

IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Article History

Received May 25, 2023

Revised September 05, 2023

Accepted September 15, 2023

Available Online September 31, 2023

Keywords:

Sustainable Development Goals, Enterprise, Graduates, Small-Scale Business

Abstract

Despite being the largest economy on the African continent, Nigeria has made slow progress in the provision of quality education for all. As the most populous country in Africa, it is also home to the highest number of out-of-school children in the world (estimated at around 20 million). The objective of this session is to set the stage for all stakeholders to understand the major issues highlighted in the education sector. The discourse will focus on how to implement the sustainable development goals and aspirations outlined in the post-2015 global and continental frameworks. It will also align with the government's renewed Hope Agenda on Education in Nigeria. The paper will provide a synthesis of key successful practices and lessons learned from national cases studies, research reports and presentations at various consultation forums. The presentation also highlights the global assessment of Nigeria's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The issues raised revolve around equitable access, quality of education, learning crises, policy implementation and financing of basic education. The paper recommends that foundational skills are the building blocks of future schooling success, and that Governments need to continue sealing the visible cracks in the educational systems through deliberate strategic interventions in foundational learning. These include the production of appropriate pedagogical resources for foundational learning, expanding learning spaces, availing, and mining data and evidence for education decision-making regarding foundational learning, continuing with the catch-up programmes such as remediation, and incorporating methodologies, practices, child-centred approaches for different learners. The domestication and implementation of various education policies and laws is critical to the education reform in Nigeria. The paper also recommends the principle of inclusion of all the education stakeholders in Nigeria: civil society organisations and the private sector, development agencies and foundations, teachers' unions, parents' associations, women and youth movements, research and expertise networks, etc.

Introduction

Education ensures that people use energy and water more efficiently and recycle household waste. This helps to protect the planet. With higher levels of education, people or societies across the globe will show greater concern about the well-being of the environment.

UNESCO reported that each additional year of schooling increases average annual gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.37%, which consequently leads to provision of good jobs and economic growth. According to the same report, another benefit is an increase in enrolment rate in

secondary education by 10% with the consequent reduction in the risk of war by 3%. The Global Partnership for Education is a prominent example of how collaborative partnership can enhance progress in education and the development of other sectors.

In summary, the role of education in the achievement of sustainable development cannot be over-emphasised. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are at the forefront of government initiatives across the world. The SDGs are primarily concerned with promoting sustainable

growth via ensuring wellbeing, economic growth, environmental legislation, and academic advancement. One of the most prominent goals of the SDG is to provide learners with high-quality education (SDG 4).

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Nigeria began to implement the SDGs almost immediately.

First, it established institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels to support effective implementation. Then, with this early head start, it implemented several strategic initiatives between 2016 and now, while others are still ongoing. These strategic initiatives include:

- The development of a Country Transition Strategy from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016
- SDG data-mapping and the publication of Nigeria SDGs Indicators Baseline Report, in 2017
- Integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the SDGs into Nigeria's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), 2017-2020
- Domestication and customization of Nigeria's Integrated Sustainable Development Goals (iSDGs) Policy Simulation Model, 2019
- Ongoing realignment of the National Statistical System (NSS) with the requirements and indicators of the SDGs to be completed by August 2020
- Commencement of the design and implementation of the Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) for the SDGs
- Commencement of the process for independent evaluation of priority SDGs – SDGs 1, 3 and 4 in January 2019, and
- Conduct of its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the SDGs in Nigeria. Nigeria has domesticated the SDGs and linked them to

its national development plan, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020.

Challenges of implementing Sustainable Development Goals

Inadequate Access to Education

Though there are out-of-school children throughout Nigeria, most out-of-school children in the North never attended school, while in the South most dropped out of school. At the same time, there is variation in the composition of the out-of-school population across different geographic zones, with relatively higher out-of-school rates among girls in the North; children of nomadic pastoralists throughout the country; boys who drop out in the South East and South-South zones; the so-called 'area boys' (loosely organised gangs of mostly male street children and teenagers) in the South West; children of migrant fishermen in the South-South; and the children in the North-East displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency. Regarding the North-East, displaced children are adding to the ranks of the existing out-of-school population. Boko Haram has targeted and killed teachers, education workers, and students. At least 611 teachers have been deliberately killed, and more than 2,000 people have been abducted by the group, many from their schools, since the beginning of the conflict. Between 2009 and 2015, attacks in the North-East destroyed more than 910 schools and forced at least 1,500 to close. By early 2016, close to 1 million school-age children had fled the violence.

