



Exploring Youth Radicalisation within the Almajiri System in Northern Nigeria

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Introduction

The UN Security Council's July 2018 report highlights the escalating threat posed by Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram,¹ with operational expansions and recruitment surges in Nigeria and beyond.² The unprecedented rise of jihadist extremism in Africa represents a critical global security challenge, with the Almajiri system in northern Nigeria emblematically illustrating how systemic marginalisation, educational exclusion, and socio-economic deprivation can transform vulnerable youth populations into potent recruitment pools for violent ideological movements. Boko Haram's recruitment of marginalised Almajirai youths, estimated at over 10 million in Northern Nigeria, exploits their unemployment and identity grievances. Reports from organisations like UNICEF and interviews with former Almajirai confirm their vulnerability to extremist promises of purpose and provision, underscoring the urgent need for systemic educational and economic reforms.³

The Almajiri system - an integral component of Northern Nigeria's Islamic heritage since the 11th century Sufi tradition of Qur'anic education - has experienced a significant transformation.⁴ The term "Almajiri" derives from the Arabic *al-muhajirun*, meaning "those who migrate for knowledge." In its original form, young male students (Almajirai) would travel from their home communities to study under Islamic scholars (Mallams),⁵ viewing this educational migration as both noble and spiritually beneficial. Historically, the system operated within a well-structured social framework where Hausa Emirs⁶ provided oversight and state-managed *zakat* (Islamic alms) that financially supported schools and students. Mallams served as comprehensive mentors, providing not only religious instruction but also guidance, shelter, and sustenance while students memorised the Qur'an and learned Islamic jurisprudence.

However, British colonial policies systematically dismantled this supporting infrastructure by withdrawing state funding, eliminating *zakat* management systems, and reducing traditional emirate authority. This left Mallams suddenly dependent on charity and informal networks, fundamentally undermining the socio-economic foundations that had sustained quality education for centuries.⁷ Today's Almajirai often face severe hardships, including inadequate shelter, insufficient nutrition, limited healthcare access, and educational resources confined largely to basic Qur'anic memorisation. Many resort to begging for sustenance, creating the visible street children phenomenon that characterises contemporary Almajiri experience in Northern Nigerian urban centres.

The structural deficiencies create what can be termed "educational vulnerability" - graduates equipped primarily with religious knowledge but lacking literacy, numeracy, and technical skills necessary for integration into Nigeria's evolving economy. This educational gap perpetuates economic marginalisation, potentially making graduates susceptible to alternative narratives promising purpose and provision.⁸

1 Kairat Umarov, "Letter Dated 16 July 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) Concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals, Groups, Undertakings and Entities Addressed to the President of the Security Council," *United Nations Security Council Committee*, July 27 (2018).

2 Dan Kuwali, "Countering Violent Extremism in Africa," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa* (Springer, 2022).

3 Geoffrey Njoku, "Children adjust to life outside Nigeria's Almajiri system," 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/stories/children-adjust-life-outside-nigerias-almajiri-system>.

4 Mohammed Bello Baban'umma, "Almajiri Model School System and the Problematic of Implementation," *Lapai Journal of Politics* 5, no. 1 (2018): 114.

5 Hannah Hoechner, "Accomplice, patron, go-between? A role to play with poor migrant Qur'anic students in northern Nigeria," *Qualitative Research* 18, no. 3 (2018).

6 Victor Nnadozie and Michael Anthony Samuel, "Alternative pathways to universal basic education: through the lens of Almajiri nomadic schooling in northern Nigeria," *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production* 23, no. 1 (2017).

7 Uche Uwaezuoke Okonkwo, "Islam and human dignity: the plights of Almajiri street children during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria," *Co-gent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2022).

8 Iro Aghedo and Surulola James Eke, "From alms to arms: the Almajiri phenomenon and internal security in northern Nigeria," *Journal of Policy Studies* 28, no. 3 (2013).

This policy brief details the urgent need to disrupt the self-reinforcing cycle of poverty, educational neglect, and radicalisation within the Almajiri system by targeting its structural root causes. Economic marginalisation, lack of formal schooling, and social alienation create vulnerabilities that necessitate holistic interventions beyond militarised counter-terrorism approaches. However, the system's inherent potential for building resilience through comprehensive religious education represents a crucial dimension often overlooked in policy discourse.

