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## **Forces of educational policy change since 2000 in Nigeria**

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**Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2015**  
**Forces of educational policy change since 2000 in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The return to civil/democratic rule in Nigeria and the need to promote the process of national integration coming on the heels of a major international education initiative in Dakar in 2000 provided the platforms for the formulation and implementation of key educational policies in the country. Some challenges have been overcome while others that still need to be resolved include the need for government to: (i) allocate more resources to the education sector, (ii) curb corruption, ensure transparency and accountability in the education sector, (iii) restructure the sector to ensure that roles and responsibilities of different government agencies are clearly defined, (iv) recognise the key role of private providers in the education delivery system, (v) ensure that the policy formulation process is participatory, and (vii) minimise the politicisation of the post of the Minister of Education and reduce the high turnover of the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Education for effective policy implementation and continuity.

**Introduction**

Nigeria's Human Development Index, particularly its educational indicators ranked low in the years (1983-1999) preceding the return to civil/democratic rule in 1999<sup>1</sup>. The expectation of most Nigerians<sup>2</sup>, and in particular, after the inaugural speech of the new President<sup>3</sup>, was that the return to civil/democratic rule will bring about improvement in the key development indicators including those relating to poverty reduction, low mortality rate, good governance and quality education. Indeed, between 1999 and 2014, successive Nigerian Governments have, initiated series of policies and programmes aimed at improving governance in general and establishing necessary infrastructural and organisational framework for the overall development of the country, including policies and programmes relevant to the six Education for All (EFA) goals.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), Universal Basic Education (UBE) Law (2004), National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (2007) and the National Policy for the Integrated Early Childhood Development (2007) were all geared towards ensuring that Nigeria meets its commitments on the globally agreed aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The policies were championed by the collaboration between the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and other line ministries, International Development Partners (IDPs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in response to global educational reforms including those of the EFA Movement. Some achievements have been recorded in increased enrolment at the pre-primary and primary education levels but there are still challenges in funding the education sector adequately, providing compulsory education for all, promoting learning and life skills for youths and adults, achieving gender equality and improving the quality of education to an acceptable level.

**Challenges facing the country around 2000**

The challenges facing the education system around 2000 can be characterised as being complex and suffocating. They included: (i) lack of access to formal schooling with the majority (over 65%) of the out-of-school children being girls, (ii) substantial regional (between the northern and southern States) difference in education indicators, (iii) low level of learning achievement attributed to poor teacher quality, (iv) scarcity and/or inadequacy of teaching and learning materials and a general absence of learner-friendly environment, (v) low level of funding, (vi) poor community and civil society

organisations' participation in education delivery, (vii) a more than 50% illiteracy rate of the Nigerian citizenry<sup>4</sup>, (viii) dearth of reliable educational data, (ix) lack of transparency, accountability and effective monitoring mechanism in the education system, and (x) unclear roles and responsibilities among the three tiers of government leading to confusion, duplication, and sometimes rivalry in the discharge of their responsibilities<sup>5</sup>.

The Nigerian Government had at different times experimented with different approaches to the funding and management of primary education. This trial and error approach or the so-called 'pendulum approach'<sup>6</sup> is exemplified by the following sequence of events in the funding and management of primary schools: Between (i) 1960 and 1975, it was the responsibility of the Local Government Councils (LGCs); (ii) 1976-1979, under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, the Federal, States and LGCs jointly funded and managed the scheme; (iii) 1979-1988, the funding and management was back to the LGCs; (iv) 1989-1990, it was the responsibility of Federal/States/LGCs under the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), (v) 1991-1993, it was back to the LGCs, (iv) 1993-2002, it was returned to Federal/States/LGCs under NPEC and (v) 2002-to date, the States and LGCs are responsible for the management and funding of basic education.

With the return of democracy to the country in 1999, there was pressure by the State Governments to decentralise the administration of education in the country. Under the 1999 Constitution, education is under the Concurrent Legislative List<sup>7</sup>. The Federal Government is expected to put in place policies to ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels including the provision of: (a) free, compulsory and universal primary education, (b) secondary education, (c) university education, and (d) adult literacy programme. The 36 State Governments, on the other hand, are charged with the responsibilities of providing primary, post-primary, vocational, technical and other forms of education in their areas of jurisdiction. The 774 Local Government Councils (LGCs) in the country are to participate in their respective State Governments' programmes on the provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education. Each Local Government Council (LGC) operates within a geographical area referred to as the Local Government Area (LGA).

