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# Building Resilient Learning Environments in Rural Basic Schools Amidst Insecurity: Global Lessons for Pupil and Teacher Retention in Nigeria

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**Geoffrey Aondolumun AYUA[1], Augustina Unoaku UDEOZO[2], Fanan Abigail GIRE[3], Meshach Terseer UGBEDE[4], Msuur TOFI[1], Kelvin SAMUEL[5]**

[1]Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Benue State University (now, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University) Makurdi, Nigeria,

[2]St Paul's Academy, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria,

[3]Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University (now, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University) Makurdi, Nigeria,

[4]Department of Art and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Benue State University (now, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University) Makurdi, Nigeria,

[5]Department of Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria

GAA 0000-0003-1994-3511

Correspondence: Geoffrey Aondolumun AYUA, ayuageoffrey@gmail.com

## Abstract

Persistent insecurity in rural Nigeria has severely undermined the attainment of Universal Basic Education, leading to mass school closures, displacement, and poor pupil and teacher retention. While initiatives such as the Safe Schools Declaration exist, rural Basic schools remain highly vulnerable due to reactive policies and limited context-specific strategies. This conceptual paper examines how resilient learning environments can be built in Nigerian rural Basic schools by drawing global lessons from countries that have sustained education amid conflict. Anchored on Resilience Theory and Policy Transfer Theory, the paper synthesizes best practices from Kenya, Mali, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and conflict-affected states in Nigeria such as Borno and Yobe. The analysis identifies five cross-cutting themes: community partnership, low-cost alternative delivery, teacher support, psychosocial and peace education, and multi-sectoral policy coordination as critical to retention during insecurity. From this synthesis, the paper proposes the "GLAM Model: Global Lessons Adapted for Marginalized Rural Schools"— a framework comprising Guarded Schools, Low-Tech Learning, Assisted Teachers, and Mindful Learners. The paper argues that sustainable pupil and teacher retention in rural Nigeria requires shifting from crisis-response to adaptive, community-driven resilience. It concludes with implications for policy, practice and future research on securing education continuity in rural communities.

**Keywords:** Resilient Learning Environment, Insecurity, Global Best Practices, Pupil Retention, Teacher Retention, Rural Basic Education, Policy Transfer

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental instrument for human development, social stability, economic participation and national transformation. At the basic education level, schooling provides children with foundational knowledge, skills, values and competencies required for effective participation in society. In Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme represents a major national commitment to expanding access to quality basic education. However, the realisation of this commitment is increasingly threatened by insecurity, particularly in rural communities affected by insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts and communal violence. Insecurity disrupts not only the physical safety of schools but also enrolment, attendance, teaching and learning, teacher availability and the continuity of children's educational experiences (Akingbade et al., 2022; Akpotu, 2019; Sarkinfada, 2023).

The Nigerian situation is particularly concerning because insecurity has progressively extended beyond the North-East, where Boko Haram insurgency has caused extensive educational disruption, to other parts of North-West and North-Central Nigeria. Akingbade et al. (2022) document the geographical and temporal spread of Boko Haram attacks and their implications for education in Northern Nigeria, while Ngezack et al. (2024) demonstrate the wider relationship between insecurity, school administration, teachers' job performance and students' performance. Recent evidence also indicates that farmer-herder conflict can threaten the retention and completion of basic education in North-Central Nigeria (Aun & Bello, 2026). These developments suggest that the challenge is no longer simply how to reopen schools after attacks, but how to create learning environments capable of continuing to function despite recurring insecurity.

Rural Basic schools are particularly vulnerable because they often operate with limited infrastructure, inadequate staffing, weak communication systems and restricted access to alternative educational opportunities. When a rural school closes because of insecurity, pupils may have no nearby alternative institution. Displaced families may also move children away from their schools, teachers and peers, thereby interrupting educational progression (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). At the same time, teachers working in insecure and geographically isolated communities may seek transfers, avoid rural postings or leave their positions because of safety concerns and difficult working conditions. Teacher retention is therefore inseparable from the continuity and quality of pupils' education (Bassey et al., 2025; Malloy & Allen, 2007; Mendenhall et al., 2019).

The need for resilient and context-sensitive educational practices is also supported by evidence from educational research in Benue State. Ayua and Ode (2018), in their study of constructive teaching practices in urban and rural schools, demonstrate the importance of approaches that respond to differences in learners' educational contexts. Similarly, Ayua (2021) highlights the potential of improvised teacher-learner materials for improving Basic Science performance among mixed-ability pupils, while Ayua et al. (2023) show the relevance of ethnoscience pedagogy to pupils' performance in Basic Science. Although these studies were not specifically concerned with insecurity, they reinforce an important principle for rural education: effective educational responses should be adaptable to learners' circumstances and make meaningful use of available local resources and experiences. This principle is particularly relevant when insecurity restricts access to conventional school facilities and instructional resources.

