

EDUCATION FOR ALL: PROGRESS, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This paper gave an overview of the Education for All movement. This was introduced by a consideration of the justification for the phenomenon. It was explored from its human rights and economic perspectives. The origin of the movement and its progress globally was examined and the mechanisms and structures put in place for its success were highlighted. The Nigerian case was then considered. The rank of 108 out of 120 countries was justified by the problems faced by her as a nation. Her prospect of achieving the goals and targets of EFA by the year 2015 was considered. The paper concludes by calling on the academic community to engage in strategic research as well as advocacy which will start off a ripple effect.

Key word: Education for All: Progress, Problems and Prospects

EFA, knowing that there is benefit in its continued adoption.

Before going on to discuss Education for All (EFA) as a concept and framework for action, I would like us to lay a foundation on which further discussion is predicated. I will start this by asking some questions. The first question is: Should education be for all? Does it form an agency in securing good health, liberty, security, economic well-being, and participation in social and political activities? Is it one of the power factors in present models of development? Does it play any roles in national and global transformations? Answers to these questions will give us the impetus to consider the concept of

Should Education be for All?

Formal education serves to integrate the individual into the adult society. In this regard, the knowledge, skills, values attitudes etc. developed enables the individual contribute maximally to society and to benefit from society and to find fulfillment in personal growth through every aspect of learning. Because of the two-way interaction, the modus operandi and scope of education is usually determined by forces external to it. Political imperatives and social forces thus exert enormous influences on the direction of education for any society. "Indeed, the aspirations of any society and culture

will have powerful and, perhaps, decisive effects on the education which develops” (Mbajorgu & Ezeano, in press).

The history of education highlights succinctly its importance. The early efforts at formal schooling aimed at producing ‘lords’ who were custodians of the truth. Disciples gathered at the feet of masters or ‘scholarch’, who is usually the head of a school of thought e.g. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle etc. Schooling at this time was for the elitist few. This served the early traditional society. However, as society evolved and made more demands on individuals, education became increasingly available to more people.

The revolution in the economy of the world, which culminated in the industrialized society induced a demand on individuals who had to negotiate and act in an increasingly knowledge-based economy and society. How for instance, will an individual access medical care if he does not have the funds and how will the funds be available without a good job? Taking it further, how will an individual have a good job without tradeable skills which can only be gotten through education?

Unfortunately, the school system prior to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1949) excluded the less privileged in the society. For those who were fortunate to gain entrance into it, it served as sorting ground between the able and the less

able. Given the realization that the human race are not equal on many fronts and given that space and distance has assumed little importance in human interactions since the World Wars, what should be the role of the school? It is obvious that the global village cannot be fully realized if part of its membership are excluded by the institution primarily set up for the integration of individuals into it. The aim of education will and has necessarily changed from producing an elitist few expected to run the society to helping every individual to the full realization of their potentials.

Since illiteracy will exclude individuals from participation and integration, it is necessary that through policy imperatives, a nation state grant its citizens the right to education and basic education specifically. This is considering the importance of EFA from a human rights point of view. I would like to suggest that this right should be considered as the most basic of human rights. This is because education, viewed rightly, is an agency in achieving other fundamental human rights. In this regard, it affords the ability to negotiate and act in order to secure other forms of human rights (UNESCO, 2002).

We can also make a case for EFA from the point of view of economic empowerment. Thomas, Wang and Fan (2001) argue that “as with land and machinery, an equitable distribution of human capital (basic literacy and nutrition/health) constitutes a

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precondition for individual productivity and ability to rise above poverty". Research (e.g. Stevens and Weale, 2004) has demonstrated that education bequeaths economic benefits to individuals. They stated that a one year increase in the year of schooling increases an individual's earning by 7%. They also claimed that from literature it was found that the returns to primary education ranged from 42% in a country like Botswana to 2% in a country such as Yemen. The return to secondary education ranged from 47% in Zimbabwe to 2% in Yugoslavia whereas the return to tertiary education ranged from -4% in Zimbabwe to 24% in Yemen. Noting that lower secondary education forms part of basic education, we can deduce that the return to investment in basic education is quite high (Fig. 1).

