



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, HUMAN RESOURCES
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**

**Ad hoc Experts Group Meeting on Assessment of
Confidence Building Factors in School Curricula
(18-21 October 1993, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)**

**STATUS REPORT/REVIEW OF AN ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIA
OF FACTORS THAT HINDER/FOSTER CONFIDENCE BUILDING
IN SCHOOL CURRICULA**

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OF FACTORS THAT HINDER/FOSTER CONFIDENCE BUILDING
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1. LEVEL, CONTENT, QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION AT THREE LEVELS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:

Currently, Primary Education is for six years duration and its content has been adjusted to include elementary science, social studies and the vocations.

Not much can be said for the quality of education at the primary level since it is for a mere six year period. No doubt some of the school leavers come out very successful and gain admission to the best secondary schools in Nigeria. But majority of the products are only able to write their names and are sometimes unable to write their addresses accurately. Many of them do relapse into illiteracy after ten years of schoolelessness. In other words, the present six year primary education does not confer permanent literacy on its recipients.

It is because of its low quality and its irrelevance for our needs that the 9-year compulsory Basic Education Scheme was approved by Government but it is yet to be implemented.

Secondary Education is in two parts: Junior Secondary of three years duration and Senior Secondary also of three years duration. The curriculum is varied and rich, including subjects in Arts, Sciences, Commerce, Vocations and Technology. The curriculum is comprehensive in design but its implementation is limited by shortage of funds and availability of adequate number of appropriate teachers. But all told, education at the secondary level is relevant as it

produces potential intermediate staff for the industries and other sectors of the economy.

At the tertiary level, conscious efforts have been made in the past ten years to respond to national needs with greater emphasis on technological and agricultural education through the expansion of Colleges of Technology and the establishment of special Universities of Technology and Universities of Agriculture.

II EDUCATIONAL GOALS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, HOW WELL ARTICULATED THEY ARE IN CONSONANCE WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The National Policy on Education, 1977 (revised in 1981)¹ set out educational goals to include building an egalitarian society and producing self reliant citizens through relevant education. It also provided for the development of literacy education among the illiterate masses in positive response to giving every citizen equal access to education.

The Educational goals, aims and objectives were clearly articulated in the National Policy on Education in response to the needs for national development. But because of the weaknesses inherent in the 1977 document, the Federal Government has in 1990, decided to adopt a 9-year compulsory

1. Fed. Govt. of Nigeria: (1977) National Policy on Education, Lagos, Federal Ministry of Education.

Basic Education so that every child of school age can truly have equal access to education. When implementation commences, its recipients will be able to freely decide (or be helped to decide) whether to pursue academic, vocational or technical education for the supply of appropriate personnel to the expanding economy.

III THE CO-ORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WITH THOSE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Attempts have been made to co-ordinate and harmonize educational policies, goals, and objectives with national development policies, goals and objectives through emphasis on technological and agricultural education which have been made manifest in the establishment of Universities of Technology and Universities of Agriculture. Also the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment and the National Apprenticeship Scheme has given support to Government's desire for the co-ordination and harmonization of educational objectives with national development objectives.

What seems to be lacking is the allocation of sufficient fund to pursue the implementation of these policies through teacher training and provision of much needed equipment.

Another weakness in the co-ordination is the almost total neglect of adults illiterates who still constitute well over 60 percent of our population. Their neglect educationally has tremendous limitation on educational achievement at the

Primary School level since, according to research findings, it is children of illiterates that are unable to stay in school long enough to derive benefit from education.

IV MAJOR EDUCATIONAL AND CURRICULUM REFORMS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, INTENDED TO MAKE EDUCATION RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Prior to 1955, the Nigerian Education system had an 8-year Primary School Programme in the South and 7-year programme in the Northern part. In 1955 a six-year free Universal Primary Education was introduced in the West and the East adopted the same system in 1957. the North retained the 7-year programme.

Secondary School education varied from 5-year to 6-year programmes up to 1955 when the duration was reduced to 5-years in most schools but some schools still continued with a 6-year programme. The 2-year Higher School Certificate Course was also available in the older Secondary Schools, to prepare the best of Secondary School leavers for University admission. Up to 1960 there was only one University in Nigeria - The University College, affiliated to the University of London. The courses in it were arts and sciences without any professional courses.