Consequently, resilience has become increasingly important within education-in-emergencies scholarship. A resilient learning environment is one in which schools, teachers, pupils, families, communities and education authorities possess the capacity to anticipate, withstand, adapt to and recover from disruption while maintaining meaningful learning opportunities. Shah et al. (2020) emphasise the growing importance of resilience in education during emergencies, while Burde et al. (2017) demonstrate that education in

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emergencies must address not only access but also continuity, protection and the conditions necessary for sustained learning. Teacher well-being and support are equally important because teachers serve as instructional providers, sources of psychosocial support and potential agents of peace and social cohesion (Mendenhall et al., 2019; Novelli & Sayed, 2016).

International experiences provide useful lessons for strengthening such resilience. Conflict-affected settings such as Kenya, Mali, Afghanistan and South Sudan have employed different combinations of community participation, alternative learning arrangements, teacher support, psychosocial interventions and flexible educational delivery to sustain schooling during periods of disruption. Nigeria's experiences in Borno and Yobe also provide important domestic lessons through initiatives associated with school safety and community participation. However, these approaches cannot be transferred mechanically because educational institutions, patterns of insecurity, community structures, technological capacity and available resources differ across contexts. Kagawa (2005) and Davies (2004) emphasise the contextual complexity of education in emergencies and the relationship between education and conflict.

The central challenge, therefore, is to identify global lessons that can be selectively adapted to the realities of rural Nigerian Basic schools. While existing literature has examined insecurity and education in Nigeria, teacher retention, refugee education and education in emergencies, limited conceptual attention has been given to integrating these strands into a resilience-oriented framework specifically concerned with retaining both pupils and teachers in insecure rural communities. This paper consequently examines global strategies for building resilient learning environments and proposes context-sensitive ways of adapting relevant lessons to rural Basic Education in Nigeria. It argues that sustainable educational continuity requires a shift from predominantly reactive responses to insecurity towards preventive, adaptive and community-centred approaches that simultaneously protect schools, support teachers, retain pupils and sustain learning.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The provision of Basic Education in Nigeria is increasingly threatened by insecurity, particularly in rural communities exposed to banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts and insurgency. Beyond physical attacks, insecurity disrupts school attendance, enrolment, teaching, curriculum implementation and the stability of the teaching workforce. Consequently, pupils may withdraw from schooling, while teachers may avoid or leave affected communities, thereby weakening the capacity of rural schools to provide continuous education.

The problem is compounded by the limited capacity of many rural schools to adapt when conventional schooling is disrupted. Evidence from Basic Education contexts shows that teachers already face challenges such as inadequate instructional resources, limited administrative support, insufficient instructional time and difficulties in implementing the curriculum effectively (Ayua et al., 2026). Similarly, Ayua (2021) demonstrates the potential of improvised teacher-learner materials to sustain meaningful learning where conventional instructional resources are inadequate. Other studies by Ayua et al. (2022), Ayua and Agbidye (2020), and Ayua et al. (2024) further demonstrate the value of creative, contextualised and resource-sensitive approaches to Basic Science education. These findings, although not specifically conducted in insecurity settings, highlight the vulnerability of rural schools when institutional and material support is weak. Ayua and Gamat (2018), and Eriba and Ayua (2025) also emphasise the broader role of education in addressing conditions associated with crime and insecurity.

Despite these efforts, existing responses to insecurity in Nigerian education remain largely centred on school protection, closure, relocation and post-crisis intervention. There is inadequate integration of school security, flexible learning, teacher support, community participation and psychosocial well-being as

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interconnected mechanisms for retaining both pupils and teachers. The central problem, therefore, is the absence of a context-sensitive resilience framework that translates relevant global lessons into sustainable strategies for maintaining educational continuity and retention in insecure rural Basic schools in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Paper**

The paper seeks to conceptually examine global strategies for building resilient learning environments in conflict and insecurity contexts and propose ways of adapting such strategies to enhance pupil retention, teacher retention and continuity of learning in rural Basic schools in Nigeria.

**Significance of the Paper**

The paper provides a conceptual basis for UBEC, SUBEBs, policymakers, and development partners to develop resilience-oriented strategies for sustaining Basic Education in insecure rural communities. It highlights the importance of safe learning environments, teacher welfare, community participation, preparedness, and flexible educational interventions. The paper also emphasises the roles of parents and community leaders in protecting schools and sustaining pupils' and teachers' participation. Furthermore, it identifies gaps in existing literature and suggests areas for further research, contributing to efforts to strengthen the resilience and continuity of Nigeria's Basic Education system amid persistent insecurity.