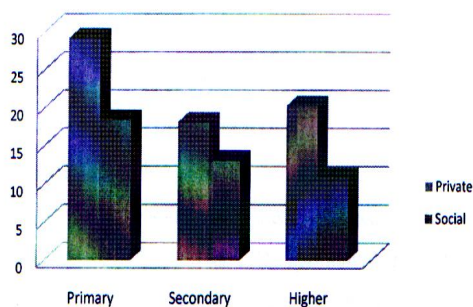


Fig. 1 Returns to investment in education by level
(Source: Psacharapolous 1994)

Psacharapolous and Patrinos (2002) reviewing literature maintained that research over 40 years have yielded an

established pattern in the relationship between investment in education and economic growth and returns: for every one year increase in years of schooling, there is a 10% increase in returns. However, a decline is introduced after a threshold for higher levels, carrying with it a regressive income distribution implication (Mbajjorgu, 2012 and Psacharapolous and Patrinos, 2002). Private returns are higher than social returns and women receive a higher return to their investment in schooling than men (See Table 1).

Table 1 Return to Education by Gender (%)

Education Level	Men	Women
Primary	20.1	12.8
Secondary	13.9	18.4
Higher	11.0	10.8
Overall	8.7	9.8

Source: Psacharapolous and Patrinos, 2002.

It would seem from our discussion so far that basic education is an agency which should be made available to every citizen. The questions we started off with can now be given answers. Therefore, the commitments made at the international scene should be translated into legislation that can stand as legal instruments and guarantee for the citizenry.

**What is Education for All (EFA)
World Conference on Education
for All (5-9 March 1990, Jomtien)**

EFA is a global movement coordinated by UNESCO. Its aim is to

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meet the learning needs of all children, youths and adults by the year 2015. This movement started by the adoption of *World Declaration on Education for All* and its companion *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs* at the World Conference on EFA, held in Jomtien Thailand between the 5th and 9th of March, 1990. The conference was convened jointly by the executive heads of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. The Conference was co-sponsored by an additional 18 governments and organizations, and was hosted by the Royal Government of Thailand.

The Inter-Agency Commission, the body set up to organize the conference attracted delegates from 155 governments, 20 inter-governmental bodies and 150 non-governmental organizations. They noted that the reality as at the time did not match the expectations from the efforts made by countries around the globe to ensure the right to education for all. The conference therefore, adopted a human rights approach to education building on *Article 26* of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948. It represented "a worldwide consensus on an expanded vision of basic education and a renewed commitment to ensure that the basic learning needs of all children, youths and adults are met

effectively in all countries" (UNESCO, 1990: iv). Six goals were established. These include:

1. Goal 1: Universal access to learning
2. Goal 2: A focus on equity;
3. Goal 3: Emphasis on learning outcomes;
4. Goal 4: Broadening the means and the scope of basic education
5. Goal 5: Enhancing the environment for learning
6. Goal 6: Strengthening partnerships by 2000

World Education Conference (26-28 April 2000, Dakar)

An extensive evaluation was undertaken in 2000 to assess the progress of the EFA movement. This assessment was done at individual country level and the result reported at six regional conferences in 1999 and 2000:

1. Region 1: Sub-Saharan Conference on Education for All, Johannesburg, South Africa, 6-10 December 1999;
2. Region 2: Asia and Pacific Conference on the EFA 2000 Assessment, Bangkok, Thailand, 17-20 January 2000;
3. Region 3: The Arab Regional Conference on Education for All, Cairo, Egypt, 24-27 January 2000;
4. Region 4: The Third Inter-Ministerial Review Meeting of the E-9

Countries, Recife, Brazil, 31 January- 2 February 2000;

5. Region 5: Conference on Education for All in Europe and North America, Warsaw, Poland, 6-8 February 2000; and
6. Region 6: Regional Education for All Conference in the Americas, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 10-12 February 2000. -UNESCO, 2000

This Forum re-affirmed the commitment of the national governments to achieving EFA goals and targets by the year 2015. It noted that although many national governments were committed to the World Declaration and the Framework for Action, they are still far from achieving EFA goals and targets. It noted particularly

that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies. Without accelerated progress towards education for all, nationally and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between

countries and within societies will widen (UNESCO, 2000: 8).