The much later UBE (2004) Law reinforces these different roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of government but adds that "the Federal Government's intervention under this Act (i.e., UBE Law) shall only be assistance to the States and Local Government in Nigeria for the purposes of uniform and qualitative basic education throughout Nigeria"<sup>8</sup>. The implication of this is that the intervention may cease if and when the Federal Government so decides.

### **Political pressures, national and international processes and actors that promoted changes**

The return to civil/democratic rule in Nigeria (1999) and decisions of the international community at the World Education Forum (2000) to achieve EFA goals and targets for every citizen and society were the main change agents that provided the momentum for tackling the challenges bedevilling the basic education sub-sector in Nigeria.

#### *EFA Movement*

The EFA movement in Nigeria was inspired by UNESCO's effort in 2003 to support the country in producing a National EFA Plan which should incorporate the 36 States' EFA Plans. Other donors also supported the process. The World Bank's Universal Basic Education Project (UBEP; 2002-2006) supported 16 States in preparing their EFA plans while DFID's -funded Capacity for Universal Basic Education (CUBE) and Girls' Education Project (GEP) assisted State Governments to prepare their strategic plans linking them to elements of the EFA goals. So far, 33 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have produced costed education sector plans. A Nigerian EFA plan incorporating some State plans was, however, published in 2007.

A number of important EFA-related developments by the EFA Movement took place between 1999 and 2012 with some preceding the publication of the National EFA Plan in 2007 where Governments, donor partners, civil society and the private sector have been working together towards achieving the EFA goals. These have contributed to the progress achieved so far. The key events are highlighted in the table below and a few are discussed in details in subsequent sections of this paper:

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Key EFA Movement event</b>   |
|-------------|---|
| 1999**      | Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme launched by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN)   |
| 2000**      | Civil Society Action Coalition for EFA (CSACEFA), an umbrella organisation for education-related civil society organisations in the country formed  |
| 2003        | Education Sector Status Report (ESSR) highlighting the status of the educational system as at May, 2003 published. ESSR identified the critical issues and challenges facing the sector and the major policy options and directions for moving forward  |
| 2004**      | Revised edition of National Policy on Education (NPE) published   |
| 2004**      | UBE Law passed by Parliament  |
| 2005        | Universal Basic Educations (UBEC) published its National Action Plan to guide the implementation of basic education activities and the attainment of the objectives of UBE, EFA goals and MDGs  |
| 2005        | The Nigeria Education Sector Diagnosis, a framework for re-engineering the education sector published. The framework (i) diagnosed and identified the challenges faced by the country towards improving education provision, (ii) developed strategic plans to assist in the formulation of medium and long-term national policy and strategy orientations and (iii) prepared a National Education Action Plan, incorporating a range of options available at Federal, State and Local Government levels  |
| 2007**      | National Policy on Gender in Basic Education published  |
| 2007**      | National Policy for the Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) published   |
| 2007-2012   | Action Aid Nigeria (AAN) published the report on its' <i>Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria (TEGIN) Project</i> . The research was conducted in Northern Nigeria focussing on (i) gender equality in schooling, (ii) girls' empowerment, (iii) teaching and teachers, (iv) school management, (v) school funding and (vi) community mobilisation   |
| 2009        | A 5-year Education Road Map formulated and published by Federal Ministry of Education (FME) provides strategies and road-map for the education sector towards the achievement of the goals of Vision 20-2020, 7-Point Agenda of FGN, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy II (NEEDS II), Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)  |
| 2011        | Presidential Task Team on Education's Report published. The report made the following recommendation: (i) need to restructure existing policies, particularly 6-3-3-4 Education system to incorporate a preparatory year in Early Childhood Care & Education (for 5-year olds) to enhance government involvement in the EFA Goal 1, (ii) better to split FME into two by creating a distinct Ministry of Higher Education and streamlining the existing FME Parastatals for enhanced efficiency in service delivery, (iii) need to review the existing UBE Law to provide Basic Education up to the end of Senior Secondary School and (iv) need to establish a sustainable funding arrangement along with a transparent mechanism to managing the resources for the education sector. The report adds that the sector's budgets should be put in the public domain to ensure more transparency in the deployment of funds. |
| 2011        | FME 4-Year Strategic Plan published focusing on: (i) Strengthening the Institutional Management of Education; (ii) Access and Equity, (iii) Standard and Quality Assurance, (iii) Teacher Education and Development, (iv) Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and (v) Funding, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization  |
| 2012        | FGN launched the Almajiri School Project to integrate the Almajiri system in the northern States into the basic education system  |
| 2012        | National Literacy Action Plan (2012 – 2015) published targeting 4 to 5 million adults and youth towards acquiring basic literacy skills by 2015   |

\*\*These are discussed in greater details in sections below

A key lesson learnt from these events is that Nigeria is not in short supply of policy formulation and documentations but the issue remains that of effective policy implementation. For instance, could the 5-year Road Map published in 2009 by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) be so defective (and not implementable) to warrant the same FME to publish another 4-Year Strategic Plan two years later in 2011?