**Scope of the Paper**

The paper focuses on rural Basic schools in Nigeria, located in communities affected or potentially affected by insecurity. The discussion centres on pupil retention, teacher retention, continuity of learning and resilient learning environments. It draws comparative lessons from international experiences, particularly Kenya, Mali and Afghanistan, while also considering experiences from Nigeria. The paper synthesises relevant conceptual and research literature to identify strategies that can inform the development of resilient rural Basic Education systems in Nigeria.

## 3. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Concepts relevant to this study would have their meanings buzzed and must be clarified in the context and analysis of this study.

- **Insecurity and Education:** Insecurity refers to conditions characterised by threats to the safety, freedom, property and general well-being of individuals and communities. In the context of rural education in Nigeria, insecurity encompasses banditry, kidnapping, farmer-herder conflicts, insurgency and other forms of violence that threaten the normal functioning of schools and communities. Its educational consequences include school closures, displacement of pupils and teachers, irregular attendance, reduced enrolment and disruption of teaching and learning besides psychological trauma. Sarkinfada (2023) observes that insecurity constitutes a major challenge to basic education in Nigeria. Prolonged insurgency can disrupt educational activities and access (Akingbade et al., 2022).
- **Resilient Learning Environment:** A resilient learning environment refers to a school environment with the capacity to maintain or restore safe, inclusive and meaningful learning opportunities when confronted with crises. It involves the ability of schools, teachers, pupils, families, school, communities and education systems to anticipate risks, respond to disruption, adapt to changing circumstances and recover from adversity. The concept extends beyond physical safety to include continuity of learning, teacher well-being, psychosocial support, inclusion and community participation (Burde et al., 2017). In this sense, a resilient rural school is one that can protect learners and teachers while sustaining educational quality despite insecurity.
- **Pupil and Teacher Retention:** Pupil retention refers to the capacity of schools and education

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systems to keep learners enrolled, attending regularly and progressing towards completion despite adverse circumstances. Teacher retention similarly refers to the ability of schools and education authorities to encourage teachers to remain in their assigned schools and continue providing instructional services. In insecure environments, retention is influenced by perceived safety, displacement, working conditions, community support, remuneration, psychosocial well-being, professional support and availability of basic facilities. Mendenhall et al. (2019) identify teacher supply, quality and well-being as persistent concerns in crisis and displacement contexts, while Malloy and Allen (2007) emphasise supportive conditions in promoting rural teacher retention. Recent evidence also highlights community connectedness and supportive working conditions as important considerations for retaining rural teachers (Miller et al., 2026). For pupils, family displacement, fear, school accessibility and repeated school closure may encourage withdrawal from education (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

- **Global Best Practices:** Global best practices refer to world-wide practical and result-oriented experience and evidence in comparable conflict, displacement or emergency contexts and which possess potential for adaptation to other settings. Relevant practices include safe-school measures, flexible learning arrangements, community-based education, teacher support and incentives, psychosocial services, integration of displaced learners, early-warning systems and collaboration among government, communities and humanitarian organisations (Burde et al., 2017; Davies, 2004; Kagawa, 2005; Novelli & Sayed, 2016).
- **Rural Basic Education:** Rural Basic Education refers to the provision of foundational schooling for children in rural communities, where geographical isolation, limited infrastructure, inadequate resources and teacher shortages may constrain effective educational delivery. In this paper, it refers specifically to basic education provided in rural Nigerian communities, particularly those experiencing or vulnerable to insecurity and educational disruption (Haliru & Abubakar, 2025)
- **Policy Transfer:** Policy Transfer refers to the process of drawing lessons from policies, programmes or practices developed in one context and adapting relevant elements for use in another. In this paper, it involves examining educational practices from other conflict-affected settings and adapting those considered appropriate to the realities of rural Nigerian schools. The concept therefore emphasises contextual adaptation rather than direct replication of external practices (Yang, 2023)

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is anchored on Resilience Theory as propounded by Masten (2014) and complemented by Policy Transfer Theory of Dolowitz and Marsh (2000). Resilience Theory explains how individuals, institutions and communities are able to withstand adversity, adapt to challenging circumstances and recover from disruption. Masten (2014) describes resilience as the capacity of a system to adapt successfully to significant challenges through the operation of protective factors and adaptive processes. Applied to education, the theory suggests that schools do not have to collapse when confronted with insecurity; rather, the presence of appropriate protective resources can enable them to continue functioning and recover from disruption. Such protective factors may include supportive teachers, strong school-community relationships, effective leadership, psychosocial support, safe learning spaces and institutional preparedness.

The relevance of Resilience Theory to rural Basic schools in Nigeria is particularly evident because insecurity can expose pupils and teachers to displacement, fear, school closures and interrupted learning. Burde et al. (2017) note that education in emergencies requires mechanisms that sustain access and educational provision despite crisis conditions, while Shah et al. (2020) emphasise the growing importance

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of resilience in enabling education systems and communities to respond to adversity. Similarly, Mendenhall et al. (2019) highlight the importance of teacher supply, quality and well-being in crisis-affected settings. Thus, resilience provides a framework for moving Nigerian educational responses beyond temporary crisis management towards systems that can anticipate, absorb and recover from insecurity.