Areas of concern identified at this Forum were: HIV/AIDS, early childhood education, school health, education of girls and women, adult literacy and education in situations of crisis and emergency. In line with this, six goals were established:

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to

and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

Two goals from the EFA goals were adopted by the Millenium Declaration. These are:

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Mechanisms and Implementation Structures for EFA

UNESCO has developed some mechanisms and structures to monitor, evaluate and do general consultative work. These are geared towards achieving five goals set out in the Report of the Working Group on Education for All (UNESCO, 2001):

1. First, to integrate EFA fully in all programme activities of UNESCO. This concerns education, specifically, but also inter-sectoral activities related to culture, communication and information, and the sciences.
2. Second, to support countries in the implementation of EFA, for example in the formulation of education policies that cater to excluded groups.
3. Third, to develop regional mechanisms for capacity-building and exchange between countries.
4. Fourth, to champion more efficient use of resources and increased investment in basic education.
5. Fifth, to sustain the EFA momentum at the global level through EFA advocacy at international meetings. UNESCO, 2001: iii

Some of the structures and mechanisms include:

1. Setting up of a Working Group in 2000. Major goal was to form forum for consultation and discussion among the key partners, and to play a potentially critical role in influencing the design and adoption of the strategies needed to translate expressed political commitment to EFA into concrete action.

2. Forging or encouraging partnerships. An example is the FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) programme. This was formed through the collaboration of World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO and was launched at the World Education Forum in Dakar.
3. United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI). The major task of UNGEI is to mount a sustained campaign to improve the quality and availability of girls' education through a collaborative partnership of different entities within and outside the United Nations system. The overall objective is the elimination of gender discrimination and gender disparity in education systems through action at national, district and community levels.
4. Education for the Prevention of AIDS, with major focus to strengthen the role of the schools, the teachers and learning materials in order to mitigate the impact and maximize the use of education for preventive purposes.
5. EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI)/Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The goal is to help low-income countries achieve the education Millenium Goals as well as EFA goals. It was launched in 2002 as a global partnership between donors and developing country partners to ensure accelerated progress towards EFA goals.
6. EFA Global Monitoring Report. This Report began in 2002 and is produced by an independent international team based in UNESCO. The Report charts progress against the six Dakar goals and targets, highlights effective policies and strategies, and alerts the global community to emerging challenges for action and cooperation. Drawing upon the latest available data, it sets out a challenging framework for reform.

Global Status of the Six EFA Goals

The Global Monitoring Report, 2012 records the progress so far with regards to the six EFA goals globally. The aim of the monitoring, according to the document (UNESCO, 2012: 1), is to draw lessons, which will "inform the definition of future international education goals and the design of mechanisms to make sure that all partners live up to their promises". Excerpts from the document showing the status for each goal is given below.

Goal 1: Expand Early Childhood Care and Education (p. 39)

1. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is improving, but from a low base in some regions.
2. The child mortality rate fell from 88 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 60 in 2010, but current rates of decline are

insufficient to achieve the target of 29 by 2015. In 2010, there were still 28 countries where the child mortality rate exceeded 100 per 1,000 live births.

3. It is projected that around one in four children globally will suffer from moderate or extreme stunting by 2015. In half of low income countries with data, the stunting rate was 40% or higher in 2010.
4. Despite a 46% increase in the number of children enrolled in pre-school between 1999 and 2010, less than half the world's children receive pre-primary education. Progress has been slowest in low income countries, where only 15% of children received pre-primary education in 2010.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Basic Education (p. 58)

1. On current trends the target of universal primary education will be missed. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age fell from 108 million in 1999 to 61 million in 2010.
2. The rate of decline was rapid between 1999 and 2004, but then started slowing, and progress has stalled since 2008. Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of children out of school increased by 1.6 million between 2008 and 2010,

accounts for half of the world's total.