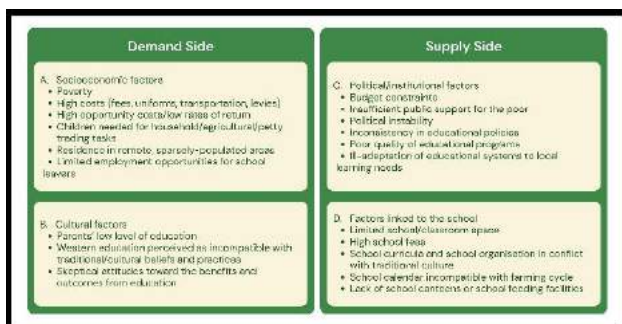
The large number of out-of-school children is the result of a wide range of demand and supply-side factors that vary by state and geographic location. On the demand side, household poverty prevents children from enrolling in school as families face many direct and indirect costs, including the opportunity cost of child labour. Perceived low benefits of education, especially for girls, and inappropriateness of formal education are also important contributing factors. In the conflict-affected areas of the

North -East, given Boko Haram’s targeting of the education system, demand-side constraints have become particularly severe. On the supply side, school facilities can be distant, classrooms overcrowded and ill-equipped, and in the conflict-affected North-East, schools may be destroyed or in dire need of repairs.

Demand and supply side barriers preventing children from entering and staying in school can be categorised further into three broad categories:

Demand Side Constraints: a series of social, cultural and economic constraints that stop many children from attending school. These include dominant social norms, attitudes and behaviour such as perceptions of the value of educating learners (particularly girls and Children with Disabilities), the cost of schooling for the poorest households, and the need for children to work to supplement household income.

Supply Side Constraints: the poor quality of education provided in public schools in Nigeria is a major constraint



Source: UBE Programme 5-Year (2015-2020) Road Map

The findings from the data on school enrolment show that, compared to other regions of the world, Africa is performing poorly. It still has a long way to go before achieving target 4.1 of SDG4:

to children attending or staying in school. The factors include poor teaching, inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), poor school management and safeguarding, language of education, inadequate classroom and water and sanitation facilities, distance to schools, enforcement/implementation teachers’ professionalism and welfare, and continuous assessment of teachers and learners, use of data in decision making, non-utilisation of space in non-state schools. Non-state providers of education, such as private schools, faith schools and community schools, provide a trusted and accessible alternative to state schools in many communities, and these schools often provide important access to education for otherwise excluded children, nomadic communities and low fee-paying schools. Whilst accessible, these schools face many of the same limitations as State schools, for example, regulation, inadequate access to financing, and poor teaching and management.

Table 1. Supply side and Demand side Obstacles to Education

"All girls and boys go through a full cycle of free and quality primary and secondary education on an equal footing".

Net primary enrolment rates (80%) and primary completion rates (55%) are below the average for developing countries (90% and 73%). They are like average countries affected by conflict (81% and 62%) and low-income countries (81% and 48%). Despite this low completion rate, the actual transition from primary to secondary is only 85%. The completion rate of secondary 1 (60%) is lower than that of primary and secondary 2 (39%). Thus, a strong selection-elimination pyramid is established in Africa. The net primary school enrolment rate of 80% drops to 66% in secondary 1, that is, 16 points below the average for developing countries (82%) and 10 points below countries affected by conflict (76%). It still

falls even further to 43% in secondary 2 compared with 59% for developing countries, 54% for conflict-affected countries and 40% for low-income countries. Finally, the gross enrolment rate in higher education drops to 8%, while it stands at 29% for developing countries, 26% for countries affected by conflict and 8% for low-income countries.

Table 2. Percentage of Households That Think a Boy Should Always Receive an Education Before a Girl if Funds are Limited

| Zone | Percentage of households |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| North-West | 44 |
| North-East | 40 |
| North-Central | 28 |
| South-West | 23 |
| South-South | 13 |
| South-East | 18 |
| TOTAL | 29 |

Source: Afro barometer 2012.

School Dropouts for Children 4 – 16 Years and Class Completed at Time of Dropout.

NEDIS (2020) highlights the percentage distribution of school dropouts by class completed at the time of dropout for all children aged 4-16 that, at any time, ever attended school for once and stopped attending. The highest Mean age at dropout is recorded in Gombe and Taraba States (10.5 years) while Bauchi State has the lowest Mean age at dropout of 7.6 years. The data also show that for children who have ever dropped out at primary school level, Sokoto State ranks highest (13 percent) while Adamawa, Rivers and Oyo States rank lowest (9 percent), and that for those who dropped out at the JSS level, Rivers State ranks highest (10 percent) while Borno and Sokoto States rank lowest (2 percent). This is an indication that there are still challenges in creating equitable access to basic education.

Improve Enrolment and Completion (at all levels)

The driver to improve enrolment and completion (at all levels) is supported by three key deliverables of the Ministry of Education as outlined below. The Ministry recorded validated performances of 100%, 10714% and 100% against their Q4 of 2022 targets, with all deliverables on track to be achieved by 2023. However, the performance at output level and its impact on key outcome results could not be ascertained due to unavailability of data on outcome level results especially for 2022.

The Federal Government successfully operationalised the Free and compulsory basic education for all children's first nine years of schooling through enrolment drive activities in all 36 states, including FCT aimed at providing free education, improving enrolment, and reducing out of school children. This is in line with the Universal Basic Education Commission Act, 2004 which provides for the establishment of State Universal Basic Education Board and Local Government Education Authority in every state, including FCT in Nigeria. This is aimed at achieving free and compulsory basic education for all children, including marginalised groups (girls and learners with disabilities, etc)

In 2021, the enrolment rates at basic and post-basic education were shown to have deteriorated against both the baseline and target set for the year, while marginal increases were recorded at Junior Secondary School (JSS), Senior Secondary School (SSS) and with the 'girls' enrolment (NEMIS, 2021). The completion rate recorded similar results with the enrolment rate. There is a marginal increase in completion rate at the JSS (55.83% in 2019 to 58.00% in 2021) and SSS levels (42.19% to 44.00%), while primary school completion rate recorded a decline from 79.74% in 2019 to 71.00% in 2021). The disparity between enrolment, retention, transition and completion

figures for boys and girls at the basic and post basic levels has gradually improved.