Policy Transfer Theory, developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), complements the resilience perspective by explaining how knowledge, policies, programmes and institutional practices developed in one setting can be transferred and adapted for use in another. The theory recognises that policy transfer does not necessarily mean copying an existing policy exactly; rather, policymakers examine experiences elsewhere, identify useful elements and modify them according to local conditions. This is important for the present paper because different countries have developed strategies for maintaining education amidst conflict and insecurity. The theory therefore provides a basis for examining lessons from countries such as Kenya and Mali, as well as experiences from Afghanistan and conflict-affected areas of Nigeria such as Borno and Yobe. However, differences in political, cultural, geographical, institutional and security contexts mean that foreign practices must be carefully contextualised. Kagawa (2005) emphasises the complexity of emergency education, while Davies (2004) demonstrates that the relationship between education and conflict is context-dependent. Consequently, Policy Transfer Theory supports the argument that useful global strategies should be adapted rather than simply adopted.

## 5. REVIEW OF GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION DURING INSECURITY

Literature on education in emergencies has progressively shifted from viewing schooling as a service that can simply be restored after a crisis to understanding education as part of the protective and resilience infrastructure of affected communities. Burde et al. (2017) argue that education during emergencies must simultaneously address access, continuity, protection and learning, while Kagawa (2005) cautions that educational responses must be sensitive to the political, social and institutional circumstances in which crises occur. More recently, Shah et al. (2020) have drawn attention to resilience as an increasingly influential perspective in education in emergencies. From this standpoint, the most valuable global practices are not necessarily those involving sophisticated infrastructure, but those that enable schools and communities to continue educating children when conventional arrangements are disrupted.

Experiences from conflict-affected parts of Kenya demonstrate how community structures can contribute to early warning, mediation, information sharing and local peacebuilding. Such arrangements are important because communities are often the first to recognise emerging threats and can provide forms of social protection that formal institutions may be unable to deliver immediately. The involvement of elders, parents, teachers and local organisations can therefore transform school protection from an exclusively governmental responsibility into a shared community concern. This perspective accords with Novelli and Sayed (2016), who regard teachers and educational actors as potential agents of peace, social cohesion and sustainable development. For Nigeria, the implication is significant: rural school safety is likely to be more sustainable when communities are treated not merely as beneficiaries of security interventions but as active partners in anticipating threats, communicating risks and sustaining children's participation in education.

Ayua and Ode (2018), for instance, demonstrated differences in constructive teaching practices across urban and rural school settings in Benue-Central. Although their study was not undertaken in an insecurity context, it reinforces the proposition that educational strategies cannot be separated from the environments in which learners and teachers operate. In insecure rural communities, this principle suggests that educational resilience should incorporate locally available resources, community knowledge and flexible instructional arrangements rather than depend exclusively on standardised school infrastructure. It is this

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capacity to adjust educational processes to local realities that distinguishes genuine resilience from temporary crisis intervention.

Kenya and Afghanistan provide notable examples of radio-supported education, while Mali has demonstrated the value and limitations of mobile schooling for populations whose geographical circumstances make fixed schools difficult to sustain. In Afghanistan, community-based and home-based schooling historically provided educational opportunities for children who could not access formal schools, while radio and television programming created additional avenues for learning when physical access was restricted (Kirk & Winthrop, 2008). These experiences demonstrate that the physical classroom need not be the only location in which learning occurs. Burde et al. (2017) similarly identify alternative delivery mechanisms as important components of education in emergencies. For rural Nigeria, this principle is particularly relevant because insecurity may make travel to school dangerous even when school buildings themselves remain intact. Community radio, printed learning packages, offline digital resources, mobile teaching teams and temporary learning spaces could therefore serve as continuity mechanisms rather than permanent replacements for conventional schooling.

The relevance of improvisation and locally available instructional resources is further supported by Ayua (2021), whose study found that teacher-learner improvised materials could improve Basic Science performance among mixed-ability middle-basic pupils. This finding, although situated outside an emergency context, has wider implications for resilience. When insecurity restricts access to laboratories, textbooks, digital devices or other conventional resources, teachers who possess the capacity to improvise may be better positioned to maintain meaningful learning. Thus, global best practice should not be interpreted solely in technological terms. For resource-constrained rural Nigerian schools, resilience may depend as much on teachers' creative use of locally available materials as on digital innovation.