It has been suggested that the high turn-over of ministers at the Federal Ministry of Education breeds policy inconsistency, imposes a poor sense of direction, and creates lack of continuity in the education system. According to a former Vice-Chancellor of University of Lagos, Professor Ibidapo Obe, the position of the country's education minister should be handled by professionals and must not be politicised. Stakeholders have also argued that the instability in the Ministry's leadership and poor policy execution is evident in several policy reversals that accompany the flux of ministers and that government must take cognisance of the fact that education requires long-term planning and continuity<sup>9</sup>.

#### *Government*

One of the major activities of the new civilian government in 1999 was the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme by President Olusegun Obasanjo. It is significant to note that it was the same Olusegun Obasanjo, who in 1976 as the then Nigerian military head of state, launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Scheme which was to be later abandoned midway as a result of implementation challenges. Earlier on, a similar Free Universal and Compulsory Primary Education programme was introduced in 1955 and 1957 respectively by the then Western and Eastern Regional Governments of Nigeria.

Why would President Obasanjo introduce a programme similar to the UPE, which he first launched and was later abandoned because of implementation challenges? The challenges which emerged just barely one year after the UPE was launched included: (a) inaccurate statistics of children of school age, (b) lack of accurate data on the number of school buildings and qualified teachers needed, (c) insufficient financial provisions, and (d) inadequate publicity to create awareness about the scheme. For instance, the figure of 2.3 million children expected in primary education rose to 3 million (an increase of 700,000 additional children who had not been budgeted for), and instead of the N500 million earmarked initially for the project, the Federal Government had actually spent a little over N1 billion on primary education while the scheme was just one year old<sup>10</sup>. Incidentally, most of the challenges of 1976 were still relevant in 1999 as they are of today.

One of the reasons for the introduction of the 1976 UPE was the attempt to bridge the gap between the educational development of the southern (western and eastern) and northern regions consequent upon the head start, which the former had by introducing the Free, Universal and Compulsory Primary Education programme in the 1950s<sup>11</sup>. The 1999 UBE programme was, therefore, designed as a policy reform measure to rectify the regional disparities in basic education across the country, eradicate illiteracy and poverty as well as to stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration<sup>12</sup>.

Under the UBE Law, the 36 States of the federation were to assume full responsibility for the establishment and control of their States' UBE programmes. State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) and their Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) were accountable to their States' legislative bodies and not to that at the Federal level. However, the UBE Programme did not effectively take off officially until 2004 (when the UBE Law was signed). Given that each of the 36 States of the

Federation was also required to have their own State UBE Law, some of the States did not have a functional UBE programme until 2007. Thus, a policy was first put in place at the national level before the States that have direct responsibility for its implementation approved of it. This was an example of putting the cart before the horse with potential challenges for the policy implementation.

The changes could also be characterised as resulting from pressure by the international community on the new government to carry out series of reforms including those on educational expenditure and management reforms<sup>13</sup>. Under the UBE (2004) Law, the Federal Government committed not less than 2% of its Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF)<sup>14</sup> to: (i) support the expansion of infrastructure in schools across the country, (ii) provide funds towards addressing educational imbalance and special needs education, (iii) supply instructional materials, (iv) cater for teacher professional development and (v) monitor the implementation of UBE Programme. This is in spite of the fact that, as mentioned above, the financing of basic education in Nigeria is the statutory responsibility of the 36 States and 774 Local Government Councils in the country and not that of the Federal Government.

#### *Civil society*

In the run-up to the World Education Summit in Dakar in April 2000, forty Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with interest in education-related issues across Nigeria came together to form a national coalition named the “Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All” (CSACEFA). Its objectives are, to: (i) contribute to the shaping of policies on education in Nigeria, and (ii) provide a platform for engaging in wider sub-regional, regional and global EFA processes and campaigns, amongst others. The coalition which now has a membership of over 600 is one of the major non-state actors pushing for change in the education sector.