This reveals that despite the political will and investments including the purposeful 1,294 interventions associated with the deliverables under this driver, the outcomes do not seem to reflect or justify the performance which aims at increasing the enrolment and completion rates. This situation may have further contributed to the current number of Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in the country which remains a significant challenge; increasing from 13 million in 2021 to 20 million in 2022 (according to UNESCO data published in September 2022). This position also implies that the prevailing challenges of transition in most of the states particularly in Northern Nigeria remains unresolved. Although this could be attributed to the difficult socio-economic conditions, including the impact of COVID-19 and the rising insecurity in the country, it is important that necessary steps are taken to accelerate progress on reducing the number of OOS children, especially as the population continues to grow.

Progress on the enforcement of free and compulsory basic education for children's first nine years of schooling

Significantly, the Federal Ministry of Education's strategy aimed at enforcing free and compulsory basic education, is yielding results. Many of the critical requirements needed for the establishment of free and compulsory basic education, including significant milestones on implementation of the relevant provisions of policies and compliance standards have been met and evidence provided. These include implementation of Early Childhood Education, Girl-Child Education and Mandatory UBE, although the Ministry observed that while enforcing this law, there is ineffective implementation of some of the approved policies by States

e.g., Policy on Inclusive Education. The deliverable has also recorded significant achievements and progress through the construction of 59 model smart schools in thirty-six states and FCT; the establishment of 210 literacy centres in 110 Federal Government Colleges in the six geopolitical zones and provision of a meal per day to primary 1-3 children in 21 states and FCT, as an incentive to increase enrolment implemented through the BESDA programme.

Inclusion

Similarly, children with disabilities are among the most marginalised groups in society. Facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes, and lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are often likely to be among the poorest members of the population and are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Discrimination against and exclusion of children with disabilities also puts them at a higher risk of physical and emotional abuse or other forms of neglect, violence and exploitation. Eight percent of children aged 2-4 years have some level of difficulty in at least one functional domain, while in older children aged 5-17 years, 15% have functional difficulty in at least one functional domain. Communication, controlling behaviour and learning are the most prevalent functional domains where children aged 2-4 years' experience difficulties. In older children aged 5-17 years, anxiety and depression are the most prevalent functional difficulty domains experienced by 8% and 6% of all children respectively in this age group. Fourteen percent of boys and thirteen percent of girls aged 2-17 years are with functional difficulty. Less than 2% of children aged 2-17 years still have functional difficulties while using assistive devices. Children living in the poorest households (17%) and children of women with no education (17%) have close to twice the prevalence of functional difficulties as children living in the richest households (2021).

Learning Crises in Education

Nigeria has the largest number of out-of-school children globally. Literacy and numeracy rates are also low. This is coupled with large inequalities by wealth group, gender, region, religion, and residential area within the country. According to the World Bank Human Capital Index for 2020, on the average, children born in Nigeria complete 10.2 years of schooling by age 18, but the learning that would have occurred at that age is equivalent to half the years of schooling attained. Regarding quality, Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) 2020 data show that only 41 percent of Grade 2-age children were able to read one word from a flashcard and 44 percent were able to perform a single-digit addition problem. Evidence from Primary Data Collection (School-Based Students Learning Outcomes Assessment) completed in 6 case studies of states by the independent evaluation in 2021, revealed that the Pupils Proficiency in Literacy is higher in only Enugu State (603.4 against a benchmark of 500) and lower in the remaining 5 states of Kano (488.77), Zamfara (443.38), Katsina (452.71) and Kwara (493.56). Regarding Pupils Proficiency in Numeracy, only two states have higher score of Pupils Proficiency in Numeracy: Enugu (599.46) and Kwara (565.28 against the benchmark of 500); other remaining four states have lower Pupils Proficiency in Numeracy: Kano (463.14), Zamfara (437.04) and Katsina (476.7).

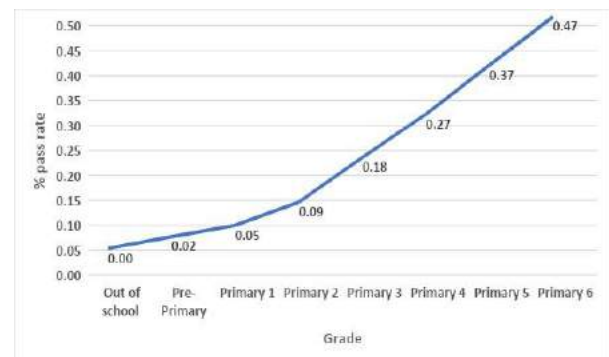
NEDS 2020 is a nationally representative survey of children aged 4 to 16 and their parents/guardians, and is designed to provide information about education and decisions about schooling.

