

ACCESS TO SCHOOL PROJECT 2025

Retention and Follow-Up Report

Reporting Period: November 2025 — February 2026 | Submitted to GlobalGiving

100 Girls Re-enrolled <i>Across 5 LGAs</i>	90% Term 1 Attendance Achieved <i>90 of 100 girls, ≥80% of days</i>	≥75% 6-Month Retention Target <i>Assessment due April 2026</i>
--	---	--



1. Overview

This report details the attendance, retention, and follow-up outcomes for the 100 out-of-school girls supported by ATLAS Initiative Nigeria to re-enter formal education in Lagos State. Implementation commenced on 16th October 2025; enrolment formalities across all five target Local Government Areas (Ikorodu, Yaba, Somolu, Kosofe, and Oshodi) were completed on 13th November 2025. This report covers the subsequent monitoring period through February 2026, encompassing three attendance checkpoints at weeks 2, 6, and 12 of the first term.

The central question this report addresses is the one donors rightly ask: the girls were enrolled, are they still there? The answer, as evidenced by SBMC tracking records across all five LGAs, is yes. Ninety of the 100 enrolled girls met the attendance threshold of 80% or more of school days across all three checkpoints, achieving the project's $\geq 90\%$ target for Term One. This outcome reflects not only the material support provided through school kits but the sustained follow-up conducted by School-Based Management Committees and ATLAS Initiative field staff, whose household visits and community engagement have been decisive in maintaining momentum beyond enrolment day.

2. Attendance and Retention Data

2.1 Term One Attendance (Weeks 2, 6, and 12)

Attendance monitoring was conducted by SBMC focal persons at weeks two, six, and twelve of the first term, using a structured tracking sheet co-designed with SUBEB. A girl was recorded as meeting the attendance threshold if she attended 80% or more of school days in the preceding period. The table below presents attendance figures disaggregated by LGA.

LGA	Enrolled	Wk 2 ($\geq 80\%$)	Wk 6 ($\geq 80\%$)	Wk 12 ($\geq 80\%$)
Ikorodu	60	54	54	54
Yaba	10	9	9	9
Somolu	10	9	9	9
Kosofe	10	9	9	9
Oshodi	10	9	9	9
TOTAL	100	90	90	90

Attendance was consistent across all three checkpoints, indicating that initial re-enrolment momentum was sustained rather than eroding over time, a pattern that previous cycles have identified as a critical vulnerability. The uniformity of outcomes across LGAs reflects the standardised SBMC-led follow-up methodology deployed

across all sites and the effectiveness of the caregiver briefings conducted at the point of kit distribution.

2.2 Attendance Below Threshold: Cases and Responses

Ten girls (10%) recorded attendance below the 80% threshold at one or more checkpoints during Term One. In each case, SBMC focal persons conducted household visits to identify the underlying cause and agree a response plan with the family. The principal reasons identified were as follows:

- ▶ **Household financial pressure** (4 girls): Families cited the cost of daily transport and, in two cases, the expectation that girls would contribute to household income on market days. SBMC trackers engaged caregivers directly, providing guidance on the conditional fee-waiver provisions available through SUBEB, and facilitated contact with school headteachers to agree flexible attendance arrangements where required.
- ▶ **Health-related absence** (3 girls): Short-term illness accounted for absences in three cases. SBMC focal persons confirmed with school records that these girls had returned to full attendance by the subsequent checkpoint and are no longer considered at risk of dropout.
- ▶ **Early domestic responsibility** (2 girls): Two girls in Ikorodu were identified as carrying significant domestic labour obligations in the early morning, which resulted in late arrival patterns being recorded as partial absences. Community mobilisers held sensitisation sessions with the relevant households, engaging older siblings and community women's groups to redistribute morning care responsibilities.
- ▶ **School placement concern** (1 girl): One girl in Kosofe was initially placed in a class assessed as significantly above her current learning level, resulting in disengagement and reluctance to attend. In coordination with the headteacher, her placement was adjusted. She has since attended consistently and her confidence in the classroom has visibly improved.

No girls have formally withdrawn from school during this reporting period. All ten cases identified as below threshold have active response plans in place, and seven of the ten had returned to consistent attendance by week twelve.

2.3 Six-Month Retention Outlook

The six-month retention assessment is scheduled for April 2026, at which point ATLAS Initiative will report against the target of $\geq 75\%$ of enrolled girls remaining in school and attending consistently. Based on current attendance trajectories and the responsiveness of SBMC follow-up to emerging risks, the project is on course to meet or exceed this target. A full retention report will be submitted to GlobalGiving following the April assessment.

3. Community and Caregiver Engagement

All 100 caregiver briefings were completed prior to the start of the first term, equipping families with clear guidance on school timetables, attendance expectations, the rights of their daughters under Nigeria's Universal Basic Education Act, and the support mechanisms available through SBMC focal persons should difficulties arise. Briefings were delivered in Yoruba and Pidgin English to ensure accessibility across all participating households.

SBMC trackers conducted household follow-up visits at each of the three attendance checkpoints, maintaining direct lines of communication between families and schools. The quality and consistency of these visits varied across LGAs: in Ikorodu, where SBMC structures are most firmly established, follow-up was systematic and well-documented; in the four smaller LGAs, the relatively lower caseload allowed for more intensive individual engagement with each family.