CSACEFA has forged partnerships with various national and international organizations in pursuance of one of its objectives of “working towards the attainment of EFA goals and MDGoal 2”. This strategy has made it possible for CSACEFA to contribute towards the realisation of the EFA goal. For instance, working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Northern Education Initiative (NEI) in the two northern states of Sokoto and Bauchi, CSACEFA supported the Adolescent Girls Program (AGP) to conduct community mobilization meetings, brought to fore issues affecting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), and promoted girl-child education in various communities. The organisation has also engaged in dialogue sessions to address educational challenges. With the support of ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) and Participation Initiative for Behavioural Change in Development (PIBCID), CSACEFA averted a possible shut down of schools in Kogi State in 2013 over the non-payment of teachers’ salaries by the State government.

To a lesser extent, CSACEFA has attempted to influence government policy on education. In 2011, at the commencement of President Jonathan’s 4-year term, CSACEFA listed major steps the next Education Minister must take to turn the sector’s fortune around. These include (i) getting more funds for the sector, (ii) devising ways of better utilizing and tracking the resources provided by the Federal Government, (iii) recruiting of more and better trained teachers, (iii) improving teachers’ salaries and implementing sound pre-service and in-service training schemes, (iv) ensuring that teachers’ remunerations reflect the importance of the teaching profession to the society and be comparable with those paid to other professions with equivalent qualifications, and (v) providing teachers, who possess the necessary moral and intellectual qualities and the requisite professional knowledge and skills, with the appropriate salary and conditions of service. Unfortunately, however, with few months to the end of the 4-year tenure of the President, not much progress has been made on CSACEFA’s list of agenda.

Another civil society network of more than fifty (50) CSOs, co-ordinated by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), also contributed to the change process. This CSO-network participated in monitoring the Federal Government's Debt-Relief Gains (DRGs) funded projects and programme across the country in 2008, with the overall aim of ensuring accountability in the utilisation of the MDG funds. The exercises generated (i) beneficiaries' opinions on community participation in project formulation and execution, (ii) project impact on the community, project maintenance and (iii) sustainability plans. According to the Monitoring Report<sup>15</sup>, the appointment of the independent monitoring team prompted many of the Federal Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) executing MDG projects to provide up-to date reports on their projects and also led to some contractors who had hitherto abandoned their projects to return to their sites and commenced work, in anticipation of the monitors' visits.

Finally, the Nigeria Girls' Education Initiative (NGEI), a collaboration between IDPs, FME, UBEC, School Based Management Committees (SBMCs), traditional and religious leaders, local communities and the First Ladies at national and state levels (wife of the late President, Hajia, Turai Yar'Adua and those of the State Governors), made significant progress towards promoting girls' education in Nigeria. According to an evaluation report<sup>16</sup>, NGEI has been a catalyst in accelerating the pace of change in people's attitudes toward female education. NGEI adopted a gender-sensitive approach to education policies and plans which resulted in increases in female enrolment, attendance and completion rates. It also champions the cases of reintegration of pregnant and married girls into the school system. Its activities which are focused mainly in the northern parts of the country where gender gaps in education are widest have had significant impacts on governments' policies as its activities are built into the programmes of the State partners.

On the flip side, it has been argued<sup>17</sup> that one of the weaknesses of the civil society movement is that CSOs' practices are perceived as being largely determined by donors' agenda. This has affected CSO-government partnerships as CSOs' genuine criticisms of government's policies have often been misconstrued. This perception can only be corrected if the CSOs seek independent funding and develop their members' capacities. A former member of the CSO and lately, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the Millennium Development Goals (OSSAP/MDGs), Mrs Amina Ibrahim, has demonstrated how non-state actors can work within established government's frameworks to promote transparency and accountability in governments' institutions. This was reflected in how she was able to facilitate the joint participation of CSOs, independent consultants and government officials in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) exercises on the utilisation of the MDG Debit Relief Gains as reflected in the Monitoring Report discussed above.

#### *International development partners*

International Development Partners (IDPs) initiated several projects and programmes to support the education reform process in the country. These include: UK Department of International Development (DFID)-funded projects such as Girls' Education Project (GEP; 2004-), Capacity for Universal Basic Education (CUBE; 2003-2008) and Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN; 2008-); USAID-funded Northern Education Initiative (NEI; 2009-); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)-funded Strengthening Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE; 2006-2014); and the World Bank's Universal Basic Education Project (UBEP; 2002-2006), State Education Sector Project (SESP; 2007-2011), and State Education Programme Investment Project (SEPIP; 2013-).