Prior to 1977 the school curriculum at primary and secondary prepared pupils for academic pursuits at the Universities. It was then assumed that all primary and secondary school leavers were capable of, and interested in

pursuing and deriving benefits from university education. Yet our education system provided for only 14 percent of primary school leavers to proceed to post-secondary institutions. Less than 5 per cent of the secondary school leavers then proceeded to institutions of higher learning.

Thus, the system concentrated on academic training and neglected acquisition of vocational and technical skills at the primary and secondary levels. The system failed to provide for over 80 per cent primary school leavers who could not proceed to post-primary institutions (since only 14 per cent provision was made) and the over 90 per cent of secondary school leavers who could not proceed to higher institutions either because of academic/financial incapacity or because of inadequate provision by the system. (Oyedeki)²

Many of those who dropped out of primary and secondary schools (with the traditional arts and/or science subjects background) struggled endlessly to pass the General Certificate of Education Examinations in most cases, without success, leading to frustration. Nigeria is blessed with human resources but the education system prior to 1977 did not make adequate provision for their training needs. They were thus under-developed and under-utilized. There was thus gross

2. Oyedeki, Lekan (1983) The UPE in Nigeria, Its Implications for National Development, Lagos, University of Lagos Press.

under-utilization of the investment in education since as high as 86 per cent could not go beyond primary education and a higher per cent could not proceed beyond post-primary education.

Against this background is the fact that the industries were under-staffed; the schools did not have enough teachers, there were inadequate personnel for the public service even when thousands of literates were roaming the streets either as touts, roadside artisan apprentices or aimless petty traders. They were products of our education system. If they were skilled they would be useful in the industries and other establishments to enable them cope with the growing demand of our expanding economy (Oyedeji: 1983).³

In 1976, the six-year Universal Primary Education Scheme was launched. It was the first time we had a standard primary education system in Nigeria. It was free but was to become compulsory as soon as practicable. There was enrolment explosion, with its attendant pressure on the economy. It was a commendable scheme to the point that it gave each child the right to education. But it increased the number of unskilled primary school leavers who could not proceed to secondary schools and who were unemployable. Its benefit was in increasing the literacy rate but it was soon discovered that those of them who did not go beyond primary education tended

3. Oyedeji, Lekan. UPE in Nigeria

to relapse into illiteracy less than a decade after leaving school.

In 1977, the Federal Government, aware of the weaknesses in the education system, concerned about the rate of drop-out from our education system, conscious of the monetary and manpower wastage, worried by the frustration being experienced by unemployable, unemployed, unskilled school leavers, and compelled by the urgency of response to the growing need for skilled and intermediate manpower for the economy, launched the National Policy on Education with a 6-3-3-4 scheme, of enriched and varied curricula covering six years of primary, three years of Junior Secondary, three years of Senior Secondary and four years tertiary education.

True, the 6-3-3-4 scheme and the National Policy on Education (1977 revised in 1981) expanded the curricula to include vocational and technical subjects at the primary and secondary levels; true the scheme allowed for most of the primary school leavers to proceed to secondary schools and gave opportunities to non-academic pupils to go vocational; true the scheme is well conceived to combine the use of the three H's - the Head, the Hand and the Heart for an all-round development of the individual in preparation for improved citizenship. But it still recognized six-year primary education as terminal for 29 per cent of the primary school leavers. It just could not make provision for automatic transition from primary to post-primary institutions. These

29 per cent were unskilled and too young to work (at 11 years). They were idle and could and did constitute social problems in addition to representing economic wastage.

In 1990 the Federal Government became persuaded to deal with the weaknesses inherent in the 6-3-3-4 scheme which still left the following problems unresolved:

- a. High drop-out rate of primary school pupils.
- b. Frequency and high rate of relapse into illiteracy of primary school leavers.
- c. Unemployability of primary school leavers because of age and inadequacy of vocational/technical skills.
- d. Sub-standard quality of basic education.
- e. Denial of right of access to education to millions of children.

