

Contributions of Development Partners to Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme

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Abstract: *This paper examines some international declarations that led to the launching of Universal basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. The objectives and scope of UBE are discussed and the situation of basic education before the implementation of UBE. This is done in order to show the huge and substantial resources the UBE programme needs for its success –the resources no single stakeholder can provide. Accordingly, five notable development partners were identified.*

Keywords: *Universal Basic Education (U.B.E), Objectives, Implementation, Resources, Stakeholders, Donor Agencies*

I. Introduction

The Universal basic Education (UBE) programme was launched in 1999. It's launching was an evidence of Nigeria's commitment to Jomtien (1990) declaration on Education For All (EFA) and new education Delhi (1991) declaration by E-9 countries.

Education statistics for 1996 show that only 14.1 million children are enrolled in primary school out of 21 million children of school going age. The completion rate was 634%, while rate of transition to junior secondary school was 43.5% (Jagaba, 2008).

The UBE programme has the following specific objectives:-

- i. Developing in the entire citizenry as strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ii. The provision of free, Universal basic education for every Nigeria of school-going age.
- iii. Reduction drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system
- iv. Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- v. Ensuring the acquisition of the ethical, moral and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for lifelong learning etc.

The scope of UBE

Universal Basic Education broadly defined to include: -

- a. Early childhood care and education
- b. 6 years of primary school
- c. 3 years of junior secondary school
- d. Adult literacy and non-formal education
- e. Skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups, such as nomads and migrants, girl-child and women Almajiri, street children and disabled groups (UBE Act 2004).

Freeness of UBE

Under the Universal Basic Education programme the under listed are provided free;

- i. There shall be no payment of tuition fees at all levels of basic education in Nigeria in public owned schools.
- ii. Textbooks in four ((4) core subjects in primary schools and five (5) core subjects in junior secondary school shall be provided free. In addition, some reading materials and other instructional materials will be free of charge.
- iii. Infrastructure such as classrooms, furniture and other school facilities shall be provided free. That is to say there shall be no levies for these items (Tahir, 2006).

The Basic Education Situation.

There has been a long neglect of Basic Education sub-sector in the country. Basically all states require massive investment in school infrastructure, facilities, teacher supply etc. for them to be fully functional (Tahir,

2007). The 2005 national school survey reveals that, there are only 284,650 classes catering for over 20 million pupils.

Out of that number only 120,695 classrooms were in good condition, while 83,506 classrooms were being used by different classes for lack of space. The national average for class size was 109 (Tahir, 2007).

On teachers availability, the survey indicated that, there were 77,709 teachers in junior secondary schools and 494,846 teachers in primary schools. Therefore, there is a shortfall of 9,195 teachers for junior secondary schools and 48,253 teachers for primary schools. To meet the current requirement, there is an additional need of 222,373 teachers for primary schools and 48,000 teachers for JSS by the year 2012 (Tahir, 2007).

Similarly, the UBE programme needs 14,676,990 textbooks in core subjects, namely; English, mathematics, Science and Social Studies in primary schools. And about 26 million textbooks are needed by 2012 in order to meet the target of free core textbooks for each pupil in Nigerian public primary and junior secondary schools by 2012 (Tahir, 2007).

If we look at the above aspects of UBE programme critically, it becomes clear that, its successful implementation requires a huge and substantial amount of resources which no single stakeholder can comfortably provide.

Accordingly, the implementation of UBE programme is a collaborative one involving Federal, State, local Government and the International Donor Agencies (Development Partners) (Tahir, 2007).

Development Partners

These are international organization that have role to play in the UBE programme.

Indeed, the universal basic education commission is mandated by the UBE act 2004(6) to liaise with development partners in matters relating to basic education.

In view of the multiple nature of the objective of UBE and its wider scope, it is clear that, there are many areas in which development partners can intervene apart from direct funding of the scheme where possible.

Already, the Federal Government of Nigeria has obtained the cooperation and support of the following international development partners: -

- a. World bank
- b. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- c. United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF)
- d. Japanese – AID
- e. United State Agency for International Development (USAID)

The area of support and co-operation obtained from the above mentioned, development partners will be discussed.

a. World Bank

The World Bank assisted primary education project: second Nigerian Primary Education Project (PEP II CR3346-UNI) This project was designed to complete and consolidate the activities initiated under the first project (PEPI – CR 2191 – UNI) and in preparing ground for the UBE programme. The project started 21st August, 2000 and ended December 31st, 2004. The credit sum was USD55m while the Federal Government contributed USD6.11m (equivalent) as counterpart fund.