Literacy and Numeracy assessments: Data on basic education achievement in reading literacy and numeracy are from the assessment of eligible children ages five to sixteen years. Literacy and numeracy skills were tested on children whether they had ever attended or dropped out of school.

Reading Literacy – this was tested by asking children to read a short sentence in English and to read from one additional native language (Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa) of their choice. The results were categorised into three groups: 'Cannot read at all', 'Able to read only parts of the sentence', or 'Able to read the whole sentence'.

Numeracy – this was assessed by asking the children to add two single-digit numbers that yielded a value of less than 10. The results were categorised into two: 'Incorrectly summed/no answer' and 'Correctly summed'.

Chart 1. Average Performance across the Levels of Primary Education



The average performance increases at higher grade levels as expected, but overall performance is still very low. Only 47% of the Grade 6 children meet the set benchmark, implying the majority lack foundational skills in literacy and numeracy even after at least six years of education. At Grade 2, which is the age-appropriate level for most of the concepts tested, only 9% of the students meet the benchmark. The improvement from one level to the next reflects a flat learning curve.

Chart 2. Literacy over time by Region

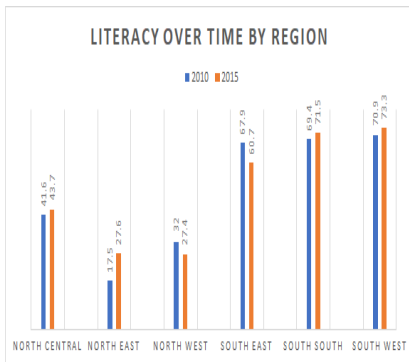


Chart 3. Comparing Literacy over time: By Wealth

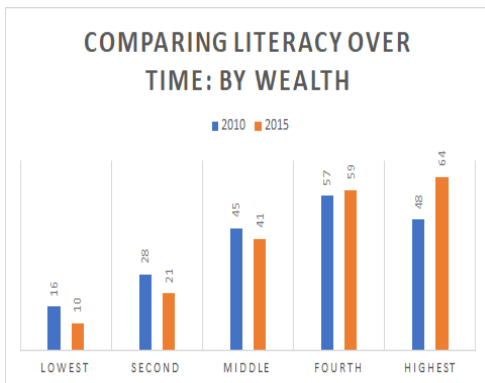


Chart 4. Numeracy by Residence and Gender

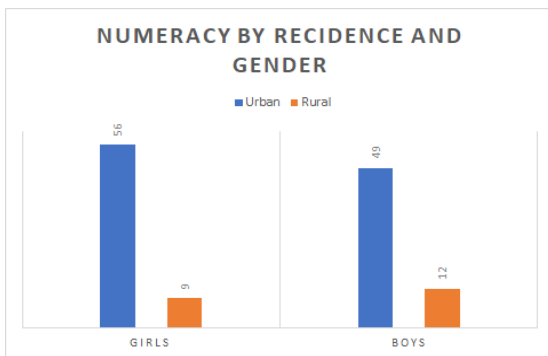


Chart 4 shows that education gender parity is changing, particularly at the urban centre due to concentration on girls' education meanwhile grassroots education development is still very poor.

Chart 5. Regional Numeracy Pass Rate

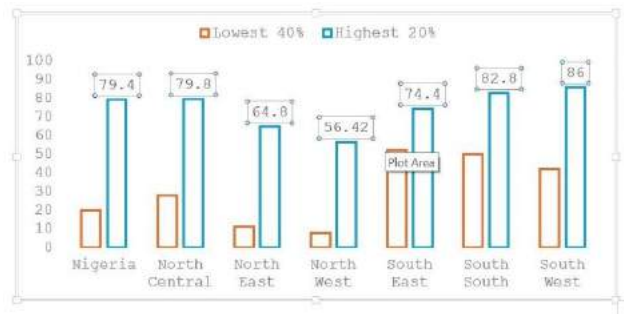


Chart 5 shows the Numeracy Pass Rate across the different regions in Nigeria. The National highest average is 79.40% and the lowest is 20.00%. South-West has 86.00%, while North-West has the lowest Highest score at 56.42%.

With all 110 Federal Government Colleges (FGCs) currently implementing the Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum from 104 in 2019, data from the most recent JSSCE (BECE) and SSCE results showed that the number of students enrolled in STEAM subjects has increased across the nation, from 5,000 in 2019 to 12,150 in 2022. And this is as a result of the interventions aimed at implementing the curriculum.

However, the 2021 and 2022 SSCE results showed a huge decline in the pass rates from 71.64% in 2021 (students with minimum of 5 credits, including Maths and English), to 60.74% in 2022. This may be connected to the impact of COVID-19 on schools and students' performance.

Other key achievements recorded by the Ministry over the period of review (2019-2023) include: Establishment of additional Federal and Science Technical Colleges (12), Federal Polytechnics (8), Universities (7), Colleges of Education (5), and a new initiative for skills development and institutionalisation of Nigerian Skill Qualifications Framework (NSQF) Assessment. These new institutions of learning were established to promote teaching and learning

through ICT devices and serve as innovative centres for promoting acquisition of skills in STEAM. They also serve as benchmark for excellence in basic education for replication by states and the FCT.