The experience of Mali and other mobile-school contexts further demonstrates that flexibility must be accompanied by contingency planning. Mobile schools have historically addressed the educational needs of nomadic populations by bringing schooling closer to learners whose communities move geographically. However, conflict can disrupt even mobile arrangements when teachers, learners and communities themselves become unsafe. The lesson is therefore not that mobility automatically solves educational exclusion, but that education systems need multiple delivery pathways that can be activated according to the nature and intensity of insecurity. Dryden-Peterson (2011) and Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) similarly emphasise the importance of maintaining educational opportunities for displaced children and connecting emergency provision to national education systems. For Nigeria, this means that temporary learning arrangements should retain clear pathways into recognised basic education rather than creating parallel systems with uncertain educational value.

Teacher welfare and retention constitute another central dimension of international experience. Educational continuity ultimately depends on teachers who are present, prepared and psychologically able to teach. Mendenhall et al. (2019) identify teacher supply, quality and well-being as persistent challenges in forced-displacement settings, while Malloy and Allen (2007) demonstrate the significance of supportive conditions in rural teacher retention. In contemporary rural Nigeria, these concerns are intensified by insecurity, difficult terrain, inadequate accommodation, professional isolation and the possibility of forced displacement. Bassey et al. (2025) therefore provide an important Nigerian perspective by linking teacher deployment and retention to educational equity and inclusion. The global lesson is that teacher retention in insecure locations should be treated as a component of educational resilience rather than merely an administrative staffing matter. Hardship incentives, safe accommodation, communication support, professional development, insurance and psychosocial assistance can collectively influence teachers' willingness to remain in vulnerable communities.

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Teacher preparedness is equally important because retaining teachers without strengthening their capacity may preserve staffing without guaranteeing educational quality. Ayua et al. (2023) found that ethnoscience pedagogy could influence pupils' performance in Basic Science, illustrating the potential of pedagogies that connect learning with learners' environments and experiences. Similarly, Ayua and Eriba (2023) emphasised creative teaching in special-needs education. These studies suggest a broader principle relevant to insecure environments: teachers need pedagogical flexibility to modify instruction according to learners' circumstances. A teacher working in a disrupted rural school may have to teach with improvised materials, adjust lesson schedules, accommodate displaced learners or provide instruction outside conventional classroom settings. Consequently, professional development for teachers in insecure areas should encompass not only subject pedagogy but also adaptive and context-sensitive teaching practices.

Psychosocial protection and peace-oriented education constitute a further global lesson. Conflict affects learners through fear, bereavement, displacement, anxiety and the breakdown of social relationships. Consequently, restoring a school building does not necessarily restore a child's capacity or willingness to learn. South Sudan's use of accelerated learning and psychosocial support illustrates the value of addressing educational and emotional needs together. Accelerated learning can help learners who have lost substantial periods of schooling to reconnect with formal education, while psychosocial interventions can support their adjustment and participation. This corresponds with Shah et al.'s (2020) argument that resilience involves strengthening the capacity of individuals and communities to cope with adversity. It is also consistent with Yaki's (2026) observation of the relationship between banditry, psychological well-being and school attendance in North-West Nigeria.

The role of engaging and contextually meaningful pedagogy should consequently not be overlooked in resilience planning. Ayua et al. (2023), in examining ethnoscience curriculum delivery, provide evidence that linking instruction to learners' experiences can influence interest in Basic Science. In an insecure environment, such approaches may contribute to a sense of continuity and belonging because learning remains connected to the learner's immediate social and cultural environment despite disruption. This reinforces the argument that resilience should not be reduced to keeping children physically within an educational programme; it should also involve creating learning experiences that encourage them to remain psychologically and academically connected to schooling.

In Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency produced school attacks, displacement and prolonged educational disruption across the North-East (Akingbade et al., 2022; Akpotu, 2019). The Safe Schools approach subsequently introduced measures involving physical protection, school safety planning, community participation and, in some instances, relocation to safer educational environments. These measures represent an important transition from viewing school safety solely as a security-agency responsibility towards a more integrated understanding of protection. Nevertheless, continuing school closures demonstrate that infrastructure-based protection alone cannot guarantee continuity. Sarkinfada (2023) identifies insecurity as a major challenge to basic education, while Ngezack et al. (2024) connect insecurity with school administration, teacher performance and students' performance. Walakan (2026) similarly shows that insecurity can undermine curriculum implementation, indicating that the consequences extend into the core processes through which education is delivered.

The Nigerian experience therefore points towards the need to integrate security with educational continuity. Current responses increasingly recognise vulnerability assessment, preparedness, emergency communication and community involvement, but these measures need to be complemented by mechanisms that allow learning to continue when physical attendance is interrupted. Aun and Bello (2026), examining retention and completion amidst farmer-herder conflict in North-Central Nigeria, provide particularly relevant evidence that educational retention must be addressed within the realities of

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local conflict. Their work strengthens the case for strategies that recognise insecurity not as an isolated event but as a condition capable of repeatedly interrupting children's educational trajectories.