3. The number of countries with a primary net enrolment ratio of over 97% increased from 37 to 55 out of 124 countries between 1999 and 2010. Just five years before 2015, twenty-nine countries have a net enrolment ratio of less than 85%, and so are very unlikely to achieve the goal by the deadline.
4. Children of official school starting age who did not enter school by 2010 will not be able to complete the primary cycle by 2015. In 2010, out of 98 countries with data there were 16 countries with a net intake rate below 50% and 71 countries below 80%.
5. Dropout remains a problem in low income countries, where on average 59% of those starting school reached the last grade in 2009. The problem is particularly acute for those children starting late.

Goal 3: Promote Learning and Life Skills for Young People and Adults (p. 80)

1. Despite a global increase in the number of children enrolling in secondary school, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio was just 52% in low income countries in 2010, leaving millions of young people to face life without the

foundation skills they need to earn a decent living.

2. Although the number of out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age fell from 101 million in 1999 to 71 million in 2010, it has stagnated since 2007. Three out of four out-of-school adolescents live in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Twelve years after the EFA goals were established, the international community is only now coming closer to agreeing on a coherent set of internationally comparable indicators of skills development and the means to measure them. But recent developments will not produce sufficient data in time to measure goal 3 adequately before 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce Adult Illiteracy by 50% (p. 90)

1. Most countries will miss goal 4, some by a large margin. There were still 775 million adults who could not read or write in 2010, about two-thirds of whom were women.
2. Globally the adult literacy rate has increased over the past two decades, from 76% in 1985–1994 to 84% in 2005–2010 but, partly because the world's population has grown, the number of illiterate adults has fallen modestly from 881 million to 775 million.

3. Of the forty countries that had an adult literacy rate below 90% in 1998–2001, only three are expected to meet the goal of reducing their illiteracy rate by 50%.
4. The global youth literacy rate stood at 90% in 2005–2010, equivalent to 122 million young people. This means that the world is not in a position to eradicate illiteracy by 2015 or any time soon thereafter.

Goal 5: Achieve Gender Parity and Equality (p. 106)

1. Convergence in enrolment between boys and girls has been one of the successes of the EFA movement since 2000, but more needs to be done to ensure that education opportunities and outcomes are equitable.
2. There are still sixty-eight countries that have not achieved gender parity in primary education, and girls are disadvantaged in sixty of them.
3. The incidence of severe gender disparity has become less common. Of the 167 countries with data in both 1999 and 2010, the number of countries where fewer than nine girls were in primary school for every ten boys fell from 33 to 17.
4. At the secondary level, ninety-seven countries have not reached gender parity; in forty-three of them, girls are

disadvantaged. In much of the Arab States, South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa gender disparities are at the expense of girls, while in many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in East Asia and the Pacific, disparities are at the expense of boys.

5. International learning assessments indicate that girls perform better than boys in reading at both primary and secondary school level, and the gap is widening. Boys have an advantage in mathematics in most countries, although there is some evidence that the gap may be narrowing.

Goal 6: Improve Quality of Education (p. 122)

1. Millions of children who go to school do not learn the basics. Out of around 650 million children of primary school age, as many as 250 million either do not reach grade 4 or, if they do, fail to attain minimum learning standards.
2. Pupil/teacher ratios at primary level improved globally between 1999 and 2010, especially in East Asia and Latin America. But they worsened in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, the regions that already had the highest pupil/teacher ratios.

3. A significant proportion of teachers remain untrained at both primary and secondary level. Of 100 countries with data at the primary level, in 33 less than 75% of teachers were trained to the national standard. Even those who have received training are not always well-prepared to teach in early grades.

The Case of Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the 155 countries and 164 countries that attended the World Conference on EFA (Jomtien, 1990) and the EFA Forum (Dakar, 2000) respectively. In line with the commitments made on the two occasions, the Nigerian Government has taken a number of measures to ensure she achieves the EFA goals and targets by the year 2015. How have we fared and what mechanisms are put in place to achieve the goals of EFA by 2015?

