



## The dRPC – 20 years of Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Northern Nigeria

## The dRPC – 20 years of Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Nigeria

### Overview

The development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC), is the oldest local non-profit working to advance early childhood development policy implementation within government and to strengthen the capacity of community associations to run community based ECCD centres. With funding from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, the dRPC first rolled out its ECCD work stream in 2004 advocating for the development of a National ECCD policy. Between 2005 and 2009, the dRPC trained over 100 local teachers in the area of ECCD; supported 15 community ECCD centres; and convened two National Dialogues on ECCD. The dRPC's early work on ECCD was captured in national daily newspapers and TV programs. One such article in 2009 had this to say of the dRPC's ECCD work:

“Between 2006 and 2009, dRPC trained 146 teachers from public and private schools in Kano on the government's new ECCD policy and made donations of instructional materials and teaching aids of over 1 million naira each. Materials donated include stationery, play items and other instructional materials, first aid items, sanitation and hygiene items, among others. The topics covered in the training programs were aimed at supporting the new ECCD policy of the Federal government as adopted by the state government. The Centre has developed a comprehensive training guide in English and Hausa languages focusing on core elements of child development such as nutrition, first aid, reading and writing through the child-to-child method, creative play, among others. The ECCD National Roundtable of 18th July 2007 has drawn a total of 21 participants out of whom five participants represent State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) of five states – Kano, Kaduna, Yobe, Sokoto and Bauchi states. The roundtable also drew nine participants representing non-governmental organizations such as the Save the Children and ENHANSE; 1 journalist, 1 representative of UNICEF Kano, as well as four representatives of the dRPC. <https://dailytrust.com/will-drpcs-initiative-improve-learning-in-public-schools/>

In 2018, the dRPC expanded its work in the ECCD space with deeper investments in Kano and Jigawa States as priority states where 40 young female secondary school leavers were supported to establish community based ECCD home based centres targeting nursery aged school children who would otherwise only have

attended Quranic schools. The first cohort of 2018 ECCD teachers were 40 female secondary school leavers who had obtained only 1 or 2 subjects, from NECO/WAEC and were unable to transit to post-secondary education. The young women, burdened with a sense of failure and the anticipation of a limited future marked by early marriage and domestic servitude, were targeted for transformation into entrepreneurs, inspirational teachers, community assets, and advocates for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD).