The broader evidence also suggests that physical protection, teacher support, flexible delivery and learner well-being are mutually reinforcing rather than independent interventions. A school may be physically secure but still experience declining attendance if pupils remain traumatised or parents fear sending them to school. Similarly, alternative learning may be available but ineffective if teachers are inadequately supported or learners lack materials and supervision. The value of teacher creativity in such circumstances is reinforced by Ayua and Agbidye (2020), whose work on Science-Technology-Society strategy demonstrates the contribution of adaptive pedagogy to learners' educational experiences. The lesson for rural Nigeria is that resilience requires educational actors who can modify both the means and content of instruction without abandoning curriculum expectations.

Across the international and Nigerian experiences, therefore, the emerging best practice is an integrated, community-centred and adaptive model of educational continuity. Kenya illustrates the importance of community-based protection and communication; Mali demonstrates the value, but also the limitations, of flexible and mobile schooling; Afghanistan highlights the potential of home-based and radio-supported education; South Sudan demonstrates the importance of accelerated learning and psychosocial support; and Borno and Yobe show both the value and limitations of school-safety initiatives within Nigeria. These experiences converge with the broader education-in-emergencies literature (Burde et al., 2017; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Kagawa, 2005) in suggesting that resilience is strongest when educational systems possess multiple ways of protecting learners, supporting teachers and sustaining learning.

## 6. ANALYSIS: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES FROM GLOBAL CASES

A comparative reading of Kenya, Mali and Niger, Afghanistan, South Sudan and conflict-affected areas of Nigeria points to towards the direction that educational resilience is less a product of isolated interventions than of the capacity of schools and communities to adapt to disruption. Although insecurity takes different forms across these settings, the cases converge around community participation, flexible learning arrangements, teacher support, psychosocial protection and institutional coordination. This convergence extends the education-in-emergencies discourse beyond school access and physical protection towards the capacity to sustain meaningful learning when normal educational arrangements are disturbed (Burde et al., 2017; Kagawa, 2005; Shah et al., 2020). From this perspective, resilience should be deliberately embedded in the organisation of rural Basic Education rather than activated only after crisis occurs.

A particularly significant lesson is the strategic value of community partnership. In geographically remote and insecure environments, parents, traditional authorities, teachers and community organisations possess local knowledge and social relationships that formal institutions may not readily command. Kenya's community peace structures, Mali's community-supported mobile schools, Afghanistan's community-nominated teachers and Nigeria's School-Based Management Committees illustrate how communities can contribute to communication, early warning, school protection and educational continuity. This aligns with Novelli and Sayed (2016), who position education and its actors as potential contributors to peace and social cohesion. The relevance to Nigeria is reinforced by Aun and Bello (2026), whose work on basic-school retention amidst farmer-herder conflict points to the importance of context-sensitive responses. Community participation should therefore be understood as a component of educational resilience rather than merely an administrative formality.

The importance of context is also reflected in Ayua and Ode (2018), whose examination of constructive teaching practices across urban and rural schools in Benue-Central underscores the need to recognise differences in educational environments. Similarly, Ayua et al. (2023) demonstrate the relevance of

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ethnoscience pedagogy to pupils' learning in Basic Science. Although these studies were not conducted in conflict settings, they provide a useful conceptual insight: rural educational interventions are more likely to be meaningful when they draw upon learners' environments, experiences and available resources. In insecure communities, this principle can extend to community-based protection, locally relevant learning and the use of indigenous resources to maintain educational engagement.

A second major lesson is the need to decouple learning continuity from uninterrupted access to conventional classrooms. Radio-supported learning in Kenya and Afghanistan, mobile schooling in Mali, and alternative and accelerated learning in South Sudan demonstrate that schooling can continue through flexible arrangements when conventional attendance becomes unsafe or impossible. Dryden-Peterson (2011) and Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) similarly emphasise the importance of preventing displacement from becoming permanent educational exclusion. For rural Nigeria, the implication is not to replicate any foreign model wholesale, but to establish a repertoire of alternatives, including community radio, temporary learning spaces, mobile teaching teams and offline learning resources.

This flexibility is strengthened when teachers are able to improvise and adapt. Ayua (2021) demonstrates the potential of improvised teacher-learner materials for supporting Basic Science learning, while Ayua et al. (2021) highlight the contribution of creative teaching to learner interest. These perspectives are particularly relevant where insecurity restricts access to conventional instructional resources. Thus, alternative delivery should not be regarded as educational compromise; when appropriately designed and connected to the formal curriculum, it can become a deliberate mechanism for maintaining learning during disruption.