End of project evaluations of some of these projects/programmes suggest that very few of them have delivered on the objectives for which they have been established. For instance, the World Bank's Universal Basic Education Project (UBEP; 2002-2006) for 16 States with priority to educationally

disadvantaged LGAs in the country was cancelled in 2006 because it was not going to achieve its purpose. This was ascribed to fundamental design flaws of the project in which, amongst other things, the components' activities were not well aligned with the project development objectives (PDOs) and the fact that UBEP spread its limited resources too thinly among the 16 States and numerous federal agencies<sup>18</sup>. Lately, the DFID's funded GEP was also criticised for performing relatively poorly overall against the UK-Independent Commission for Aid Impact's (ICAI's) criteria for effectiveness and value for money<sup>19</sup>. The same report however, indicated that another DFID-funded programme, ESSPIN, is performing relatively well overall against the ICAI's criteria.

Three issues have continued to undermine the effectiveness and relevance of these interventions by the IDPs. The first has to do with design of each of the project within the context of the country's developmental plans, such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) or the Nigeria's Vision 2020 and the Transformation Blueprint. Critics<sup>20</sup> have argued that the near absence of a strong national institution that would demand that the IDPs align their intended interventions with the nation's development plans has been responsible for these lapses. On the other hand, others have suggested that weak institutional capacity, high staff turnover and limited coordination structures of the National Planning Commission (NPC) are key challenges that will need to be addressed<sup>21</sup> in order for it to be able to participate effectively and contribute meaningfully to the design of the IDPs' projects/programmes or scrutinise them for relevance.

The second issue, which is related to the first, is the lack of proper coordination mechanism of the activities of the donors, which has resulted in two or more donors engaging in similar projects within the same geographic areas and even at the same time. For instance, both the DFID-funded GEP and the USAID-funded NEI were at some point in time working in Sokoto and Bauchi states on similar issues pertaining to girls' education. This created some challenges for the State Partners (SUBEBs and SMOEs), as they had to deal with two different donors with different approaches to the same issues. An effective donor-coordination unit either at the Federal Ministry of Education or National Planning Commission (NPC) would have streamlined the activities of donors in the affected states to ensure efficient use of resources.

A third issue has to do with the sustainability of the donor-initiated projects and programmes. Except where the state governments take ownerships of the donor-funded projects before the completion date for the projects, such projects may cease to exist once the project closes. This could be avoided if the projects were better designed (involving stakeholders at State, Local and Community levels) with governments' inputs and linked to the States' development planning documents.

### **Issues in the implementation of EFA Policies**

#### *(a) Role of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) in basic education delivery*

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) is charged with the overall responsibility of formulating and coordinating national policies on education. The Minister of Education also chairs the National Council on Education (NCE), the highest decision-making body for the education sector in Nigeria, which includes all the Commissioners of Education in the 36 States of Nigeria.

Between 2004 and 2007, the Federal Ministry of Education has led in the development of the (i) National Policy of Education (NPE, 2004), (ii) Universal Basic Education (UBE) Law (2004), (iii) National Policy on Gender Education in Basic Education (2007) and (iv) Integrated Early Childhood Development (2007). Although these policies were approved by NCE, yet there have been complaints that the processes of formulating these policies were not participatory and inclusive enough. It has been observed that contributions by stakeholders at the local government and community levels were

minimal. Others have also argued that the non-implementable nature of these policies was as a result of the inability of FME and/or its agencies to conduct advocacy and awareness campaigns on the policy issues before and after the policy formulation process. Furthermore, it has been suggested<sup>22</sup> that the policies would be implementable if the states were allowed to 'domesticate' the national policy, i.e., by adapting the national policy to the peculiarities of each State.

Because the Nigerian Constitution (1999) allows both the State and Federal governments to legislate on matters relating to education (that is, Education is on the Concurrent List), the Federal Ministry of Education has established and controls 104 Federal Unity Colleges (FUCs) across the country offering post-basic education in addition to the state-controlled secondary school systems. This has given rise to complaints by stakeholders that FME has introduced elitism into the secondary education system by creating the FUCs, which has necessitated the formulation of specific policy and different standards for these Colleges.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) is the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the policy document which was first published in 1977. This edition emphasises the country's commitment to EFA and education-related MDGs through the provision of free and compulsory 9- year basic education programme, comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It also stresses the importance of the non-formal, technical and vocational education and educational services.