The pass rate in standard examinations recorded a massive decline from the 2019 baseline, especially for UTME (98%) to 34% in 2020. The set performance benchmark for WASSCE and NECO by the end of 2023 is that 100% of learners who attempt Certificate Examination by the end of senior secondary education are expected to achieve at least seven credit passes in the core subjects. The 2019 WASSCE result shows that only 63% of all learners that sat for the WASSCE in 2019 passed with a minimum of five credits, including English and Mathematics, and 60% in 2020. It should be noted that there was no disaggregated data to show the level of inclusiveness on the pass rates of urban-rural and male-female groupings, or disaggregated data on pass rate of various categories of schools both at senior and basic levels.

SDGs and Policy Processes

The Nigeria Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), 2017-2020, which focuses on restoring growth, investing in our people, and building a competitive economy, places education at the core of its framework. The ERGP aimed, among other things, at transforming education in line with the following major frameworks: Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action, 2000, EFA (Dakar, 2000-2015); the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2000-2015; the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; and SDGs 2030 and AU Agenda 2063. All these have reshaped educational thoughts and practices in Nigeria.

The specific overall policy thrust of ERGP, 2017 – 2020, in education is targeted towards the following goals:

- Improving access to basic education for all

- Improving the quality of secondary and tertiary education, and
- Encouraging students to enrol in science and technology courses.

A Second Voluntary National Review, June 2020, of The ERGP 2017 – 2020 acknowledges the various challenges still facing the education system in Nigeria, including inadequate access to quality basic education; an insufficient number of skilled teachers and tertiary lecturers; insufficient provision of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education; inadequate facilities at all levels of the education system; quality programmes at technical and vocational education and training level; outdated and obsolete educational policies and practices; and insufficient funding for education in the country. Thus, to address these and other challenges facing the education sector, the Federal Government of Nigeria set three policy objectives, namely:

- Ensuring quality universal education for ‘Nigerian’ children and youth,
- Increasing the number of youths and adults with the skills required to secure employment and become entrepreneurs, and
- Prioritizing education for girls (Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2017).

Ministerial Strategic Plan for the Education Sector for 2018-2022

In line with the ERGP and the SDGs, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) domesticated and integrated SDG 4 into the education sector’s Ministerial Strategic Plan (2016-2019). Similarly, the Ministry has also developed ‘Education for Change: A Ministerial Strategic Plan (2018-2022)’ that adequately mainstreamed SDG 4 targets and indicators. The Education for Change MSP (2018-2022) was built on ten pillars and around three result areas: Access, Quality, and Systems strengthening. For each of

the pillars, there are well-defined objectives together with the strategies to be employed in achieving them. Additionally, the Plan identifies strategic actions required to address the challenges of the education system, among which are the following:

- Ensuring that the national education sector provides unhindered access to quality basic education for all children of school age
- Ensuring that all basic education learners have access to textbooks to attain the learning outcome benchmarks
- Addressing current teacher supply gaps in primary schools (Federal Ministry of Education, 2018).

Sectoral strategies and plans (e.g. Medium-Term Sector Strategies – MTSS) are important for prioritisation of resources in the education sector

“Policy and strategy, monitoring and evaluation: implementation of more rigorous, policy based state development plans (SDPs); alignment of MTSSs with the priorities in the SDPs and the available funding; mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion objectives into these development plans; more effective monitoring and evaluation of results through the inclusion of explicit targets in the plans, introduction and capacitating of state bureaus of statistics and the creation of a Community of Practice to enable practitioners to share experiences; and the beginnings of annual performance reporting by sectors” (SPARC, 2016, p. 3).

There are key contextual and long-existing factors that restrict the transformation of the efforts by past programmes into significantly better learning outcomes. These include poor infrastructure in many primary schools; chronic shortages of basic teaching and learning resources (textbooks); patronage-related recruitment of head teachers which makes it difficult for some head teachers to

adequately benefit from leadership and management training opportunities by education programmes; poorly motivated and unqualified teachers (also recruited on a patronage rather than merit basis); poor student attendance; use of English language instruction that pupils (and often teachers themselves) do not understand; weak school management; and erratic budget execution in some states which affects timely payment of teachers’ salaries. The most serious challenge lies in supplying enough teachers to rural areas and improving school infrastructure. Recognition of the complexity and centrality of political economy/governance factors in large-scale reform processes should predicate any judgements of the programme on contextual factors, no matter how well a programme is conceived, developed, and implemented. Some of these factors are crosscutting but may vary in terms of intensity from state to state (IMEP, 2017, p.67; ESSPIN, 2016, p. 10; TDP 2018, p. 92; GEP3, 2016, p. 44).

The critical challenge in human resource management is to ensure sufficient recruitment and deployment of capable teachers. Northern states suffer from shortages in the number of teachers employed, particularly for qualified teachers. There have been notable improvements in the quality of teachers in Kaduna following the removal of unqualified teachers and recruitment of qualified teachers. Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) worked effectively with Teacher Development Programme (TDP) to develop the teacher recruitment and deployment policy for Kaduna State (Williams et al., 2021). However, it has proven more difficult to promote similar reforms in Kano and Jigawa States.