When properly structured and resourced, Islamic education provides critical resilience-building elements: spiritual grounding with moral frameworks, community integration mechanisms, confident identity formation, and traditional emphasis on scholarly debate and interpretation—skills that enable students to critically evaluate extremist narratives. The distinction between *tsangaya* schools (traditional, apolitical Qur'anic memorisation) and *markaz* institutions (Salafi-influenced) illustrates this transformative potential, where traditional approaches can build resilience rather than vulnerability.

Drawing on empirical evidence, this analysis argues that counter-terrorism efforts must move beyond securitised approaches to address the Almajiri system's structural drivers through threefold objectives: integrating mainstream curricula elements like mathematics and science into Almajiri education; proposing governance mechanisms that address systemic corruption and exclusion; and advocating community-led initiatives that dismantle divisive identity narratives. This hybrid approach preserves cultural heritage while equipping students with skills to bridge socio-economic divides and transforms the system from a point of vulnerability into a stabilising force for youth development.

Integrating Almajiri education into mainstream curricula enriches rather than suppresses its identity by incorporating essential subjects into the traditional syllabus. By addressing both structural deficiencies and leveraging inherent strengths, policymakers can undermine the conditions fuelling radicalisation while restoring institutional legitimacy, ultimately advancing sustainable security through inclusive, community-supported reform in Northern Nigeria.

Beyond Traditional Assessments

Scholarly discourse on the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria revolves around three perspectives: (1) the system as a catalyst for radicalisation, (2) systemic neglect and governance failures as the core issues, and (3) socio-economic deprivation as the primary driver of radicalisation.

The first perspective identifies the Almajiri system as a catalyst for radicalisation, contending that its structure fosters conditions conducive to extremism. Scholars such as Awofeso, Ritchie, and Degeling posit that the system, characterised by inadequate supervision, rote memorisation of religious texts, and the absence of government regulation, creates an environment where students are susceptible to indoctrination.⁹

In contrast, the second perspective contests this causal link, underscoring systemic neglect and governance lapses as the foundational concerns. Rather than actively contributing to radicalisation, Almajirai are perceived as casualties of widespread socio-political marginalisation.¹⁰

The third standpoint accentuates socio-economic destitution as a pivotal factor, positing that the

9 Niyi Awofeso, Jan Ritchie, and Pieter Degeling, "The Almajiri heritage and the threat of non-state terrorism in northern Nigeria—lessons from Central Asia and Pakistan," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 26, no. 4 (2003): 311-25.

10 Hannah Hoechner, "Striving for knowledge and dignity: How qur'anic students in Kano, Nigeria, learn to live with rejection and educational disadvantage," *The European Journal of Development Research* 23 (2011): 712-28.

impoverished circumstances of Almajirai render them prone to radicalisation. Studies highlight the grim living conditions—homelessness, starvation, and lack of access to formal education—that make Almajirai susceptible to recruitment by extremist organisations.¹¹ The distinction between tsangaya schools, focused on apolitical Qur’anic memorisation, and markaz institutions, infused with Salafi ideology, is critical. This divergence underscores how socio-economic destitution renders Almajirai vulnerable to radicalisation, as markaz teachings may intersect with extremist interpretations, unlike the traditional, non-political tsangaya curriculum. This distinction is crucial because tsangaya schools emphasise traditional, non-political Qur’anic memorisation, while markaz institutions, influenced by Salafi ideology, often integrate doctrinal teachings that can intersect with radical interpretations.¹²

While prior research emphasises poverty, indoctrination, and identity fragmentation in Almajiri radicalisation, this study integrates these perspectives, spotlighting the Almajiri curriculum’s systemic flaws. By synthesising socio-economic deprivation with educational shortcomings, it offers a comprehensive analysis of enduring human capital deficits, reframing radicalisation’s roots holistically. Moreover, whilst extant research has investigated the part played by impoverishment, religious indoctrination, and fragmented identities in the radicalisation of Almajiri children, it has predominantly overlooked the systemic shortcomings of the Almajiri educational syllabus and its enduring socioeconomic repercussions on human capital development.