The key changes and innovations that the NPE (2004) sought to introduce are that: (a) Education boards or similar authorities shall be responsible for the management of schools and appointments, posting and discipline of teachers within their defined areas of authority, (b) Special and adequate inducement shall be provided for teachers in rural areas to make them stay on their jobs, (c) On monitoring and maintenance of minimum standards, Governments (at Federal, State and Local levels) shall establish efficient inspectorate services for monitoring and maintaining minimum standards at all levels of education and (d) State Ministries of Education and local education authorities in collaboration with the Federal Inspectorate Services (FIS), shall be the body inspecting all educational institutions under their jurisdiction. The FIS shall operate as an autonomous body supervised by the Minister of Education.

What would have been a major turnaround for the education sector was the launch of the Community Accountability and Transparency Initiative (CATI) whose objective was to get community development associations, town unions, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), and NGOs etc., involved in monitoring the deployment and use of public funds in schools. When fully operational, all disbursements to primary schools under the UBE funding mechanism would be published and made available to communities so that they may ascertain if funds have been used for the purposes that they were meant for. For a start, CATI led to the publication of the capital and recurrent expenditure of institutions in 2005 and 2006<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, the initiative was scrapped the moment that the Minister who championed its establishment left office. It was the same Minister who made attempts to re-structure the parastatal and departments under the Ministry of Education to eliminate corruption, wastages and establish an autonomous inspectorate service unit as envisaged by the NPE (2004). Once the Minister left office, it was back to business as usual. This is yet another good policy but which was caught up in the politics of poor implementation where an in-coming new Minister reverses what his/her predecessor has put in place.

The high point of incidence of corruption in the education sector was when in 2005, President Obasanjo openly alleged that top officials of the Ministry of Education connived with some members of the Parliament to inflate the education sector budget. The officials were subsequently relieved of their posts and prosecuted.

From 1999 to date, the Federal Ministry of Education has had ten successive Ministers with only two occupying that position for more than two years. Similar, high turn-overs of Ministers in other Ministries as well in State Ministries of Education are common across the country. It cannot be overemphasized that such high turn-overs of the leaderships of the Federal and State Ministries are not conducive for the proper implementation of policies and cannot guarantee stable administrative continuity as noted earlier under “EFA Movement”.

In spite of these limitations, some Federal Ministers of Education made significant contribution to the development and progress towards achieving the EFA goals. These champions included the Ministers under whose tenure (i) the UBE Scheme was introduced, (ii) the Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF) was launched to increase enrolment of school children, assist children from poor homes, reduce school absenteeism and improve the health status of school pupils, (iii) an attempt was made to re-structure the FME and eradicate corruption in the Ministry and (iv) a 5-year Road Map Strategic Plan was introduced, defining strategies for achieving the objectives of FME including those of UBE and EFA goals.

*(b) Role of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) in basic education delivery*

One unique feature of the UBE Law (compared to the Decree 96 (1993) which established the defunct National Primary Education Commission, NPEC) is that each State Government (through its parliament) decides the structure, composition and specific responsibilities of its SUBEB and LGEAs. To that extent, the State Governments should be held responsible for the current situation where we have serious administrative conflicts (for instance, on recruitment and deployment of teachers) between the State Ministries of Education (SMOEs) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs); between SUBEBs and Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs); and between LGEAs and their respective Local Government Councils (LGCs).

The above scenario exemplifies the complexity in the administrative structure of the education set-up. Whereas the SMOEs (headed by the State Commissioners of Education) are expected to oversee the totality of the education programme of each State, the UBE Law in most States makes the SUBEBs (headed by Executive Chairmen) accountable to the State Governors and not the State Commissioners of Education. Likewise, the LGEAs are supervised by and accountable to the SUBEBs and not the LGCs in whose jurisdiction the LGEAs are located. As it stands presently, the LGCs have no administrative responsibilities in the State UBE scheme but curiously enough each LGC has a supervisory councilor for education. Why was this portfolio created in the first instance? It is either this position is scrapped or the supervisory councilors, who are elected officials, are allowed to partake in the decision-making process on basic education at the local level. The latter is preferable as it will broaden participation and reduce the present tension in the education sector. These are some of the issues that the UBE Law now under review must resolve if all government ministries, agencies, and departments must work in tandem for the achievement of the UBE goals.