Competence of teachers is linked to children’s learning outcomes

Teachers should be able to identify low performers and diagnose pupils’ performance to adequately support pupils to learn and improve learning outcomes. Education

programmes should invest in designing and implementing structured systems for teacher development and structured lesson plans for teachers. Nonetheless, any comprehensive attempt to bring about systemic and institutional change through introducing a changed culture of teaching and learning, will take time to become standard practice when working at scale. (ESSPIN, 2016; GEP3, 2016).

The Ministry conducted several training programmes including, Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE), Upgrading of Teacher Information System, Mandatory Continuous Professional Development and Digital Literacy for all categories of teachers (22,500) across the 6 geo-political zones. The Ministry also developed E-Learning website for students and Teachers which has recorded over 45,000 viewers. A structured 'teachers' training plan has been established and there is evidence of effective implementation across all the states. A total of 30,000 teachers have been trained across the 36 states and FCT in all subjects and thematic areas. Notable among the achievements of this deliverable is that 85% of the teachers who sat for the examinations passed and have professional qualification. There is also adequate information and evidence on the status of the TPD (Teacher Professional Development) workplan for each state as well as the accessibility and availability of the training manuals used for re-skilling of secondary school teachers. Effective implementation of this training plan will lead to effective teaching and learning outcomes in schools. A new policy on Career Path for Teachers in 2019 and approved by NCE in 2020, that provides a more robust framework for the growth, development, and management of teachers through the identification, registration, and licensing of all qualified teachers in Nigeria in line with global practices. About 2,248,003 teachers are registered and licenced as of March 2023 because of this policy. OSGF, (2023).

Inadequate Financing in the Education Sector

The lack of equitable and adequate financing is one of the principal causes of the failure of the objectives of Education For All, between 2000 and 2015. Yet, no target of the SDG4 specifically treats the financing of education. Education expenditure reports hardly combine public funds, of foreign donors and household expenditures. The national education accounts, which examine the three sources concurrently, give it a more precise picture. At the world level, the mean public expenditures on education have crossed the two-third threshold proposed in the 2030 Education Agenda. At least 35 countries, however, are not respecting the minimum GDP share recommendation (4%) and total public expenditures (15%) that should be devoted to education.

The meeting of educational needs poses first and above all, the question of necessary financing for the acquisition of personnel, the infrastructures, and other inputs in sufficient quality and quantity. The Global Monitoring of Education Report 2016 mentions a recent estimation: 'in order to achieve the SDG's between now and 2030, it will be necessary for both the public and private sectors invest each year an additional amount corresponding to one part of the GDP included in 1.5 and 2.5%. Low income or lower middle-income countries would have to increase their expenditures to higher than about 4% of the expected GDP' (Schmid and Traub, 2015).

The situation in Nigeria is different from the rest of Africa as the total public spending on basic education at all government levels has hovered around 1.7 percent of GDP, well below the average for SSA of 4.6 percent of GDP. Spending increased marginally from 10.2 to 12.5 percent of total public spending over the 2009–2013 period (compared to SSA average of 17 percent). When considering total public as well as private spending on education, household out-of-pocket private payments make up the largest share (40 percent); Federal

Government spending amounts to 21 percent; state governments to 13 percent; and local governments to 25 percent.

Public basic education finance depends to a large extent on federal revenues: salaries account for more than 80 percent of total spending in the sub-sector and are sourced directly through statutory transfers from the Federal Government to the Local Government Area (LGA) accounts. Federal spending includes fiscal transfers to the states for basic education managed by UBEC, the UBE Intervention Fund, which is allocated annually at least 2 percent (guaranteed) of the Federal Government budget under the 2004 UBE Act. This means that public spending on basic education, including the allocation to the UBE Intervention Fund is procyclical and dependent on execution of the federal budget. Low execution rates of federal and state budgets and of fiscal transfers reduce already scarce resource allocations. Since 2014, budget performance has deteriorated further as a result of the fiscal crisis and several states have reported delays in paying teachers' salaries as a result. (World Bank, 2017)

In addition, state governments in Nigeria are heavily dependent on federal transfers, about 85 percent of which is oil revenue distributed from the Federation Account. Between March 2014 and December 2016, federal transfers to states declined by 33 percent. Overall government revenue has decreased from 10.5 percent of GDP in 2014 to 5.7 percent in 2016. Due to this sharp drop in revenue, most states have been accumulating salary and other contractual arrears.