This study contends that the Almajiri system, in its current form, intensifies radicalisation and perpetuates socio-economic disparity in Northern Nigeria. However, binary push-pull frameworks oversimplify radicalisation dynamics. Critical theorists like Sedgwick¹³ argue that religious education can function as both a vulnerability and a resilience factor, depending on the structural context. Rather than inherent extremism catalysts, Islamic institutions may strengthen social cohesion and critical thinking when adequately resourced and supervised. By failing to equip children with modern education and life skills, the system weakens human capital and exacerbates structural poverty. This study bridges gaps in understanding radicalisation by integrating multidisciplinary perspectives, revealing unexamined elements like the Almajiri system’s structural deficiencies. It advocates for innovative reforms—vocational training, structured curricula, and robust governance—to address these oversights, comprehensively mitigating extremism’s drivers through education. To bridge these gaps, this study integrates diverse scholarly perspectives on radicalisation and education, offering a comprehensive examination of how reforming the Almajiri system could mitigate the drivers of extremism. To counter radicalisation, addressing the deficiencies within the Almajiri system must go beyond traditional assessments. Education reforms must incorporate vocational training, structured curriculum integration, and governance mechanisms to ensure Almajiri children acquire relevant skills.

An interdisciplinary, evidence-based approach is essential for designing interventions that integrate Almajiri education with formal systems while addressing governance failures and socio-economic exclusion. Drawing from secondary sources—including journals, books, and reports—as well as primary data from newspaper sources and structured interviews with key informants five Almajiri graduates (Borno [3], Niger [1], Kaduna [1]), a parent (Jigawa), a businessman (Kaduna), and two academics (Kaduna, Edo), ensuring a representative perspective. Participants were purposively selected using snowball sampling through educational networks and community leaders, ensuring geographical diversity (four northern states) and stakeholder representation. However, the small sample size (nine informants) limits generalizability. Their positionality as both direct system participants and observers provides experiential insights but requires broader

¹¹ Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of religious politics and secular ideologies*; Freedom C Onuoha, *Why do youth join Boko Haram?*, vol. 5 (JSTOR, 2014).

¹² Roman Loimeier, “Boko Haram: The development of a militant religious movement in Nigeria,” *Africa spectrum* 47, no. 2-3 (2012).

¹³ Mark Sedgwick, “The concept of radicalization as a source of confusion,” *Terrorism and political violence* 22, no. 4 (2010).

validation for representative claims. This analysis unveils the intricate interrelations between poverty, cultural discontent, and state failures in fostering conditions conducive to extremist recruitment and explores Almajiri radicalisation through three main interconnected lenses: socio-economic deprivation, identity-based grievances, and governance failures. By embedding education within a broader framework of governance reform, social inclusion, and economic development, the Almajiri system can shift from being a vulnerability point to a stabilising force for youth development in Nigeria.

Conditions Conducive to Radicalisation

This section presents the study's findings in alignment with its three core objectives: (1) to outline reforms integrating Almajiri education into mainstream curricula, to propose governance mechanisms addressing systemic corruption and exclusion, and to advocate for community-led initiatives dismantling divisive identity narratives.

Socio-Economic Deprivation

This study, drawing on interviews with five Almajiri graduates, two academics, one male parent and one middle-class businessman, highlights how respondents overwhelmingly cited poverty, unemployment, and lack of social mobility as factors that push many towards radicalisation. The Almajiri system, rooted in Qur'anic education, often serves as a socio-economic coping mechanism for impoverished families who send their children away for 'free' religious instruction, though many students—residing full-time in tsangaya schools—are forced into street begging to sustain themselves and their Mallams.¹⁴ Few Almajiri graduates transition to formal education due to the lack of equivalency frameworks and skills training, trapping them in cycles of poverty and informal labour.¹⁵ Boko Haram exploits economic desperation by offering Almajiri youth financial incentives, food, and a sense of purpose, often framing their ideology as a pathway to social justice and empowerment.¹⁶

Cultural Marginalisation and Identity-Driven Resentments Fuelling Almajiri Youth Radicalisation

Identity-based grievances surface as a critical determinant that extremist groups exploit for recruitment. As some scholars argue, extremist groups manipulate these grievances by framing Western education as a cultural threat.¹⁷ Historically, British colonial policies marginalised Qur'anic schooling, fostering deep-seated scepticism toward state-led secular curricula.¹⁸ These historical grievances persist today, reinforcing anti-state sentiments.¹⁹

¹⁴ Hoechner, "Accomplice, patron, go-between? A role to play with poor migrant Qur'anic students in northern Nigeria."