Status of EFA in Nigeria

Nigeria is ranked the 108 out of 120 countries with available data, according to the Global Monitoring Report, 2012. Countries are ranked according to their EFA Development Index (EDI). Four of the EFA goals are used to calculate this index as a result of data constraint. The value of the Standard EDI is the arithmetic mean of the four EFA goals. These are given below:

1. universal primary education (goal 2), measured by the primary adjusted net enrolment ratio;

2. adult literacy (goal 4), measured by the literacy rate for those aged 15 and above;
3. gender parity and equality (goal 5), measured by the gender-specific EFA index (GEI), an average of the gender parity indices (GPIs) of the primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios and the adult literacy rate;
4. quality of education (goal 6), measured by the survival rate to grade 5; in the absence of comparable indicators on quality, notably on learning outcomes, the survival rate is used as a proxy because of its positive correlation with average international learning assessment scores.
-UNESCO, 2012b: 306

A score of 1 represents full achievement across the four EFA goals, whereas a score of 0 represents none achievement of the EFA goals.

Nigeria's scores across the four goals are as follows: Standard EDI value 0.723, Primary Adjusted Net Enrolment 0.576, Adult Literacy Rate 0.613, Gender Specific EFA Index 0.830 and Survival Rate to grade 5 0.863. Nigeria scored below 0.90 on all four components and 0.723 overall. This suggests Nigeria has not achieved any of the EFA goals as at 2010 when the

assessment was done. Following are some basic education indicators.

Access to and Equity in Education

The number of out-of-school children in Nigeria is estimated at about 7million. This contributes about 10% to the global figure. Statistics indicate that Nigeria has the largest number of out-of-school children in the world. Males have higher access than females (Fig. 2a and b). However, of the females in school a high percentage remain in school up to grade 5. There are also 3.5 million nomadic school-aged children with only 450,000 of them accessing any form of schooling. The estimated teacher/student ratio is 1:37. The global estimate is 1:24.

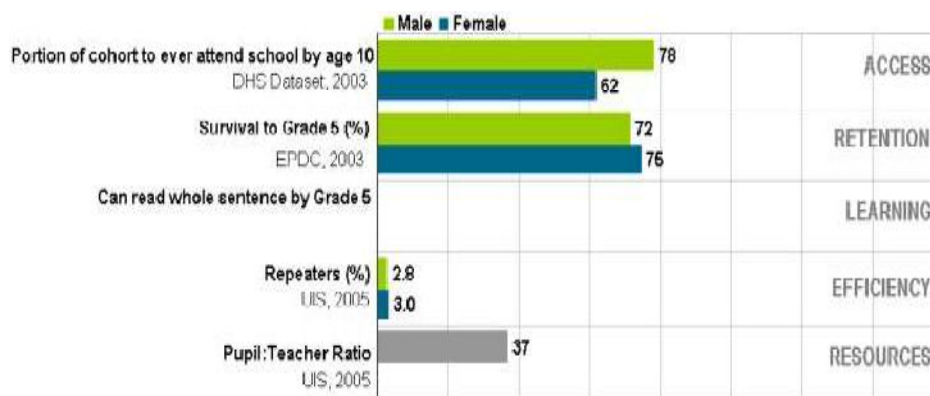


Fig. 2 Overview of the Primary School System
Source: Santcross, Hinchliffe, Sims Williams, Adediran, and Onibon, 2010

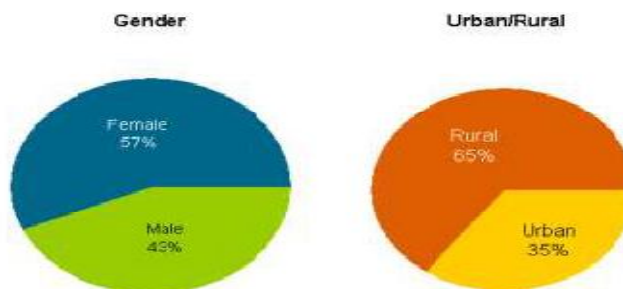


Fig. 2b Enrolment Rates for Males/Females and Rural/Urban Regions
Source: Santcross, Hinchliffe, Sims Williams, Adediran, and Onibon, 2010

Gender Parity

Table 2 indicates that the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) fluctuated over the period 1998 to 2005. Again, a consideration of the gender variable in the intake shows a disparity between males and females in favour of males. A gender gap is, therefore, revealed in the intake. Much more important.