Available records show that roughly 71 percent of the UBE Intervention Fund allocation for 2016-2022 was for capital expenditures, followed by 27 percent on goods and services, and 2 percent on personnel. Several 2016 Intervention Fund allocations, including for instructional

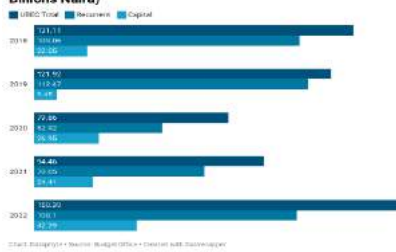
materials, TPD, and special education were not disbursed in 2016 at all—with states accessing instead 2014 and 2015 allocations in 2016. States only accessed 4.3 percent of matching grants, reflecting the fact that only three states accessed the 2016 allocation, as described above. Apart from personnel expenditures, which were fully disbursed in 2016, the two 2016 Intervention Fund allocations that were disbursed in 2016 were the 'educational imbalance' and 'UBE monitoring' allocations. The first represents spending on construction and rehabilitation of schools; *almajiri* education projects; girl-child projects; as well as boy-child projects. The second represents spending on special programmes in addition to monitoring interventions, such as advocacy visits to states and quality assurance practices in basic education institutions. In other words, the spending in 2016 reflects a focus on interventions addressing out-of-school children as well as quality of education.

Table 3. UBEC Approved Budget

| Year | Current U.S. Dollars | 2005 U.S. Dollars |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 2005 | 295,053,207 | 295,053,207 |
| 2006 | 295,053,207 | 295,053,207 |
| 2007 | 454,340,601 | 483,294,215 |
| 2008 | 454,340,601 | 483,294,215 |
| 2009 | 285,390,816 | 247,929,649 |
| 2010 | 285,390,816 | 247,929,649 |
| 2011 | 410,084,511 | 342,340,932 |
| 2012 | 410,084,511 | 342,340,932 |
| 2013 | 464,595,718 | 382,318,205 |
| 2014 | 464,595,718 | 382,318,205 |
| 2015 | 337,143,126 | 227,686,618 |
| 2016 approved budget | 391,421,320 | 258,224,817 |

Similarly, between 2018 and 2022, Nigeria has budgeted the sum of N577.749 billion for its universal basic education program.

Nigeria's Budget for UBEC between 2018 and 2022 (in Billions Naira)



Financing is one of the challenges to education, especially basic education and the Federal Government sets aside two percent of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) for equal distribution to all the 36 states of the country and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), to support basic education. A Dataphyte report had however revealed that Nigerian states failed to access up to N48 billion in UBEC grants in seventeen years and the state universal basic education board budgets were low.

Select States, their 2021 SUBEB Budgets, Capital Component, Actual Capital Expenditure and Unaccessed UBEC Grant in 2021 (in Millions Naira)

| State | Budget | Capital | Actual Capital | Unaccessed UBEC Fund |
|-------|--------|---------|----------------|----------------------|
| Ogun | 2,363 | 1,447 | 516 | 946 |
| Osun | 5,422 | 4,201 | 837 | 946 |
| Enugu | 8,216 | 8,000 | 202 | 946 |
| Niger | 400 | 0 | 0 | 946 |
| Abia | 2,649 | 368 | | 946 |

Actual capital expenditure were as at Q3, 2021
Table: Dataphyte - Source: States Budget, UBEC, Dataphyte Research - Created with Datawrapper

School to student ratio is also problematic. Analysis of the most recent education statistics released by the country shows that there are 466 students on the average at each Junior Secondary school in the country and an average of 359 students at each primary school in the country.

Projections, using the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF), of available funds for the UBE program over the lifetime of the Operation average US\$320 million annually for all states, resulting in a total of US\$1.60 billion over the five years of the Operation. Using a share of 47.6 percent of the UBE Intervention

Fund, government financing amounts to a total of US\$760 million. This is leveraged by IDA’s contribution of a total of US\$611 million, thus equating to an overall program envelope of US\$1.371 billion over the five-year period. This is a sustainable source of funding that can be accessed for the effective implementation of the SDG4. (World Bank, 2017)

Job Creation and Digital Economy

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) puts Nigeria's unemployment rate at 4.1 percent in the first quarter of 2023, as against 5.3 percent in the previous quarter. KPMG detailed this forecast in its International Global Economic Outlook report, where it stated that “unemployment is expected to continue to be a major challenge in 2023 due to the limited investment by the private sector, low industrialization, and slower than required economic growth and consequently the inability of the economy to absorb the 4-5 million new entrants into the Nigerian job market every year”. For instance, in the 2019 SDG index, Nigeria ranked 159th among the 162 countries compared in terms of their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nigeria’s performance score of 46.4 is just a little above the score for the Central African Republic, a country sitting at the lowest rung of the index. Nigeria is undisputedly the giant of Africa and the most populous nation – with a population of 213 million and an estimated GDP of 45 trillion naira as at the third quarter of 2021, making it the largest economy on the continent. The giant of Africa in 2019 became the global headquarters of poverty with an estimated 91.8 million of its population living in extreme poverty. The World Bank has also projected that the number of Nigerians living below the poverty line will increase to 95.7 million in 2022.

According to the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, in an assessment of the Federal Ministry of Education, the ministry has facilitated the creation of

58,100 new jobs (skilled and unskilled) for Nigerian Youths through collaboration with the private sector on initiatives aimed at development and implementation of strategies for incentivising public private partnerships. Key achievements for this deliverable include the adoption of a PPP model for the provision of infrastructure in tertiary institutions; the inauguration of a National Skills Committee for Job Creation; and the adoption of a Helix strategy for enhanced skills development in educational institutions.