¹⁵ Michael Saaondo, Bonaventure Chia, and Barnabas Obiaje Ellah PhD, "Comparison of the Implementation of Upper Basic Education Curriculum Between Private and Public Schools in Nigeria," *Global Scientific Journal* 11, no. 10 (2023).

¹⁶ Alexander Thurston, "Boko Haram: the history of an African jihadist movement," (2017).

¹⁷ Hoechner, "Accomplice, patron, go-between? A role to play with poor migrant Qur'anic students in northern Nigeria."

¹⁸ Loimeier, "Boko Haram: The development of a militant religious movement in Nigeria."

¹⁹ Aderonke Adegbite, "Child's Education and Inclusive Development in Nigeria: Exploring Multicultural Preferences for Redistributing Economic Obligations Through Laws," *Available at SSRN 4336075* (2019).

Governance Failures and Institutional Neglect

Governance failures further deepen the vulnerability of Almajiri populations. Weak institutional oversight, systemic corruption, and inconsistent policy interventions perpetuate cycles of exclusion.²⁰ Their economic precarity, coupled with minimal institutional representation, amplifies their marginalisation during political, economic, and security instabilities, making them particularly acute casualties of governance failures. For instance, during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns, thousands of Almajiri children were forcibly relocated without provisions, exacerbating their destitution and exposure to radical groups.²¹ Research indicates that this governance void cultivates fertile terrain for extremist narratives that posit violence as a legitimate reaction to state failure. The absence of reintegration programmes, growing resentment toward state abandonment, and increased Almajiri recruitment by insurgent factions demonstrate this governance vacuum.²² Consequently, Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (1979) explains how perceived exclusion reinforces in-group solidarity and susceptibility to extremist ideologies,²³ thereby intensifying Almajirai's collective sense of estrangement and vulnerability to extremist narratives.

Heavy-Handed State Responses and the Extremism Feedback Loop

Security forces' overemphasis on militarised approaches has proven counterproductive. As documented by one of the interviewees in Borno State,²⁴ and corroborated by Ezra²⁵ and Maman,²⁶ the indiscriminate targeting of Almajiri communities in the aftermath of security incidents drives numerous individuals towards extremist groups, either for protection or vengeance. Post-2009 Boko Haram crackdown, 2013 Baga massacre, and 2017 airstrike in Rann reportedly pushed thousands toward Boko Haram and ISWAP.²⁷ Moreover, former Boko Haram members in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes cite state violence as a primary reason for joining.²⁸ Recruitment narratives highlight state betrayal, persecution, and the promise of protection.²⁹ This dynamic engenders a perilous feedback loop where heavy-handed state responses reinforce the very narratives extremists utilise for recruitment. Extremist propaganda frames the government as corrupt oppressors, portraying insurgents as defenders of Islam and justice, leveraging grievances over killings and displacement.³⁰ As indicated earlier, seven out of ten youths in Borno State lack formal education—entrenching exclusion as security crackdowns alienate communities, reinforcing extremist recruitment through narratives of systemic neglect and lost opportunities.

Divergent Perspectives on Education and Social Mobility

Community insights provide a nuanced understanding of these dynamics concerning educational prospects and social mobility. Several erstwhile Almajirai who availed themselves of formal education challenge narratives of systematic exclusion, positing that openings are extant but

20 Uche Uwaezuoke Okonkwo, "Islam and human dignity: the plights of Almajiri street children during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2022).

21 Samuel Chukwudi Agunyai and Victor Ojakorotu, "Covid-19, Human displacement, and expanding crises of insecurity in Africa: The case of Almajiri children in Nigeria," *Int. J. Criminol. Sociol* 10 (2021).

22 Paul Markos, "Assessing the Impact of Factional Infighting within Boko Haram," (2020).

23 Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. "The social identity theory of intergroup behavior." In *Political psychology*, pp. 276-293. Psychology Press, (2004).

24 "Interview with E conducted on November 10 2024 in Lagos," interview by Author.

25 Ezra Danladi Mallam, "Boko haram insurgency and human rights violation in North Eastern Nigeria" (Kampala International University, College of Humanities and social sciences., 2019).