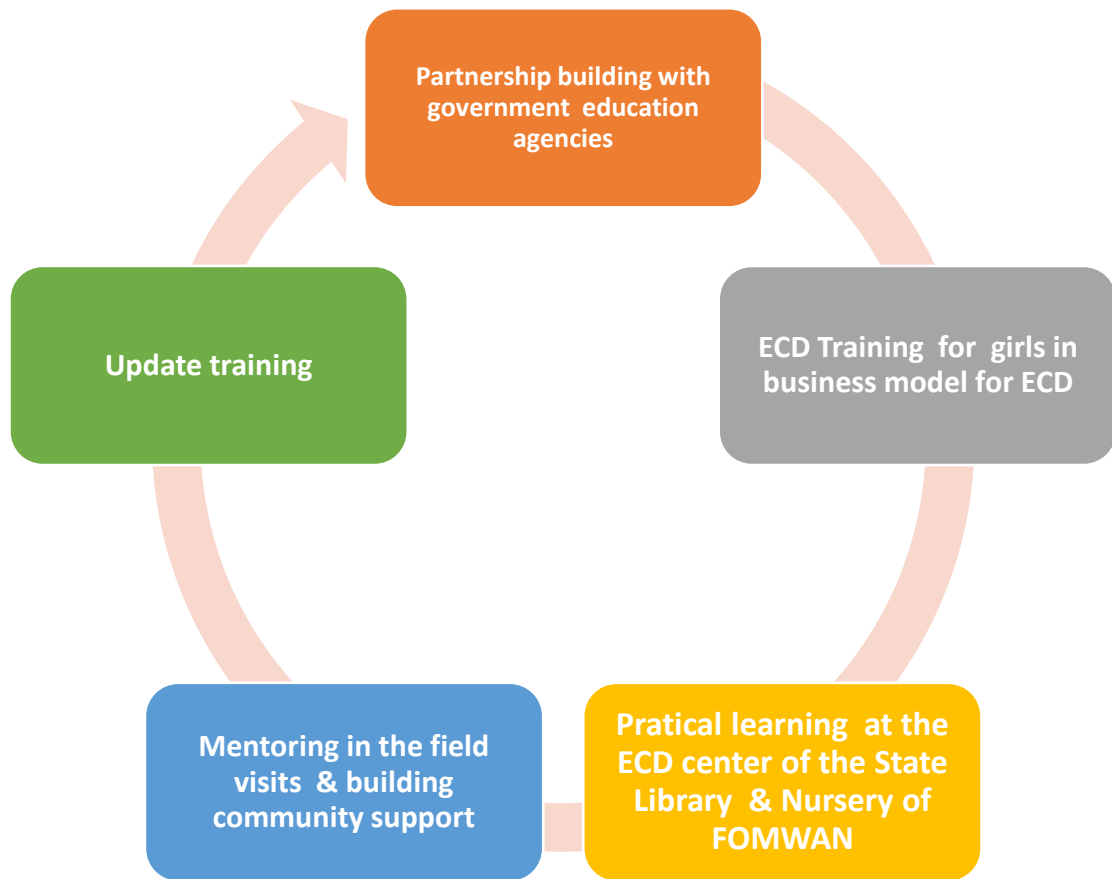
Figure 1: ECCD Centre in Gwaram

The dRPC's innovative concept aimed to empower these 40 girls to establish and manage ECCD within the safety of their homes. The objective was to reach out to the millions of out-of-school children in their communities, particularly in Kano and Jigawa states in Northern Nigeria - <https://thenationonlineng.net/how-school-leavers-boost-eccd-in-kano-jigawa/>.

By 2019, the dRPC successfully collaborated with the Ministries of Education in Kano and Jigawa States, as well as the ECCD department of State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in both states. Working with government, the dRPC organized a comprehensive training program specifically designed to support 40 girls establish community-based ECCD Schools. The training focused on a range of crucial topics, such as: how to start an ECCD School, difference between ECCD Education and Nursery Education, role of proprietors or proprietresses in Running an ECCD School, Record Keeping and Administration in ECCD Centre, ECCD Curriculum for Classes 1 and 2; Child Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation in

ECCD; Introduction to ECCD Class; and Teaching Practice and Developing the Community-Based ECCD School Workplan.

**The dRPC's ECCD capacity building training model:**



Success Story of participatory ECCD teacher training

Figure 2: ECCD Training for secondary school girls in dRPC program 2019



Figure 3: ECCD Class in Mallam Madori

In addition to the training, the dRPC provided ECCD starter kits to all 40 girls; infrastructure grants of between N50,000 to N80,000 for centre improvements; facilitate registration of schools with Corporate Affairs Commission, the LEA and SUBEB; supported the recruitment of teachers assistants; and mentored and funded girls for continuing education (back to school programs).

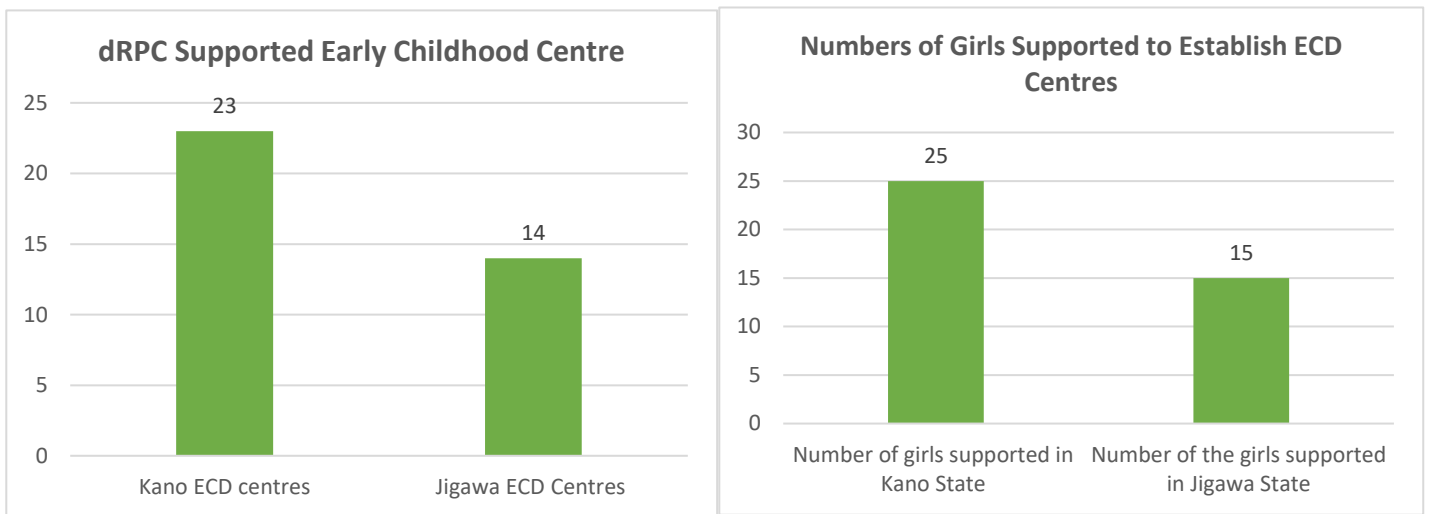
#### Key Metrics of the dRPC supported home based ECCD Centres