However, is the fact that gender parity was not achieved in any of the years under consideration. The highest Gender Parity Index (GPI) was recorded for the year 1999 after which there was a decrease, or more accurately, the index continued to fluctuate.

Table 2 GER in Primary Education (National) from 1998 to 2005

Years	Total Enrolment	Total	Male	Female	Gender Gap	Gender Parity Index
1998	16,045,567	76	85	66	19	0.78
1999	10,591,247	92	98	85	13	0.87
2000	11,450,262	57	66	48	16	0.72
2001	13,163,034	63	72	54	18	0.75
2002	18,210,575	85	93	77	16	0.83
2003	22,675,040	102	113	92	21	0.81
2004	21,140,282	93	101	85	16	0.84
2005	22,044,792	95	103	86	17	0.83

Source: Santcross, Hinchliffe, Sims Williams, Adediran, and Onibon, 2010

Literacy Rate

Table 3 shows the literacy rates of males and females according to states. It should be noted that there are huge variations among the states with Lagos State recording the highest rate. Borno State records literacy rate as low as 14.5. The overall or national literacy rate is estimated at 56.9%. It is also

worthy of note that the literacy rates for urban and rural regions differ ((urban 74.6 % and rural 48.7%) and sex (male 65.1% and female 48.6%). It is believed that measures will be taken to address these disparities. Statistics also indicate that only 500,000 of the 40 million adult illiterates are enrolled in adult learning classes.

Table 3 Distribution of Population (Age 6 and Above) By Literacy States, Status and Sex

S/N	State	Population			Literacy Rate			%age
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1.	Abia	1,430,298	1,451,082	2,881,380	1075280	1013986	2,089,266	72.5
2.	Abuja	733,172	673,067	1,406,239	479,460	384,626	864,086	61.4
3.	Adamawa	1,607,270	1,571,680	3,178,950	734,105	553,051	1,287,156	40.5
4.	Akwa Ibom	1,983,202	1,918,849	3,902,051	1,426,385	1,331,413	2,757,798	70.7
5.	Anambra	2,117,984	2,059,844	4,177,828	1,603,569	1,532,523	3,136,092	75.1

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6.	Bauchi	2,369,266	2,283,800	4,653,066	913,500	672,414	1,585,914	34.1
7.	Bayelsa	874,083	830,432	1,704,515	566,164	491181	1,057,345	62.0
8.	Benue	2,114,043	2,109,598	4,223,641	1084138	818653	1,902,791	45.1
9.	Borno	2,163,358	2,007,746	4,171,104	392721	210771	603,492	14.5
10.	Cross River	1,471,967	1,421,021	2,892,988	953,240	849,366	1,802,606	62.3
11.	Delta	2,069,309	2,043,136	4,112,445	1,419,177	1,284,626	2,703,903	65.7
12.	Ebonyi	1,064,156	1,112,791	2,176,947	607913	545088	1,153,001	53.0
13.	Edo	1,633,946	1,599,420	3,233,366	763011	719046	1,482,057	45.8
14.	Ekiti	1,215,487	1,183,470	2,398,957	914656	877622	1,792,278	74.7
15.	Enugu	1,596,042	1,671,795	3,267,837	1,095,655	1,076,831	2,172,486	66.5
16.	Gombe	1,244,228	1,120,812	2,365,040	538,463	390,853	929,316	39.3
17.	Imo	1,976,471	1,951,092	3,927,563	1075280	1013986	2,089,266	53.2
18.	Jigawa	2,198,076	2,162,926	4,361,002	566164	491181	1,057,345	24.2
19.	Kaduna	3,090,438	3,023,065	6,113,503	914656	877622	1,792,278	29.3
20.	Kano	4,947,952	4,453,336	9,401,288	2,701,175	1,899,636	4,600,811	48.9
21.	Katsina	2,948,279	2,853,305	5,801,584	740034	517630	1,257,664	21.7
22.	Kebbi	1,631,629	1,624,912	3,256,541	506,633	316,203	822,836	25.3
23.	Kogi	1,672,903	1,641,140	3,314,043	596641	513803	1,110,444	33.5
24.	Kwara	1,193,783	1,171,570	2,365,353	627,636	539,436	1,167,072	49.3
25.	Lagos	4,719,125	4,394,480	9,113,605	4341595	4042922	8,384,517	92.0
26.	Nasarawa	943,801	925,576	1,869,377	441,859	340,875	782,734	41.9
27.	Niger	2,004,350	1,950,422	3,954,772	763011	719046	1,482,057	37.5
28.	Ogun	1,864,907	1,886,233	3,751,140	1,218,209	1,138,043	2,356,252	62.8
29.	Ondo	1,745,057	1,715,820	3,460,877	1,192,117	1,101,163	2,293,280	66.3
30.	Osun	1,734,149	1,682,810	3,416,959	137563	135242	272,805	80.0

