

HOW TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE)

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Abstract

The idea of basic education in a global innovation aimed at making human beings literate. It, therefore, has its root development from the global community. The idea of UBE is not Nigeria's brain-child, rather an extension of" what the global community agreed to uphold so, it is Nigeria's effort to go by what has already been agreed upon by the world to renew commitment to the provision and promotion of Basic Education which Nigeria was also a signatory. H is the light of this that this paper is coining up with measures that can be put in place" to ensure the successful implementation of universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria.

History of Free Basic Education in Nigeria

The complex and conflicting nature of education system in Nigeria led to so many trials and errors in the smooth running of schools right from primary to tertiary level. The reasons were largely due to inconsistencies and lack of continuity in formulating education policy objectives and the methods employed to realize such objectives.

It is an open secret that the education system bequeathed to us by the colonial masters was tailored towards achieving narrow-minded political objectives in which the emphasis was to produce people for white collar jobs for immediate post independence elites.

However, the idea to introduce university primary education (UPE) was first nurtured by the regional governments of western Nigeria. Action group (AG), formed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo mooted the idea of free basic education in 1952. The then western region minister of education, Chief S.O. Awokoya presented a proposal for the introduction of a free, universal primary education (UPE), which eventually came into being on the 17th of January 1955. Onqjcte (2001), observed that the minister while presenting the proposal to the house of assembly on the 30th of July, 1952, opined that educational development is imperative and urgent. It must be treated as national emergency, second only to war. It must move with the momentum of a revolution.

The government of eastern region led by Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, under the National Convention of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) also borrowed a leaf from the action group of the western region government and made a move in 1957, to launch their own version of UPE scheme. Precisely, NCNC government made primary education free, universal and compulsory.

General Olusegun Obasanjo military government equally launched a nationwide universal primary education programme in September 1976. The 1976 UPE scheme as seen by Tahir (2001), was by the middle of the 1980's, bedeviled by a number of unforeseen and abominable difficult which rendered it virtually unsustainable.

The current UBE programme was again launched by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the immediate past civilian president on the 30th September 1999 in Sokoto.

In his launched address to the nation, he emphasized that education is not just a matter of acquiring skills, rather the term is better perceived when and understood as a means of instilling, especially in our young ones, he importance of a number of fundamental values such as devotion to the continuity of the nation (Nigeria) as one, respect for the constitution and the importance of democracy, among other things are the inculcation of the sense of dignity of work and moral uprightness as well as respect for others EL Yakub (2001).

The first enrolment nationwide was made in 2000/2001 academic sessions. The objectives of the UBE programme as outlined by the former president can only be achieved through functional and effective education. Such functional education should include vocation and technical education skills which will make the student self-reliant through self employment; moral education which will prepare him as a responsible citizen of the nation and citizenship and political education; which will prepare him to participate activity in the political and social development of the country. For the UBE to succeed, it requires full co-operation of the community, Local Government as well as teachers. Any programme of this nature requires fund for proper execution. UBE programme can be used to achieve nation building and in terms of education and self-actualization only if citizens of Nigeria support it. In line with the above idea, UBE (2001), observed that:

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a monumental national enterprise and its success will

depend largely on the extent to which its efficient management can be assured. It is mainly for this reason that management becomes a topical issue in the continuous policy dialogue on UBE.

The Meaning and Scope of Basic Education

Basic education can aptly be described as the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides reading, writing and numeracy skills. It includes a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners acquire functional literacy. In the Nigerian context, basic education includes primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult literacy.

Objectives of the UBE Programme

- The objectives of the UBE programme in Nigeria according to EL Yakub (2006), include the following:
- a. Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
 - b. Provide free, compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
 - c. Reduce drastically drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency.
 - d. Cater for drop outs of school children, adolescents through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
 - e. Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning).

According to UBE proposed implementation blueprint, the following approaches and operational strategies will be adopted for the successful implementation of the UBE scheme.