- Number of ECCD Centres first established in 2019 – 20 (12 in Kano and 8 in Jigawa State)
- Number of ECCD Centres thriving as of 2024 – 19 (10 in Kano State and 9 in Jigawa State).
- Number of ECCD pupils in thriving schools in 2024 – 2048 (890 Males and 1138 Females)
- Number of young secondary school female leavers trained to run home based ECCD Centres by dRPC since 2019 – 42
- Number of ECCD aged pupils reached in dRPC supported schools since 2019 – 9,280 (Male 3979 and Female 5301)
- Number of dRPC trainings conducted for young female home based ECCD Centres since 2019 - 10
- Number of Rural and Urban LGAs in Jigawa and Kano state with dRPC ECCD supported Centres in 2024 – Urban 3 Rural 4

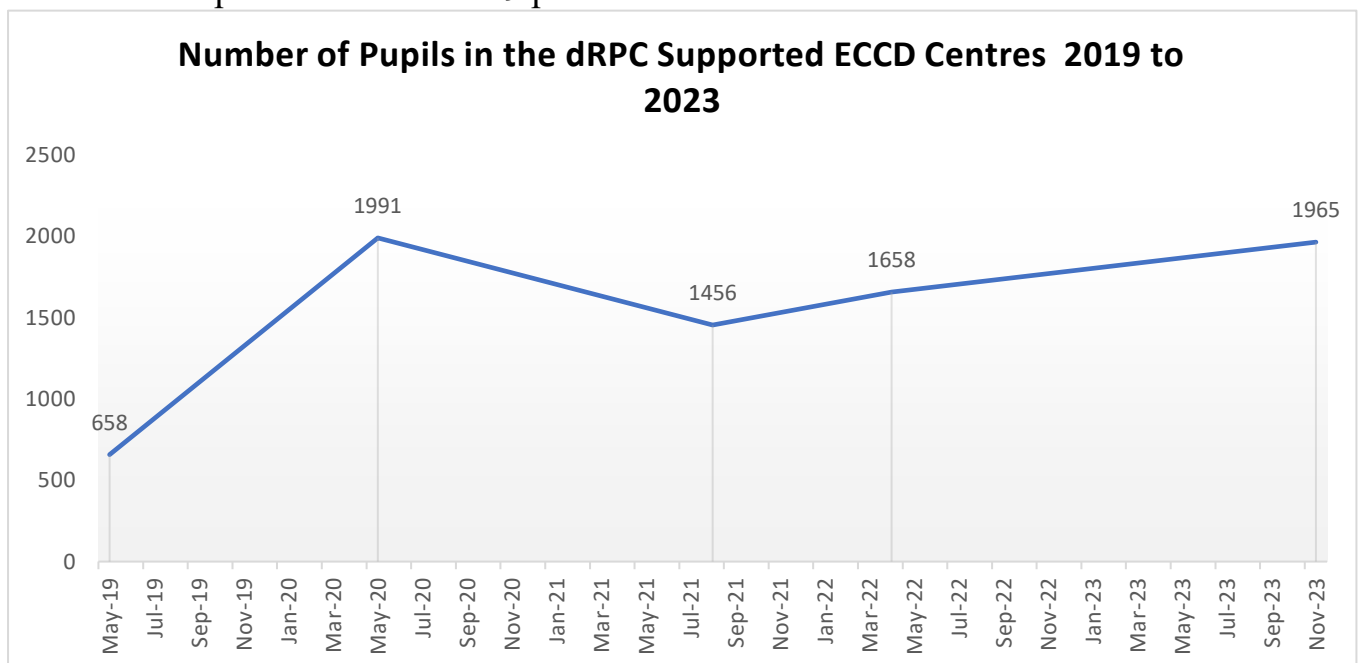
- Number of local communities and traditional leaders supporting dRPC ECCD Centres as of 2024 – 7
- Average Centre population of pupils per ECCD Centre as of 2024 - 103
- Average school fees per term for pupils in ECCD Centres as of 2024 – N600
- % of ECCD Centres breaking even or making a profit as of 2024 – 89.47% (17 ECCD Centres)
- Number of security incidences reported in ECCD Centres since 2019 - 0