The project has five components: -

- i. Strengthening human resources capacity;
- ii. Creating a more conducive teaching and learning environment;
- iii. Improving the quality of curricular delivery;
- iv. Improving the information for decision making and planning; and
- v. Increasing HIV/AIDS awareness

b. UNESCO intervention

The initial intervention of UNESCO was concentrated on capacity building of personnel and institutions in the key aspects of quality, relevance and efficiency in both formal and non-formal dimensions of UBE. Improvement of management of various tiers of the education system, information technology and systematic monitoring. The UNESCO intervention has five components: -

- a. Improved community education and literacy using the media.
- b. Improving quality assurance
- c. Electronically– mediated training for teachers education.
- d. Reinforcing capacity for local level management of UBE
- e. Systematic monitoring and sustainability

c. UNICEF activities

The UNICEF has been a major partner in Nigeria's effort to move basic education forward, with the launching of UBE in 1999, UNICEF has shown interest to see to the success of the programme. The UNICEF has since sponsored a number of workshops and meetings on strategic planning capacity and human resource development.

Some of these workshops included the following:

- i. Workshop in child-to-child approach held for SPEB education officers in Enugu and Lagos
- ii. Training of LGEA science masters and desk officers on the use of science and laboratory equipment at the sciences and equipment development institute, Akwuke-Enugu.
- iii. Workshop on harmonization of basic education data for SPEBs/SMOEs/LGEAs statisticians, held at Uyo, Akwa Ibom state.
- iv. Training of basic education resource persons in visualization of participatory programme held at Makurdi in December, 2000

d. Japan's international Cooperation Agency (JICA) assisted in primary education

The assistance by the Japanese government is meant to rehabilitate and furnish source primary schools in three states. These are: Kaduna, Niger and Plateau. 490 classrooms, 13 head teachers' offices, 382 toilets and 19 boreholes would be constructed in the three states. The total cost of the project is N1.44 billion.

e. Literacy Enhancement Assistance Programme (LEAP)

This project was funded by USAID Nigeria. Its goal was to improve reading, writing and learning of mathematics by the Nigerian child.

It was implemented by three international

NGOs: Education World Centre, World Education International and Research Triangle Institute.

LEAP covered three states: Kano, Nasarawa and Lagos. UBEP (Cited in Jagaba, 2008).

Development partners on other activities

Nigeria joined (2001) the African Girl's Education Initiative (AGEI) delivered through UNICEF.

The aim of which is to promote girl-child education.. the UNICEF and Federal Government of Nigeria will be involved in:

- i. Raising national awareness on girl's education through public awareness campaigns, rallies and seminars.
- ii. Building schools technical capacity to develop girl-friendly school environments, and helping communities to sustain girls' education.
- iii. Collaborating with government and other stakeholders in reviewing existing curriculum and teaching materials for gender sensitivity.
- iv. Promoting the employment of more female teachers to serve as role models and increase parents' confidence that their female children will not face sexual harassment in school.
- v. Promoting the development of pedagogical skills that will enhance the participation of girl and improve learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2002).

In addition, Nigeria has been selected as a World Bank EFA fast track initiative country. Under this initiative, UNIFEC an the federal Government of Nigeria will work in six target states with lowest female literacy and enrolment rates in these areas:

- i. Conducting advocacy activities by meeting with PTAs, traditional rulers, religious leaders, NGOs and other community groups to build support for girls' education; promoting the employment of more female teachers; establishing more girls-only primary schools; and organizing rallies on the negative effects of child labour, especially for girls.
- ii. Improving the quality of educational services delivery to enhance girl's participation and improve learning outcomes, retention and achievement, by providing in-service training for teachers, administrators and inspectors, and by evaluating the curriculum for gender sensitivity.
- iii. Improving the learning environment by republishing schools, providing classroom furniture, books and materials, water and toilets for each of five schools in six states.
- iv. Promoting sustainability and community ownership of this initiative by empowering and the community members and building capacity at the grass-roots level (UNICEF, 2002).

The United National Development Programme (UNDP) has been given the role of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitor for the United Nations (UN) system.

Thus, the UNDP is to monitor the progress Nigeria makes in achieving the eight goals of millennium development. These goals include; Universal Primary Education (UNDP, 2009).

II. Conclusions

The resources required for successful implementation of the UBE programmes are huge and substantial. The support and cooperation given by the development partners to this historic programme partners have full confidence in Nigeria and its people.

The UBE programme is more detailed and elaborate on the role of various stakeholders including development partners compared to the universal Primary education (UPE) programme of 1976 which did not envisage any role for development partners.

III. Recommendation

In view of the involvement of international Bodies in the implementation of UBE and the need to sustain their confidence, there should be transparency and accountability at all levels of programme management. The development partners like International Fund for Agric. Development (IFAD), Department For International Development (DFID) U.K and other institutions may be of use to the UBE programme especially in its non-formal component.

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