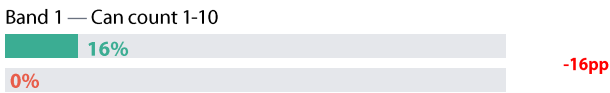
### LOWER PRIMARY (P1–3) — Literacy



### UPPER PRIMARY (P4–6) — Numeracy



### JUNIOR SECONDARY (JSS1–3) — Numeracy



Source: Field Data, 2026

## KEY TAKEAWAY

The KLNC intervention, implemented from January 2026, produced accelerated learner progression across all school levels within **two weeks** of daily sessions. Some learners advanced from Band 1 to Qualified Learner status in as few as ten school days. Peer coaching within groups proved particularly effective in accelerating progression among low-band learners, while continuous competency tracking enabled teachers to identify learners with specific difficulties and provide targeted scaffolding. Teachers reported substantial improvements in classroom engagement and learner motivation. Importantly, the intervention incurred no additional cost — all instructional materials were produced locally by teachers using existing resources. These results suggest that the binding constraint on learning in Konduga is not resource availability but instructional method, and that a structured, evidence-informed pedagogy can produce rapid gains even in the most challenging contexts

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Scale up KLNC across the BAY states.

The KLNC method should be adopted as a structured supplementary intervention in all primary and JSS schools in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, with priority given to remote and rural schools where learning poverty is most concentrated. We recommend a phased rollout — beginning with consolidation across Konduga LGEA, extending to other Borno LGEAs, and then scaling to the wider BAY region. Within the Education in Emergencies (EiE) framework, KLNC should be designated as the standard remediation methodology for foundational literacy and numeracy.

### 2. Build teacher capacity through structured, cascading training.

KLNC facilitation training should be integrated into the existing SUBEB and LGEA teacher development calendars rather than treated as a standalone programme. The cascade model used in the pilot — training cluster supervisors and headteachers first, who then train classroom teachers — proved effective and should be formalised. A simple, illustrated KLNC Teacher Guide should be developed for classroom reference. Initial rollout requires only a two-day training per school cluster, making it feasible within existing time and budget constraints.

### 3. Institutionalise competency tracking and learning data.

Daily KLNC band tracking should be mandated as part of teacher accountability at the school level. Progression data should be integrated into the existing Education Management Information System (EMIS) to enable state-wide monitoring of learning outcomes. Termly assessments comparing baseline and post-intervention band distributions should be conducted across all participating schools to measure impact and identify schools requiring additional support.

### 4. Provide enabling logistics and coordination.

Schools require access to basic consumables such as cardboard, markers, and paper representing a minimal, one-time cost per school. Each LGEA should designate a KLNC focal person to coordinate implementation and report progress to SUBEB. Alignment with School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) is essential to sustain community ownership and accountability beyond the initial implementation period.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND SCALABILITY

The Konduga KLNC experience provides early evidence on three fronts. First, foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes can improve meaningfully within a single academic term when instruction is restructured around a progressive, band-based pedagogy. Second, the model demonstrates that measurable gains — moving learners from Bands 1–2 to Band 5 and above — are achievable within two weeks of daily implementation, without additional financial outlay. Third, the approach establishes Konduga LGEA as a potential proof-of-concept for locally developed education-in-emergencies innovation, directly supporting Nigeria's commitment to SDG 4 (Quality and Equitable Education for All). If validated through formal monitoring, the KLNC model is designed to be scalable to other conflict-affected, low-resource school systems across the BAY states and, more broadly, across sub-Saharan Africa.

## CALL TO ACTION

These findings require an immediate, coordinated response from education authorities and their partners. We call on the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the Ministry of Education to formally endorse the KLNC as a supplementary literacy and numeracy intervention for BAY state schools, and to commission a monitored pilot across at least three additional LGEAs during the 2026 academic year.

We urge development partners — including UNICEF, FCDO, the World Bank, and USAID — to co-fund the scale-up and provide independent monitoring and evaluation. Finally, the Konduga experience should be formally documented and disseminated as a model within the Education in Emergencies community of practice, so that other crisis-affected jurisdictions can adapt and replicate the approach. Every term of inaction is a term in which the learning gap compounds.



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