### More Metrics

Metrics on 40 girls trained to establish 37 ECD Centres in Kano and Jigawa States as of 2019

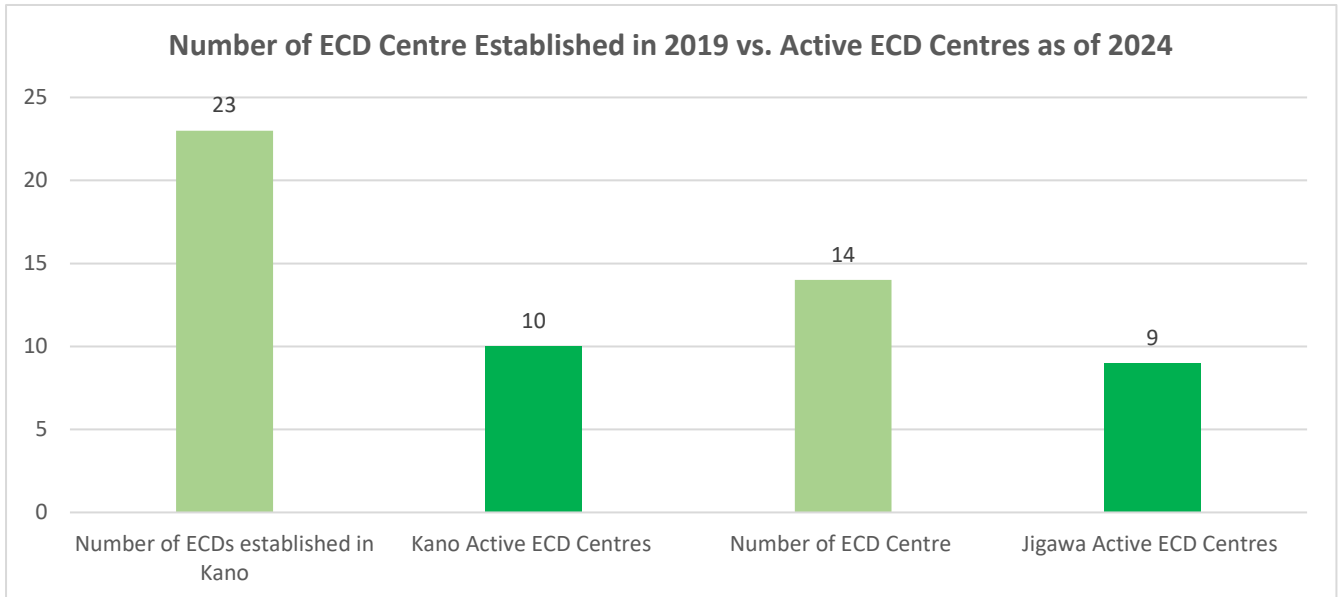


The ECCD centres commenced with an enrolment of 658 pupils in 2019, which grew to 1991 in 2020. However, there was a decline to 1965 in 2023, attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of certain schools due to