Mendenhall et al. (2019) identify teacher supply, quality and well-being as persistent challenges in crisis-affected contexts, while Malloy and Allen (2007) demonstrate the importance of supportive conditions in rural teacher retention. Miller et al. (2026) similarly draws attention to supportive working conditions and community connectedness. In Nigeria, therefore, retaining teachers in insecure rural schools requires more than recruitment. Hardship allowances, secure accommodation, transportation, professional development, psychosocial support and effective communication with education authorities should form part of an integrated retention strategy (Bassey et al., 2025). Importantly, teacher retention must also include pedagogical preparedness. The creative and context-responsive teaching perspectives evident in Ayua and Eriba (2014) and Ayua et al. (2021) suggest that teachers should be equipped to modify instructional practices when ordinary classroom conditions are disrupted.

Another important dimension is the psychological safety of learners and teachers. Insecurity can generate fear, grief, displacement and social dislocation that continue even after schools reopen. Yaki (2026) demonstrates the relationship between banditry, psychological well-being and school attendance in North-West Nigeria, while Shah et al. (2020) emphasise that educational resilience encompasses the capacity to cope with adversity. Psychosocial support, counselling, peer interaction, peace education and trauma-sensitive teaching should therefore accompany physical protection. This is consistent with Novelli and Sayed's (2016) view of education as a potential instrument for peace and social cohesion.

|The cases establish that fragmented interventions are unlikely to produce sustainable resilience. Education authorities, security agencies, health and social-welfare services, humanitarian organisations and communities must operate through coordinated arrangements. Davies (2004) highlights the complexity of education-conflict relationships, while Kagawa (2005) situates emergency education within wider institutional and political conditions. Nigerian evidence similarly links insecurity with school administration, teacher performance and educational outcomes (Ngezack et al., 2024), as well as curriculum implementation challenges (Ayua et al., 2026; Walakan, 2026).

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## 7. DISCUSSION: ADAPTING GLOBAL LESSONS TO NIGERIAN RURAL BASIC SCHOOLS

From the foregoing review, it is shown that educational resilience in insecure environments is less a product of a single intervention than of the capacity of education systems to adapt their structures, relationships and modes of delivery to changing circumstances. Nevertheless, practices developed in Kenya, Mali, Afghanistan and South Sudan cannot be transferred wholesale to rural Nigeria. Differences in the nature of insecurity, federal and state education structures, community institutions, technological access and resource availability require selective adaptation. Against this background, the paper proposes the GLAM Model (Global Lessons Adapted for Marginalized Rural Schools) as an adaptive rather than prescriptive framework.

**Table 1: Table showing Global Best Practices and Their Adaptation for Resilient Rural Basic Schools in Nigeria**

| GLAM Component | Global Example | Proposed Nigerian Adaptation |
|---|---|---|
| G – Guarded Schools | Kenya: community watch and community-led protection | School-Community Security Committees, traditional rulers and parents working with SUBEB and NSCDC |
| L – Low-Tech Learning | Afghanistan: radio and home-based schooling | Community radio, offline tablets/materials and WhatsApp-supported learning for upper-basic where feasible |
| A – Assisted Teachers | Mali: teacher incentives and hardship support | Rural posting/hazard allowance, teacher accommodation, training and psychosocial support |
| M – Mindful Learners | South Sudan: psychosocial support in emergency learning | Peace clubs, guidance and counselling, trauma-informed teaching and peer support |

**Source:** Authors' compilation

Drawing from Table 1, *Guarded Schools* represents the first layer because learning continuity is difficult to sustain where pupils and teachers perceive the school environment as unsafe. The Nigerian adaptation should, however, move beyond a predominantly physical-security conception of school safety. School-Community Security Committees involving school leaders, teachers, parents, traditional authorities and relevant community representatives could provide channels for early warning, communication and rapid reporting while maintaining formal links with SUBEB and professional security agencies such as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Such an arrangement would build upon the community orientation evident in Nigeria's Safe Schools experience and the peacebuilding perspective of Novelli and Sayed (2016). Its relevance is reinforced by Aun and Bello (2026), whose recent work on farmer-herder conflict in North-Central Nigeria highlights the need for strategies that protect children's continued participation and completion. Importantly, community structures should complement rather than substitute professional security agencies, with clearly defined responsibilities and accountability.

Meanwhile *Low-Tech Learning* responds to a different dimension of insecurity: the interruption of physical access to school. Afghanistan's experience with radio and home-based education and the wider education-in-emergencies literature demonstrate that learning can continue through alternative channels when conventional attendance becomes temporarily impossible (Burde et al., 2017; Kagawa, 2005). Rural Nigeria could adapt this principle through community radio, printed take-home materials, offline digital

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resources and, where connectivity permits, mobile-phone or WhatsApp-supported learning. The emphasis should be on appropriate technology rather than sophisticated technology. This is especially important where electricity, internet connectivity and digital devices remain unreliable. Evidence from Ayua (2021) on improvised teacher-learner materials and Ayua et al. (2023) on ethnoscience-based learning further suggests that resource constraints can be addressed through locally available materials and contextualised educational practices. Thus, alternative delivery should function as a continuity mechanism, not as a permanent replacement for formal schooling.