The creation of new jobs and thus the goal of increasing the productivity of Nigerians has been substantially advanced by the contributions of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovations. These were propelled by such interventions as a) reduction of post-harvest losses of farmers, b) varied capacity building activities, c) repositioning of Research and Development (R&D) Centres to commercialise and market their products and d) construction of ICT parks across the country which is still ongoing.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment facilitated creation of new jobs through the development and implementation of relevant policies and guidelines, especially collaborating with the private sector to ensure that employment opportunities are provided to Nigeria's teeming youths. The National Employment policy which was developed in 2017 has the objective of promoting full employment as a national priority and to enable men and women who are available and willing to work to attain secured and sustainable livelihood. Through the implementation of this policy, a total of 4,240,770 jobs have been created by the FMLE and its Agencies, through the following initiatives:

a) Job Centres/Migrant Resource Centres have been established to provide employment facilitation services to job seekers.

- b) The National Electronic Labour Exchange portal has been upgraded to improve job matching.
- c) Labour Market Information System has been established and is about to be launched. This will ensure effective management of labour matters through the promulgation of evidence-based policy on Labour and employment matters.
- d) Skill Acquisition and Upgrading training centres have been established as part of active labour market programmes.
- e) Other impactful achievements include change in the perception of youth from white collar jobs to self-employment; significant reduction in the level of unemployment through provision of decent employment opportunities; improvement in standard of living and stemming the tide of rural – urban migration.

The FMLE has also made progress in training 29,879 staff of the Labour sector under the Structured Mandatory Assessment Training Programme (SMAT- P) towards improved productivity.

The NITDA Digital Literacy Framework stated that Nigeria's service sector is a field in which Nigeria has momentum and national advantage. ICT has the potential to make Nigeria a global economic centre on account of the rapid growth of the sector. In 2019, ICT contributed 14% to the GDP, up from 13.32% in the preceding year. In 2020, the sector contributed 17.83% to the GDP and has already contributed 17.9% to the GDP in the second quarter of 2021. There is therefore the need to promote short- and long-term skills development in at least five sectors with potential for job creation, especially manufacturing, rural economy, renewable energy, creative industry, construction, services and digital economy, for 75 per cent of unemployed youth (NITDA, 2020).

The Way Forward for the Implementation of SDGs in Nigeria.

The following are needed for the effective implementation of SDGs in Nigeria and Africa.

1. Mobilisation of the Political Will

The mobilisation of the political will is a key condition. It can be achieved through the commitment of the political leadership at the highest level, which must involve:

- Wider national consensus-building based on the reforms to be effected
- Decision-making for the adoption of reform policies and the setting up of corresponding legislations
- Budgetary arbitration for the achievement of new objectives
- Mobilisation of the administration for necessary inter-sectorial collaborations meant for bringing about change
- Mobilisation of different sectors of society based on partnerships among stakeholders and the participation of grassroots players in favour of changes
- Strategic monitoring for the maintenance of the transformation process and the commitments made within adequate time frame for the attainment of these set targets. The differences in performances between countries that have similar realities, resources and constraints, most often, explicitly show the impact of such a level of commitment

2. Systematic Strategic and Operational, Inter-sectoral Planning of Targeted Transformation

The commitment of leadership at the highest political level can therefore give a strong boost to the development of education. This is however on condition that it is founded on well-defined political and strategic options, rigorously

evaluated, relevant and efficient. Now, the latter come, first of all, from a good sectorial analysis allowing for the diagnosis of the strength and the weaknesses, as well as factors explaining performances and counter-performances of the educational system in question in order to identify precisely the specific challenges to take up and the levers on which to rest the dynamics of transformation.

3. Availability of Technical and Strong Institutional Capacities

The need for capacities in the educational sector is vast. As for the teachers, the question is a top priority. Here, emphasis is placed on the governance capacities of the systems. The vertical coordination of implementation of policies requires that the central services of the Ministries of Education, the devolved services, local authorities and the schools, should, at every level of the ascending and the descending chain, conveniently play the roles and responsibilities attributed to them. The inter-sectoral approach of education involved in the interaction of the new objectives equally requires them to build a horizontal coordination with the other sectors of development to design and implement the integrated interventions. The capacities in question are notably the following:

- The collection, analysis, development and management of a knowledge bank on the educational system
- The preparation, strategic planning, as well as the monitoring and evaluation, of the policies and programmes
- The planning and management of human resources
- The planning and management of financial resources, including budgetary and administrative processes, procurement
- The planning and management of the educational system infrastructure.

- The planning and management of decentralisation and decongestion in the educational system
- Building of sustainable pedagogical interventions through mentorship and shadow practices, and encouraging the use of the Gender-Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) toolkit for teachers, trainers and leaders to facilitate access, equity, and quality education
- Use of professional workers to sensitise communities on the need to enrol children with disabilities in schools to enhance access
- Leveraging community-based programs complemented by modes of learning and e-learning and the use of school-based management committees to supplement and expand what government and development partners are doing at the grassroots level.
- Advocate for comprehensive educational reforms, including through the introduction of entrepreneurship, innovation, ethics, and life and digital skills in school and training curricula.

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