- a. Enactment of necessary legislation
- b. Articulation of enabling policies
- c. Sensitization and Mobilization of the group
- d. Adequate funding
- e. Optimal allocation and efficient utilization of resources
- f. Adequate teacher training, recruitment and motivation
- g. Effective coordination of activities
- h. Encouragement and stimulation of the active participation of the private sector, nongovernmental and voluntary agencies as well as local communities in the scheme.
- i. Establishment of working partnerships and collaboration with the international communities and donors agencies and j. Regular supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. UBE (2001)

In order to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme, there shall be regular monitoring and evaluation of the UBE objectives, strategies and outcomes. This will enable those charged with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluation to recommend necessary implementation adjustments and remediation where necessary. The objectives of monitoring and evaluation of the UBE scheme shall include the following:

- a. Ensuring that the scheme is understood by all;
- b. Ensuring the implementation of the scheme;
- c. Evaluating the performance of the executors of the scheme;
- d. Identifying and examine constraints and their impact and;
- e. Making necessary suggestions and recommendations on remedial measures

The Federal Ministry of education shall provide the overall coordination for the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. Monitoring and evaluation of specific projects and activities within The frame work of the scheme shall be performed by the respective governments and evaluating bodies.

How to

Ensure Success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE)

In order to ensure the success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, adequate measures should be put in place to avoid the past mistakes of the Universal Primary Education (UPE). Thus, aspects of staff welfare, provision of infrastructure, teacher training and retaining, proper utilization of curriculum as

well as management and funding should be given top priority.

- **Staff Welfare:** a sound and promising teacher's welfare package should be evolved with a view to raising their morale and encouraging them to remain on the job and perform satisfactorily.

Instructional Materials: the supply of adequate and suitable instructional materials is essential in the overall success of the programme.

Infrastructural Facilities: Rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings and the construction of new ones should be urgently looked into and provided for. This will accommodate the increasing number of intakes that are being expected and there should also be provision for classroom furniture.

Training and Re-training: There must be frequent and regular training and retraining of staff which will ensure available and capable human resources to manage the programme.

Curriculum: Proper utilization of syllabuses should be adopted in order to take care of the varying needs of the different communities in the country. Moreover, a plan must be put in place to absorb the grandaunts of the programme into the next level of our school system.

Community Participation: Local communities should be fully mobilized to support the school system as this will help to restore public confidence. The office of the National Orientation Agency in each state of the federation and federal capital territory (FCT) should come up with a blueprint that would help to ensure effective service delivery along this line. The major language in each state should be used in the processes of an awareness campaign and this will help to ensure that the messages are well received by all the various communities that make up the country.

Funding: the three tiers of government should continue to fund primary education. However, the salaries and overhead cost which is the responsibility of local governments should be deducted at first charge and not directly from the federation accounts as the case is now.

Management: The structure of state primary education boards should be allowed to continue with the chairman being Executive. The innovation of some SPEBs by creating zonal coordinating office for quality control, material development as well as resources mobilization has proved to be rewarding and should therefore be sustained.

At the local government educational authority [LGEA] level, the position of the LGEA education committee chairman should be occupied by the local government chairman himself or the incumbent councilor for education. This arrangement will keep the local government chairman abreast of education activities or programmes in his area of jurisdiction.

The appointment, posting, promotion and discipline of education secretaries and other senior staff should be rested with the slate primary education board as this will:

- a. Be in line with other top appointments and posting in the local government set up, such as secretaries and heads of department that are directly appointed and posted by the local government services commission.
- b. Remove the politicization of the position of education secretaries and other senior staff in view of the place of education in the nation building.

Conclusion

Nigeria, regarded, as giant of Africa not only because of its large population, but also because of its enormous materials resources should more attention on education, especially at the primary level. The country is blessed with talented men and women whose capacity could be maximized through education. Attention should therefore, be focused on education at every level that would ensure rapid industrial growth, poverty alleviation, political stability and lasting democracy. Our students from the primary to the university should be well prepared to earn their living without depending in government for employment. Vocational and Technical education should be introduced and emphasized at both primary and secondary levels to prepare the youths for the challenges of the next millennium.

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