A notably positive development during this period was the emergence of informal peer networks among caregivers in two Ikorodu communities. Mothers of enrolled girls began organising voluntary morning walk-to-school groups, accompanying younger girls to school and, in doing so, increasing the visibility of girls' education as a community norm. This organic development was not programmed by ATLAS Initiative but represents precisely the kind of community-owned momentum the project seeks to catalyse. ATLAS staff have supported these groups informally and will consider how to strengthen them in the next cycle.

In Somolu, community dialogue sessions surfaced persistent pressure on some families from extended household members who viewed girls' schooling as a secondary priority relative to domestic obligations. SBMC trackers and ATLAS community mobilisers have conducted targeted follow-up sensitisation with the households concerned, drawing on rights-based framing anchored in the Universal Basic Education Act, 2004, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4. Safeguarding

Child safeguarding is embedded throughout ATLAS Initiative's follow-up methodology, and all SBMC focal persons operating in the five target LGAs received safeguarding orientation prior to the commencement of household visits. During the reporting period, the following was recorded:

- ▶ Six safeguarding concerns were identified and formally referred through established SBMC and SUBEB channels. These included three cases of suspected child labour outside school hours, two disclosures of physical discipline within

the home, and one case involving a girl whose enrolment was being actively discouraged by an extended family member.

- ▶ Four of the six referrals (67%) were resolved and formally closed within 30 days. This falls short of the project's target of $\geq 90\%$ closure within 30 days and reflects the structural gap identified in the 2025 Implementation Report: the absence of a formalised referral directory with designated contacts and response timelines across social welfare, law enforcement, and child protection agencies. The two outstanding cases remain open and are being actively tracked.
- ▶ In response to this gap, ATLAS Initiative has initiated a scoping process with SUBEB and the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare to co-develop a Referral Directory and Response Protocol Handbook. A draft is expected to be available for stakeholder review in March 2026.

No safeguarding incident involved a disclosure of identity that would require redaction from this report. The identities and circumstances of all referred cases are held confidentially by ATLAS Initiative and the relevant SBMC focal persons and will not be disclosed in any public-facing document.

5. Challenges and Adaptations

ATLAS Initiative is committed to honest, adaptive reporting. The following challenges were encountered during this reporting period and addressed as described. Acknowledging these challenges openly is essential to building donor confidence and informing more effective programme design.

- ▶ **Variation in SBMC record-keeping capacity.** In Ikorodu, where 60 girls are distributed across multiple wards, the volume of cases exceeded the organisational capacity of some SBMC volunteer teams, resulting in inconsistencies in documentation between wards. ATLAS Initiative responded by deploying a simplified two-page tracking sheet, conducting a refresher session with Ikorodu SBMC focal persons in December 2025, and establishing a WhatsApp coordination group to enable real-time sharing of attendance data between trackers and the ATLAS field coordinator.
- ▶ **Household financial pressure and market-day absence.** Economic stress within beneficiary households remains the most frequently cited barrier to consistent attendance. In four cases, girls were kept home on market days to assist with trading or domestic duties. ATLAS Initiative is working with SBMC trackers to engage these families through the community dialogue approach, reinforcing the legal obligation to ensure school attendance under the Universal Basic Education Act, 2004, whilst remaining sensitive to the genuine economic pressures families face. This structural challenge will be addressed more

systematically in the next cycle through cross-referral to ATLAS's ELiTE livelihood programme for eligible caregivers.

- ▶ **Delayed formalisation of referral pathways.** The absence of a formal, multi-agency referral protocol continues to constrain the speed and completeness of safeguarding responses, as noted in the 2025 Implementation Report. The two unresolved safeguarding referrals from this period are directly attributable to this gap. ATLAS Initiative has escalated this as a priority for the first quarter of 2026 and is actively pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare to establish clear protocols, designated focal contacts, and accountable response timelines.

7. Looking Ahead

Building on the strong attendance outcomes of Term One, ATLAS Initiative's focus for the next phase of this project is retention, systems strengthening, and early preparation for the 2026 A2S cycle. Specifically:

- ▶ The six-month retention assessment will be conducted in April 2026. This will measure the number of originally enrolled girls who remain in school and attending consistently, with results reported against the $\geq 75\%$ target. A full retention report will be submitted to GlobalGiving following this assessment.
- ▶ The Referral Directory and Response Protocol Handbook, developed jointly with SUBEB and the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs, will be finalised and piloted across the five target LGAs in the first quarter of 2026, directly addressing the safeguarding gap identified in this and the preceding report.
- ▶ SBMC monitoring capacity will be strengthened through a train-the-trainer workshop planned for March 2026, cascading standardised verification, attendance tracking, and safeguarding awareness across all participating wards and establishing quarterly peer-learning clusters at LGA level.
- ▶ Early fundraising mobilisation for the 2026 A2S cycle will commence in the first quarter of 2026, incorporating the lesson from 2025 that delayed funding disbursement compresses implementation timelines and reduces the quality of preparatory activities. Securing commitments in advance of the academic year is a strategic priority.
- ▶ ATLAS Initiative will explore cross-referral pathways between A2S beneficiary families and the ELiTE livelihood programme, currently funded by Irish Aid, to begin addressing the household economic pressures that underlie persistent attendance risks for a proportion of enrolled girls.