The Federal Government in 1990 therefore decided to adopt a 9-year compulsory Basic Education with effect from October 1992. The scheme is to ensure:

- i. That all children of school age must register in school.
- ii. That children remain in school until they become young adults at the age of 15 years.
- iii. An enriched expanded curriculum that will sustain the interest of children for nine years.
- iv. That there are educational provisions for children beyond the primary school and thus resolve the problem of underemployment of children and unemployment of youth.
- v. One hundred per cent (100%) transition from primary to

the Junior Secondary School.

The 9-year compulsory Basic Education Programme which was to commence in October 1992 is however yet to take off for obvious reasons of political, educational and economic crisis being experienced in Nigeria since the past 18 months.

V QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OUTPUTS IN TERMS OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES AND THEIR PREPAREDNESS FOR THE WORLD OF WORK AND FOR LIVING A PRODUCTIVE LIFE

The current curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels is rich and varied enough to provide adequate knowledge, skills and positive attitude to prepare students for the world of work and of productive life. The inclusion of subjects in Arts, Science, Commerce, Vocations and Technology as well as co-curricular activities like shoe making, watch repair, practical agriculture, home economics, auto-mechanics, wood work, metal work, hair care, etc helps to equip students with pre-vocational skills that can inculcate in them the spirit of dignity of labour and of self-reliance.

But the quality of education being received is not as high as desirable because of lack of adequate qualified teachers, inadequate funding and inadequate provision of relevant equipment.

The curriculum itself is the best that could be conceived to prepare learners for creativeness and invention and thus divert them away from destructive tendencies of the youth

since it is natural to protect rather than destroy what one has built.

VI MAJOR CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION

a. When the Compulsory 9-year Basic Education takes off all children of school age will have equal access to education provided Government can device strategies for enforcing it on every home and every child.

b. Although Government has given legislative support to the development of education in Nigeria, it has not complemented that legislation with the necessary budgetary commitment. Thus there has been insufficient allocation of funds to education at all levels leading to poor service conditions for teachers at all levels of education. The teachers have responded with incessant strikes which have disrupted continuing learning at all levels of education in the past two years.

The situation is made worse by the sky rocketing prices of materials which have pushed most of these materials from the reach of parents and self sponsoring students, leading to the premature withdrawal of several students.

c. Enough trained teachers for primary level are available for employment but Governments have not allocated enough funds to engage sufficient number for the primary classes. Consequently many trained teachers are

unemployed and many of those employed have inadequate qualifications. The decision was taken over a decade ago that the minimum qualification for teaching at the primary level would be the National Certificate of Education (NCE) but Grade II Teachers still abound in the classrooms because they attract lower remunerations.

At the secondary level all teachers should be graduates with qualifications in education. But there are not enough of such teachers to go round the secondary schools. Also, because of the poor service conditions, trained graduate teachers tend to seek employment in the private sector, leaving increasing shortages of trained teachers at the secondary level.

At the tertiary level, several teachers have withdrawn their services also because of poor service conditions. Expansion in the programmes and courses is thus difficult. Recently, Government has improved service conditions, but has not matched it with provision of teaching materials and equipment. Even with the slightly improved service conditions several teachers at all levels are seeking opportunities elsewhere other than teaching.

- d. Nigeria has not been lucky to have political stability since independence. There has been a total of ten years of democratic rule with twenty-three years of military intervention. It can thus be said that in Nigeria we

have civil intervention since it is less frequent than military rule!

Similarly, our economy has been battered rendering our currency less and less valuable as each day passes. Prices of commodities, including educational materials have gone out of the reach of the average person making it difficult for parents and self sponsoring students to respond to the educational needs of the economy.

There have been rapid technological changes with the extension of computerization to various organizations in both the private and public sectors. Education is responding to the need in this area with training in computer education at both secondary and tertiary levels.

There has been an increase in the level of awareness and attitude towards population issues, especially family size, child spacing, maternal care, child care, nutrition, primary health care and so forth. The Federal Government of Nigeria has put a national population policy in place and has introduced population education on the curriculum at the secondary and tertiary levels. At the University of Lagos, there is the Masters Degree in Population Education and several scholars are involved in various research endeavours on population issues.

VII MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE, IN ORIENTING EDUCATION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES:

- a. Government has continued to encourage scientific and

technological education with the establishment of Universities of Technology and of Agriculture and the expansion in Polytechnic programmes. This is in response to the rapid scientific and technological changes in the country and thus to match the personnel needs of the industries.