26 Emmanuel Baba Mamman, "Public policy response to violence: Case study of boko haram insurgency in Nigeria" (Walden University, 2020).

27 John Campbell, "Boko Haram and Nigeria State Weakness," in *Africa in World Politics* (Routledge, 2018).

28 Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram exists: The relative deprivation perspective," *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review* 3, no. 1 (2013).

29 James J Hentz, "The multidimensional nature of the Boko Haram conflict," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 29, no. 5-6 (2018).

30 Mordi Kenekukwu Martha, "A historical materialist perspective to Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria," *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research* 3, no. 1 (2022).

unutilised.³¹ As one informant from Borno State articulated: “We were accorded the identical opportunities as other juveniles, yet some of us elected not to capitalise on them.”³² The informant cited familial expectations, preference for religious schooling, and mistrust of government education policies. Many Almajiri graduates struggle with unemployment despite education, while others reject formal schooling due to cultural resistance or systemic neglect—intensifying debates on personal agency versus structural barriers in accessing opportunities. However, these perspectives contrast starkly with those bereft of access to formal education, spotlighting internal discourses on individual autonomy vis-à-vis structural impediments. The contrast lies in perspectives—some Almajirai see agency in educational access, while those excluded view systemic barriers as insurmountable.

Extremist groups can strategically capitalise on these sundry grievances. Boko Haram’s leadership judiciously wields religious and cultural identities, particularly theological narratives, to enlist Almajirai. Their propaganda underscores the rift between Yan Boko (Westernised Muslims) and Non-Yan Boko, depicting the former as emissaries of Western imperialism threatening indigenous values. This messaging reverberates powerfully with Almajirai, who perceive themselves as ostracised from mainstream economic and political edifices. Studies, including Mercy Corps,³³ confirm Boko Haram’s recruitment leverages socioeconomic exclusion, with defector testimonies highlighting its appeal to disenfranchised youth facing poverty and marginalisation.

Extremist Recruitment Tactics: Exploiting Vulnerabilities

Boko Haram crafts sophisticated propaganda explicitly targeting Almajiri vulnerabilities, leveraging theological and cultural narratives that resonate with their experiences of marginalisation. Boko Haram’s propaganda includes sermons, videos, and pamphlets framing Western education as haram (forbidden) and promising spiritual purity and economic rewards for recruits.³⁴ Their messaging strategically portrays extremism as a redemptive pathway, promising economic empowerment, religious authenticity, and resistance against perceived Western cultural imperialism, thereby transforming systemic grievances into recruitment opportunities.

Most notably, reflecting on the various statements made by the interviewees, a general impression emerges that systemic marginalisation fosters susceptibility to radicalisation. Interviewees describe feelings of exclusion aligning with Boko Haram’s messaging on economic injustice and cultural preservation. Moreover, flawed governance engenders economic hardship, which exacerbates identity-based grievances, whereas militarised state responses further estrange impacted communities. This intricate nexus of causality implies that efficacious counter-radicalisation strategies must tackle manifold dimensions concurrently rather than fixating on solitary factors in isolation.

Barriers to Reform and Community Resistance

Resistance from Mallams, lack of state funding, and entrenched socio-economic reliance on the Almajiri system pose significant barriers to reform.³⁵ To address these challenges, community consultation, phased economic incentives for Mallams, conditional cash transfers for families, and increased public funding for education are crucial in mitigating backlash.

Regarding advocacy for integrated policies to counter radicalisation among Almajirai in northern

31 Aminu Danladi, “Interview with F conducted on January 31, 2025 in the Hague (via WhatsApp call),” interview by Author.

32 “Interview with G conducted on November 10 2024 in Lagos,” interview by Author.

33 Mercy Corps, “Report investigates how Boko Haram recruits youth,” 2016, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/report-nigeria-boko-haram>.

34 Thurston, “Boko Haram: the history of an African jihadist movement.”

35 OF Odumosu et al., “Manifestations of the Almajirai in Nigeria: Causes and consequences” (NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH (NISER), 2013).