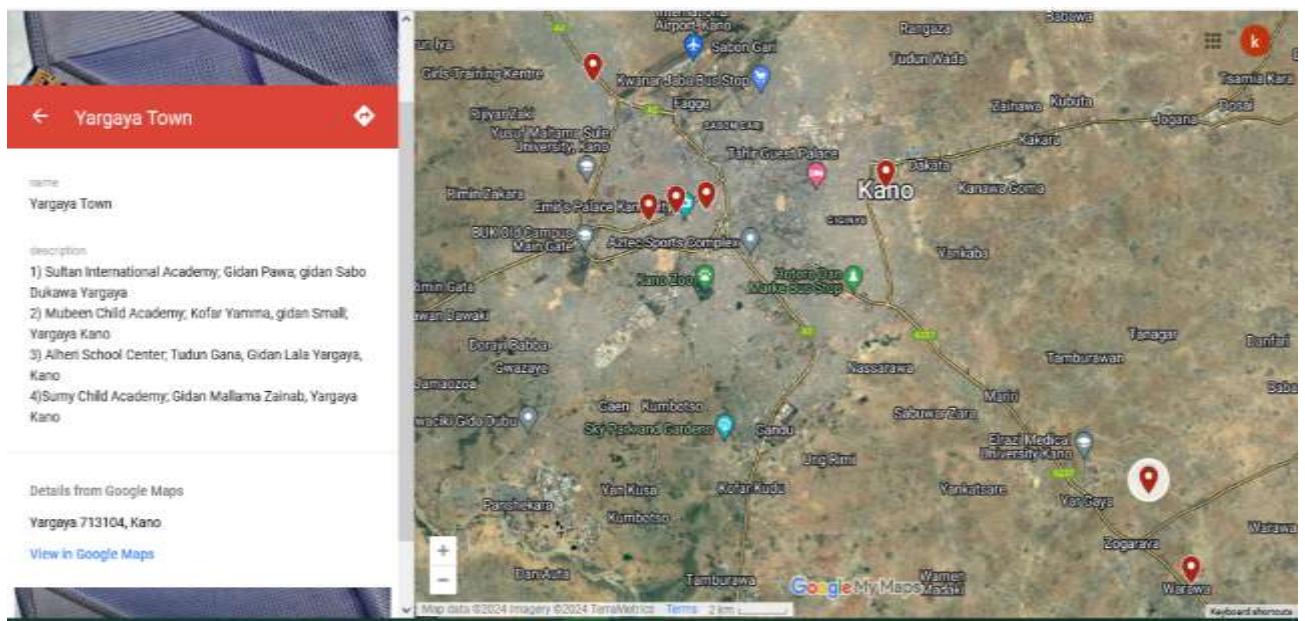


health challenges. Additionally, factors such as transitions to tertiary institutions, marriage, divorce and changes in location contributed to the reduction in pupil numbers.

37 ECCD Centres established in 2019; as of 2024 19 ECCD Centres active



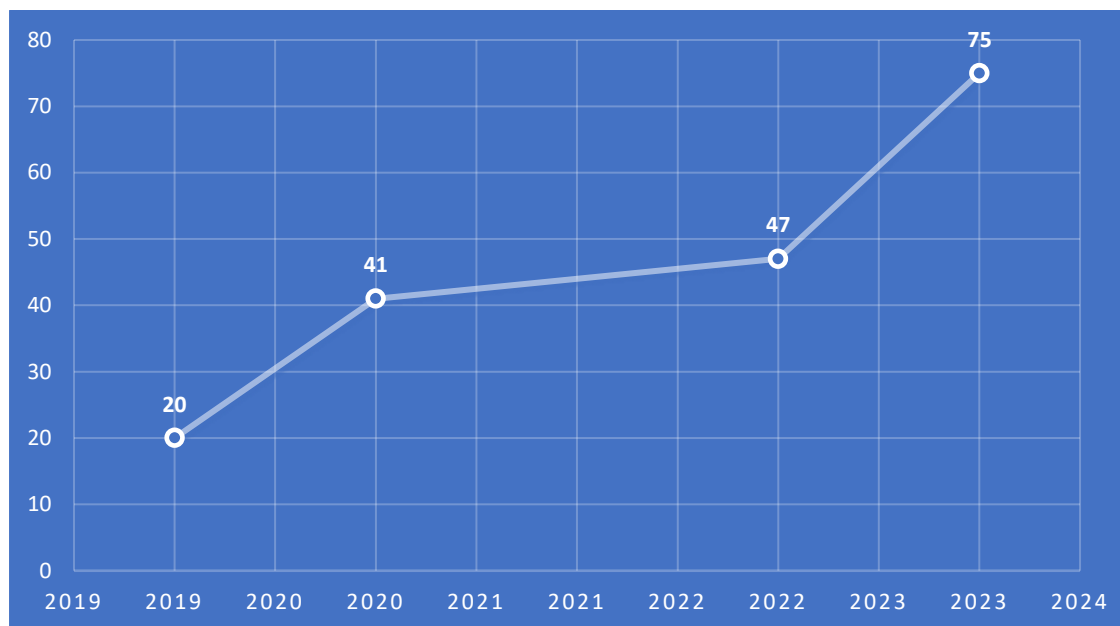
The active ECD centers are situated in Gwarzo, Gobirawa, Yakasai, Kode, Lahadin Makole, Yargaya in Kano State, and Abuja Dunari, Kamfala, Tudun Gana in Mallam Madori, Gwaram Gabas, Sabuwar Gwaram Gabas in Gwaram, and Tsohon Maranjuwa, Yalwa Tyre, Kwari in Dutse in Jigawa State.