31.	Oyo	2,802,432	2,778,462	5,580,894	1,819,804	1,691,955	3,511,759	62.9
32.	Plateau	1,598,998	1,607,533	3,206,531	810,148	683,329	1,493,477	46.6
33.	Rivers	2,673,026	2,525,690	5,198,716	1,978,446	1,804,143	3,782,589	72.8
34.	Sokoto	1,863,713	1,838,963	3,702,676	660,204	453,582	1,113,786	30.1
35.	Taraba	1,171,931	1,122,869	2,294,800	348781	185815	534,596	23.3
36.	Yobe	1,205,034	1,116,305	2,321,339	380,274	237,400	617,674	26.6
37.	Zamfara	1,641,623	1,637,250	3,278,873	596641	513803	1,110,444	33.9

Source: UESCO, 2012a

Problems

A number of problems stall the achievement of EFA goals in Nigeria. These can be subsumed under six, which are listed below. All other variables (lack of infrastructure, inadequate and ill-motivated teachers, ill-fitted curricula, etc.) often listed as problems can be considered as symptoms. The six problems are:

1. Lack of reliable data and a weak research base. This hinders right judgments about the achievements and prospects for achieving these goals by the year 2015.
2. Lack of costed Education Sector Plan. This has hindered to a large extent accessing loans and grants from international development partners.
3. Inadequate funding is one of the most important factors mitigating against achievement of EFA goals

and target by the year 2015. Allocation of funds by the relevant government bodies is often below the recommended amount.

4. Weak systems of planning and budgeting.
5. No established forum for government and donors to conduct a dialogue around support for the sector, in spite of several donor efforts over time. Donor assistance over the last 10 years has been project focused, albeit with large-scale sector programmes. With donor assistance, a small number of states have produced costed education sector Plans (Santcross, Hinchliffe, Williams, Adediran & Onibon, 2010: viii).
6. Inadequate monitoring mechanisms and structures.

Prospects

The Global Monitoring Report, 2008 identifies Nigeria as one of the countries at risk of not achieving EFA goals and target by the year 2015. Given this judgment, what are the prospects of Nigeria achieving the goals and target by 2015? A number of mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that Nigeria achieves the goals. These are given below.

Mechanisms in the Education Sector Plan

1. the establishment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, through Decree 17 of 1990
2. the establishment of the National Commission for Nomadic Education in 1990 to look after the education of nomads and other migrant groups
3. improved situational data following the Situation and Policy Analysis of Basic Education in Nigeria (SAPA) undertaken in 1992
4. an approved national curriculum for women education in effect from 1994 based on a baseline study on women education undertaken in 1992/3
5. the establishment of the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development in 1995 following the creation of a women education unit within the FME
6. the introduction of the nine-year schooling programme in 1992 re-launched as an aspect of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in 1999 (with three components: (a) formal nine year basic education, (b) nomadic education for school age nomads, migrant fishermen and pastoral nomads and (c) literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school children, youths and adults – UNESCO, 2006.
7. the introduction of Primary Education Studies (PES) in Colleges of Education as a major course of study in 1992 to improve the quality of teaching at pre-primary and primary school levels
8. the "Operation Save Our Schools" programme launched in 1992 to mobilise and involve civil society in the planning, management, monitoring and funding of schools
9. a national programme of action for the survival, protection and development of the Nigerian Child designed in 1992 to address the basic learning needs of children under six years
10. capacity-building of teachers through pre-service teacher education in colleges of education and in-service teacher training through Sandwich