An additional tension relates to the issues of managing funds for basic education. Because each State Government and their respective Local Governments have established the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA), all in-coming Federal and State government allocations to local councils are deposited into these special SJLGAs. The financing of Primary Schools teachers’ salaries and allowances (which accounts for over 80% of the funds earmarked for Primary Education)<sup>24</sup> is sourced from the SJLGA and managed by the SUBEBs and LGEAs. However, the LGCs are not happy about this arrangement and would prefer the management of teachers’ salaries to be under their control. It is to be noted, however, that it was the failure of the LGCs to properly coordinate the recruitment of teachers and the non-

payment of teachers' monthly salaries and allowances<sup>25</sup> that led to the nationwide teachers' strike and the subsequent shut down of schools for months in 1988 and 1991. These sequences of events led to the handover of the administration of school teachers' salaries and allowances to the State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs), the predecessors of the SUBEBs.

Currently funds for teacher professional development, provision of school supplies, school infrastructural development and maintenance are also being managed by the SUBEBs. It has been argued by various stakeholders including the LGCs that this does not promote capacity development at the LGEA and school levels nor does it promote accountability and transparency in the system.

In retrospect, each State Government should have clearly stated (in their respective State UBE Laws) what the roles, responsibilities and relationships between all the LGCs, State Governments' Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), including SMOEs, SUBEBs and LGEAs should be.

It has been argued<sup>26</sup> that the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) has been rather ineffective in terms of co-ordination and ensuring compliance of implementing agencies to UBE guidelines which could delay progress in ensuring that Nigeria achieves the EFA goals and MDGs. However, it is important to, also, take into consideration the limitations imposed by UBE Law on the activities of UBEC.

For instance, according to the UBE Law, the functions of UBEC include: (i) formulating the policy guidelines for the successful operation of the universal basic education programme in the Federation, and (ii) carrying out such other functions as the Minister may, from time to time, determine. However, the Department of Policy, Planning, Management and Research (PPMR<sup>27</sup>) in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) has also been saddled with the statutory responsibility of performing functions that include policy formulation for the education sector. This overlap in responsibilities has created tension between FME (PPMR) and UBEC on formulating policies affecting the basic education system. One of these is the lingering issue of carrying forward the process of formulating a national policy on School Based Management Committees (SBMC) despite the fact the National Council on Education (NEC) had since 2005 directed that functional SBMCs should be established in schools across the country.

To have tasked UBEC with the responsibility of "carrying out such other functions as the Minister may, from time to time, determine" is shying away from the fact that the State Governments may be averse to such directives to schools under their controls. This is more so bearing in mind that the same UBE Law and indeed the 1999 Nigerian Constitution place the control of basic education under the State and Local Governments.

Despite these limitations, UBEC has developed strategies of engaging partners towards fulfilling its mandate of providing greater access to, and ensuring quality of basic education throughout Nigeria. The Universal Basic Education Commission, in 2011 entered into a partnership with DFID-funded Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) "to strengthen the collaboration between UBEC and ESSPIN in the interests of accelerated achievement of improved access to and quality of education, through the establishment of functional School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and of school development funding mechanisms nationwide". The partnership has ensured that ESSPIN provides technical support to UBEC in the area of capacity development to enhance the competences of UBEC officials<sup>28</sup>. The Commission has also engaged the SUBEBs in quarterly meetings whereby operational issues are discussed and possible solutions proffered. The outcome of one of these meetings was the agreement that enabled the SUBEBs to "domesticate" the national guideline on the development of state-specific policy on SBMC which has now been incorporated into the Federal Ministry of Education's 4-Year Strategic Plan for the development of the Education Sector<sup>29</sup>.

*(c) Financing of basic education sub-sector by government at state, local and federal levels*