- b. With emphasis on Primary Health Care and the observance of Environmental Sanitation on the last Saturday of each month, Government has attempted to spread training in environmental education to the masses of the people. This is not however very effective and it has not yet occupied a significant position on the curriculum of general education.
- c. Since 1986 the Federal Government has focussed on the education of women with a view to increasing their participation in development at all levels. With the establishment of the National Commission for Women and its State counterparts, there is increased awareness by women of the need for the creation of equal educational opportunities for both sexes and deliberate attempts are being made by Government and private sector organizations to give women a chance to participate in development through special training and through sympathy and understanding.
- d. Nigeria still harbours over 60 per cent illiterates in spite of Government efforts to date. The major problem

is the reluctance of Government to provide adequate funding for mass literacy. Most of the mass literacy campaigns have been short-lived and stifled of funds. It took several years for the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education to convince Government of the need to establish the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Nonformal Education. Even now, some States do not yet have the Agency for Mass Education which is supposed to work directly with the National Commission.

Some States are making commendable efforts to drastically reduce illiteracy while others are yet to appreciate the need to spend money on adults that may soon die of old age and thus reduce illiteracy!! These States and Policy Makers that hold this view have failed to realize that drop-outs from primary schools and children of school age who are not in school are increasing the adult illiterate population and that children will continue to drop out of school if their parents remain illiterate.⁴

4. Oyedeji, Lekan: (1991) Wisdom: The Ultimate Goal of Education (Inaugural Lecture), Lagos, University of Lagos Press.

e. The Primary Health Care Programme has achieved remarkable success in Nigeria, especially in the urban centres. Also, the campaign on child spacing, reduced family size, use of contraceptives (especially condom for prevention of aids) for prevention of unwanted pregnancies seems to have achieved a remarkable level of success.

But the rural population is difficult to reach by these campaigns which are expansive and are ineffective among the rural illiterate communities. Literacy, population education, health education as well as education for peace, must of necessity go together.

As mentioned earlier, Population education has been included in the secondary and tertiary curricula but because of shortage of teachers and of funds it has not been possible to implement it as desired.

VIII CONCLUSION:

The newly adopted compulsory, free, 9-year Basic Education for school age children is a laudable one as it ensures that children remain in school during their formative years up to the age of 15 years when they become young adults. In order for the policy to be implementable, the shortages that have been experienced in the past must be addressed! These include:

- a. Shortage of funds
- b. Shortage of teachers
- c. Shortage of Equipment and Workshops

Also, the issue of mass illiteracy must be tackled with greater commitment of funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Basic Education should be made comprehensive at implementation stage to train children the three H's - Head, Heart, and Hand - The Head for the necessary academic input, the Heart for self awareness input and the training of the mind and the Hand for skills input. The combination of the training in the three H's will assist in leading learners to use the acquired skills to construct buildings in the schools, produce food to eat, produce technical and vocational services for the schools such as auto-mechanics, carpentry, home economics and the like. The commercialization of the acquired skills will generate enough funds to run the schools while Government provides funds for capital expenditure.
2. All available accreditable Artisan Workshops and Master Artisans can be engaged on a part time basis for the practical training of children in the technical and vocational subjects, leaving the theoretical training to the few technical and vocational teachers. Appropriate contracts can be arranged with these workshops and Master Artisans.
3. Illiteracy remains a problem in Nigeria. To drastically reduce it, some unorthodox strategies are needed. The use of tertiary undergraduates has been recommended.

They can be required to train a certain number of illiterates, say 30, each for their final year project. Similarly, students in their final year of secondary school can be utilized on a limited basis, to do the same. Also, National Youth Service Corpers could be posted in such a way that the language barrier will not limit their assignment of training 30 illiterates each in their service year. The secondary and primary school teachers can also be engaged, on a part time basis, to train 30 illiterates each year. With a combination of these and of the "Each One Teach One or Fund the Teaching of One" strategy, it will be possible to launch an all-out attack against illiteracy. This will help children to stay longer and perform better in schools as their parents become literate.

4. Government should review the poor conditions of teachers at all levels and be persuaded to uplift the standard of teachers so that the teachers can assist in building a solid foundation in schools for national manpower development in response to the industrial and technological development now being experienced.