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| <p>11. development of non-formal education curricula for Quranic schools, girl-child centres, and boy-dropout programmes; and integration of ECCE into the teacher education curriculum for the training of pre-primary teachers</p> <p>12. revival of the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs) and Local Government Education Authorities (LEAs) through Decree 96 of August 1993 leading to improvements in provision of teacher remuneration, infrastructure and learning materials</p> <p>13. formation of a National Steering Committee on Basic Education in 1997 to coordinate progress towards 2000 EFA targets following the 1995 Mid-Decade Review of EFA</p> <p>14. publication of Implementation Guidelines for UBE in 1999 to serve as a comprehensive guide to policy makers, programme implementers and interest groups in education</p> <p>15. -Theobald, Umar, Ocheke & Sanni, 2007: 6-7</p> | <p>supported by ActionAid and the Commonwealth Education Fund.</p> <p>2. Development of a National Framework for Education under the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP).</p> <p>3. Establishment of the Nigeria's Girl's Education Initiative (NGEI), the domesticated version the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). This is a partnership between Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS), Federal Ministry of Education (FME), UNICEF and other partners aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and EFA targets and Universal Basic Education (UBE) as it relates to girls education in Nigeria.</p> <p>4. Development of Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education, SAGEN – July, 2003</p> <p>5. Publication of a National EFA plan in 2007.</p> <p>6. Creation of an EFA unit in the Federal and State Ministries of Education.</p> |
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Other strategies that began after Dakar World Education Forum 2000 include:

1. involvement of the civil society through the coordinating body, Civil Society Action Coalition on EFA (CSACEFA). This body is

The prospect of achieving the EFA goals by the year 2015 is very slim for Nigeria. However, judging by the structures and mechanisms put in place, one can safely say that given more time,

Nigeria will attain the goals. This is dependent upon a number of factors chief of which was identified by Santcross, Hinchliffe, Sims Williams, Adediran, and Onibon, 2010. The document states that:

The EFA GMR 2009 cites Nigeria as one of the countries struggling with the impact of poor governance on the education sector. Poor governance is significantly slowing progress towards EFA and undermining the quality of basic education services. Despite recognition on the part of government of the need to; promote good governance, increase accountability and enhance the role of civil society, institutional arrangements remain complex and lack transparency. There is little accountability, monitoring mechanisms are weak and corruption remains a very significant problem. – p. xii

Conclusion

It is obvious that EFA is a very important phenomenon recognized globally. It is also true that the Nigerian as well as other governments' policies in the Education Sector have been influenced to a great extent by this movement. In the light of this and the perceived importance of making quality education accessible to all, what should be our roles. I would like to point out the roles of participants in this Conference. I believe in the maxim: to act locally and think globally. We should therefore,

think of what we can contribute to achieve the EFA goals and targets.

The prospect of Nigeria achieving these goals is slim. The success of her endeavours with regards to EFA depends on you and I. I am glad that majority of the participants are researchers and individuals who might one day hold one position or another. The first problem identified by this presentation is lack of reliable data and a weak research base. It is time for our universities and research institutes to encourage its academic and research staff to carry out “strategic researches” so that further actions with regards to EFA will be evidence-based. This will also provide the much needed data. Availability of data, on the one hand, will lead to better decision making and accurate costing of the education sector plan. Proper costing on the other hand will lead to attraction of international aid as this is often a requirement for funding. Added to all these, a strong advocacy and well thought out dissemination strategies should be employed to pressure decision-makers to make the right policies and enforce their implementation.

It is my belief that Nigeria will still be able to achieve these goals and targets if the right steps are taken given her advantageous position as a nation endowed with both adequate human and material resources.

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