The *Assisted Teachers* component recognises that educational resilience ultimately depends on the availability and well-being of teachers. International evidence identifies teacher supply, quality and welfare as persistent challenges in crisis-affected settings (Mendenhall et al., 2019), while recent rural education research draws attention to supportive working conditions and community connectedness as factors associated with teacher retention (Miller et al., 2026). In Nigeria, rural posting or hardship allowances, secure accommodation, transportation assistance, insurance, psychosocial support and regular professional development could make difficult postings more sustainable. Bassey et al. (2025) similarly emphasise teacher deployment and retention as issues of educational equity and inclusion. Assistance should also strengthen teachers' instructional capacity. Studies by Ayua and Ode (2020), Ayua et al. (2021) and Ayua et al. (2023) demonstrate the value of creative, contextualised and resource-sensitive teaching. In insecure settings, such pedagogical flexibility can help teachers sustain engagement even when conventional classroom conditions are disrupted.

The *Mindful Learners* component addresses the less visible consequences of insecurity. Exposure to violence, displacement, kidnapping and communal conflict can generate fear, grief and psychological distress that continue even after schools reopen. Yaki (2026) specifically links banditry with learners' psychological well-being and school attendance, suggesting that physical reopening alone cannot restore educational participation. South Sudan's experience with psychosocial support provides a useful international parallel, while Shah et al. (2020) conceptualise resilience as involving the capacity of learners and communities to cope with adversity. Nigerian rural schools could therefore incorporate peace clubs, peer-support structures, guidance and counselling, child-friendly spaces and trauma-informed teaching. These interventions could also strengthen social cohesion by equipping pupils with skills in dialogue, tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution, consistent with Novelli and Sayed (2016).

The four GLAM components are mutually reinforcing rather than independent interventions. Guarded Schools provide protection, Low-Tech Learning preserves access during disruption, Assisted Teachers sustain instructional capacity, and Mindful Learners address the psychosocial conditions necessary for meaningful participation. This integrated conception is important because recent Nigerian evidence indicates that insecurity affects not only school attendance but also administration, teacher performance, curriculum implementation and learner outcomes (Ngezack et al., 2024; Walakan, 2026). Consequently, a resilience strategy focused exclusively on infrastructure or security would leave significant dimensions of educational vulnerability unresolved.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS

The perspectives advanced in this paper suggest that educational resilience in insecure rural communities should become a core planning principle rather than an emergency response. At the policy level, UBEC, SUBEBs and Local Education Authorities need to move from uniform security arrangements towards risk-sensitive plans that reflect the specific patterns of insecurity, mobility and vulnerability within each community. Funding should therefore support not only physical protection but also continuity mechanisms, teacher welfare and community-based preparedness. In practice, resilient schooling requires schools to be

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prepared to change how learning is delivered when circumstances change. Head teachers and teachers should be equipped to activate alternative learning arrangements, maintain communication with families, provide basic psychosocial support and adjust instructional practices during periods of disruption. Community actors should be treated as partners in educational continuity, with clearly defined roles in early warning, communication, learner mobilisation and school protection.

The paper also implies keeping pupils in school is unlikely to be sustainable where teachers are unsafe, unsupported or unwilling to remain in rural postings. Consequently, teacher incentives, secure accommodation, professional support and psychosocial care should form part of retention planning. Finally, and importantly, the GLAM Model offers a basis for moving policy thinking from crisis management towards preparedness, adaptation and recovery. Its components should be piloted, monitored and refined across different rural insecurity contexts before wider institutionalisation.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Insecurity poses a serious threat to the continuity, quality and inclusiveness of Basic Education in rural Nigeria, particularly through school disruption, pupil displacement, teacher attrition and psychological distress. However, insecurity does not have to result in the complete breakdown of education. Rather, schools and communities can develop mechanisms that enable learning to continue while adapting to changing circumstances. Nigeria therefore does not need to reinvent the wheel. What is required is the careful adaptation of lessons from successful international and national experiences to the realities of rural Nigerian communities. The proposed GLAM Model (Global Lessons Adapted for Marginalized Rural Schools) provides such a framework by integrating guarded schools, low-tech learning, assisted teachers and mindful learners. Its strength lies in treating security, learning continuity, teacher welfare and psychosocial well-being as interconnected dimensions of educational resilience. In the long run, education must continue even during crisis. With stronger government-community partnerships, sustainable funding, teacher support, flexible learning systems and psychosocial interventions, rural Basic Schools can become more resilient and better positioned to retain pupils and teachers despite insecurity.

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