Nigeria, existing interventions include UNICEF's Education in Emergencies (EiE) program,³⁶ the Almajiri Integrated Model Schools (AIMS) initiative,³⁷ and recent policy shifts under Nigeria's Ministry of Education advocating increased funding and curriculum reform.³⁸ However, implementation remains inconsistent.³⁹ As government initiatives focus on formalising Almajiri education, critics argue that without addressing systemic corruption and community buy-in, such reforms risk reinforcing existing disparities rather than mitigating radicalisation vulnerabilities.

36 Mara Sofia Garcia Pinto, "Education in emergencies: coordination logics within the education cluster," (2024).

37 ABUBAKAR Idris, "Reductive schooling: A case study of Almajiri integrated model school in northern Nigeria," *Current Studies in Comparative Education Science and Technology* 3, no. 1 (2016).

38 Ali A Ahmadi and Ajibola A Lukman, "Issues and Prospects of Effective Implementation of New Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria," *Journal of education and practice* 6, no. 34 (2015).

39 Jonathan Adedayo Odukoya, Ebenezer Bowale, and Sola Okunlola, "Formulation and Implementation of Educational Policies in Nigeria," *African Educational Research Journal* 6, no. 1 (2018).

Conclusion

This study elucidates that the interplay between the Almajiri system and radicalisation in Northern Nigeria is more intricate than previously comprehended. Empirical evidence demonstrates that socio-economic deprivation may be a key driver, as millions of Almajirai endure extreme poverty, unemployment, and social stigma, making them susceptible to Boko Haram's financial incentives and ideological recruitment.

Furthermore, identity-based grievances—shaped by perceived cultural threats from Westernisation and the divide between Western-educated elites (Yan Boko) and traditionalists (Non-Yan Boko)—may also fuel extremism. Boko Haram exploits these sentiments, portraying itself as a guardian of Islamic identity against cultural erosion.

The findings underscore the need to move beyond security-centric counter-terrorism approaches. Sustainable peace necessitates tackling the underlying structural inequities that drive radicalisation. Comprehensive educational integration and governance reforms are essential to breaking cycles of marginalisation. By addressing these root causes through holistic socio-economic interventions, community-driven policy initiatives, and inclusive governance, Nigeria can mitigate radicalisation risks and foster long-term stability.

Policy Recommendations

To address the systemic drivers of radicalisation among Almajiri youth, a multi-faceted policy approach is required. This section outlines three key intervention areas: (1) integrating elements of mainstream curricula into Almajiri education, (2) addressing governance failures, and (3) fostering community-led initiatives to dismantle divisive identity narratives.

Educational Reform

A unified education system integrating secular and religious curricula is essential to equipping Almajiri youth with vocational skills and economic opportunities. Given limited political will, prioritise pilot programmes in willing states using existing Islamic education infrastructure. Leverage traditional authorities and successful Mallams as reform champions. Introduce mathematics/science gradually through Islamic contexts (calculating zakat, astronomy for prayer times). Fund through international partnerships and diaspora contributions, bypassing government budget constraints. Vocational training initiatives, supported by micro-financing and entrepreneurship programmes, will reduce economic vulnerability and strengthen pathways to self-sufficiency.

Governance Overhaul

Mitigating systemic exclusion and corruption requires transparent policies and regional cooperation. Senegal's approach to mitigating systemic exclusion and corruption through policy alignment with Mali, Niger, and Chad involves modernising Talibe education while preserving cultural identity. By integrating transparent curricula and intelligence-driven policing, Senegal prevents extremist infiltration, fostering inclusive communities and reducing alienation among vulnerable Talibe youth.⁴⁰ Policy alignment with neighbouring West African countries that

⁴⁰ Amnesty International, "Senegal: The State must move from commitment to strong action to protect talibé children", 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/12/senegal-letat-doit-passer-des-engagements-aux-actes-forts-pour-protger-les-enfants-talibes/>.

share similar informal education systems (e.g., Mali, Niger, Chad) can modernise curricula while preserving cultural identity and preventing extremist infiltration. Security sector reforms should prioritise intelligence-driven policing over heavy-handed crackdowns to prevent alienation of vulnerable communities.

Community-Led Initiatives

Shifting the perception of Almajirai from security threats to stakeholders in national development is crucial. Policy frameworks should prioritise human capacity development by establishing formal representation channels for Almajiri communities in policy dialogues involving religious leaders, educators, and parents. Ensuring sustainable implementation requires political commitment, resource allocation, and collaboration between governments, traditional institutions, and international partners.

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