Map of ECD Project Intervention in Kano State; a click on the location shows the number of ECD schools in the LGA. Link to Map of ECD schools in Kano:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1clGPXIdbc0ocS0rnwYdbalMwo4nRbA&usp=sharing> . Link to Map of ECCD schools in Jigawa:

Since 2019, the girls have been actively engaged in recruiting staff, growing from 20 teachers to 75 teachers by 2023.



### Sustainability

As part of the project's sustainability strategy, the dRPC trained the girls to conduct advocacy visits to community leaders in areas where ECCD Centres were located for local support. The objective was to secure community support for the ECCD girls and raise awareness about the importance of early creative experiences in school-like settings. This approach not only fostered trust among parents, leading to increased enrolment but also facilitated the expansion of rapidly growing schools as some community leaders offered more permanent sites. On March 15, 2023, the dRPC further strengthened the sustainability of the ECD centres by facilitating their registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) as a Company Limited by Guarantee. All 19 Centres are breaking even or making a modest profit; the Centres are valued in their respective communities and the social status of the girls has increased significantly; in the Covid period the ECCD Centres were a hub for information on infection prevention; and as children transit from these Centres into government primary schools their performance is reported to be higher than children from government nursery classes.

### Implications for national policy making and informing communities of practice

The dRPC has been disseminating its 20 years of experience leading in ECCD in Northern Nigeria by participating in national conferences and by convening communities of practices on play-based learning in Nigeria.

<https://drpcngr.org/national-dialogue-on-play-based-learning-in-eccd-in-nigeria-held-in-abuja-february-2023/>

### **Links to newspaper articles and Features Success stories on the ECD project**

- Deutech Welle Feature of dRPC ECD Schools Taba Ka Lashe (translated by dRPC): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv\\_yXNgwGPU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv_yXNgwGPU&feature=youtu.be)
- Original broadcast (Hausa): <https://www.dw.com/ha/ta-ba-ka-lashe-2526052022/av-61989123>
- Reflections on innovation in girls' education in Nigeria - [Reflections on innovation in girls' education in Nigeria](#)
- The Nation (October 24, 2019): How school leavers boost ECD in Kano, Jigawa Retrieved October 24, 2019 from <https://thenationonlineng.net/how-school-leavers-boost-e-c-d-in-kano-jigawa/>
- Daily Trust (18<sup>th</sup> October, 2019): Exam failure not an excuse to be redundant. Retrieved October 22, 2019, from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/exam-failure-not-an-excuse-to-be-redundant.html>).
- Africa Newpage (24<sup>th</sup> July, 2017): dRPC-PSIPSE: Empowering Northern girls and communities through early childhood education. Retrieved October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019, from <https://www.africannewpage.net/2019/07/promoted-drpc-psipse-empowering-northern-girls-and-communities-through-early-childhood-education/>.
- dRPC disseminates learning from #Skill4Girls4Life project to stakeholders - <https://www.africannewpage.net/2019/10/drpc-disseminates-learning-from-skill4girls4life-project-to-stakeholders/>.