The financing of basic education in Nigeria is the statutory responsibility of the 36 federating States and the 774 Local Governments Councils (LGCs). To that extent, the State Governments are therefore expected to fund basic education through their annual budgetary allocations. Before, the April 2002 Supreme Court's judgement on the Funding of Primary Education in Nigeria<sup>30</sup>, the State Governments were obliged by the Federal Government to set aside an equivalent of 10% of their primary school teachers' total emoluments which was then spent on school infrastructure, instructional materials, capacity development of teaching and non-teaching staff and payments of pension and gratuity of teachers<sup>31</sup>. However, the post-Supreme Court Judgement saw most states (with few exceptions) neglecting the financing basic education after the payment of primary school teachers' salaries (which, for instance, gulped about 80-85% of the total expenditure of Primary Education in 25 States between June 1999 and June 2002)<sup>32</sup> from the State Joint Local Government Accounts (SJLGAs). It is instructive to note that the acclaimed success of the Free, Universal and Compulsory Primary Education programme of the then Western Regional Government of the 1950s was hinged on the priority it placed on funding education. For instance, from 1954 to 1966, between 28.9% and 41.2% of the Western Region's recurrent budget was spent on education<sup>33</sup>. The present low spending by most of State Governments on basic education, thus calls to question such governments' commitment to the provision of quality education for their citizenry. There are, however, few states such as Rivers (an oil-rich state), Kano and Osun (one of the poorest states by GDP) who through their budgetary allocations have invested substantially in the basic education sub-sector

The funding of basic education also receives attention from the Federal Government. The UBE Act (2004)<sup>34</sup> makes a provision for the Federal Government to intervene in the programme by financing it with 2% of its Consolidated Revenue Fund (termed the FGN-UBE Intervention Fund or UBE-IF). The funds are disbursed to states based on a formula determined by Federal Executive Council (FEC) as follows: (i) Matching Grants to States (50% of UBE-IF) to be spent by SUBEBs on infrastructure and construction; for a State to qualify for this component of the UBE-IF, it must provide a counterpart fund amounting to 50% of the Federal Government's allocation, (ii) Provision of instructional materials (15% of UBE-IF) which is administered centrally by UBEC; (iii) Education Imbalance Fund (14% of UBE-IF) for Girls' Education Initiatives, Almajiri Education Programme and Self-Help Projects; (iv) Teacher Professional Development (10% of UBE-IF) for SUBEBs to develop the capacities of teachers; and (v) Remaining Fund (11% of UBE-IF) is allocated as grants to States for children with special needs and UBEC's implementation and monitoring activities of the UBE Programme.

From inception in 2005 to March 2014, about N247million was allocated for disbursement to the States from the UBE-IF. However, the SUBEBs could only drawdown about N197million (79.8%) leaving about N50million (20.2%) still un-accessed<sup>35</sup> in spite of the overwhelming needs for school improvements across the country. This low drawdown challenge has been attributed to the low capacity of most SUBEBs and the fact that some of the State Governments have failed to provide the required counterpart funds<sup>36</sup> which would have allowed their SUBEBs to access the UBE-IF. The State Governments on their parts have accused UBEC of dictating to them what to use the UBE-IF for and insisting that they, and not UBEC, are in a better position to determine their States' priorities.

From 2000 to 2011, the Education Tax Fund (ETF) was a major contributor to the financing of primary education. The law establishing ETF required that all companies operating in the country must pay a tax at the rate of 2% on the assessable profit of the company. The amount collected was expected to be used "for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of education in Nigeria"<sup>37</sup>. From the total tax collected each year, primary, secondary and higher education sub-sectors received 30%, 20% and 50%

respectively. Thus of the total N488.7billion (about 31% of total expenditure on Education) realised by ETF<sup>38</sup>, N146.61billion went into the financing of primary education during that period. However, the greatest challenge that faced ETF was the very low capacity utilization of the Fund by the beneficiaries resulting in huge sums of money in the fund remaining unaccessed<sup>39</sup>.

The ETF Law has since been reviewed restricting funds from ETF to institutions of higher learning only, excluding the primary and secondary sub-sectors (it is therefore, now referred to as the 'Tertiary Education Trust Fund'- TETFund). The case of the exclusion of primary education could be justified (taken into consideration the additional inputs from UBE-IF), but it is difficult to understand the rationale for leaving out the secondary education sub-sector completely without an alternate intervention programme. This may well turn out to be another case of defective policy planning process with implications for the learning outcomes of the future products of secondary schools who would be seeking admission to higher institutions of learning.

*(d) Nigeria's financing of the education sector*

Overall, Nigeria's spending on the whole education sector has been low, averaging 8.21% of the total budget between 2000 and 2011<sup>40</sup>. This was well below those of Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, Kenya and Morocco which had 31%, 30%, 25.8%, 23% and 17.7% respectively of their annual budget for education<sup>41</sup>. In terms of Gross National Product's (GNP's) share to the education sector, Nigeria allocated only 3% compared to Ghana (26%), Namibia (22%), Kenya (20%), Tunisia (17%) and Egypt (13%)<sup>42</sup>.

The low level of financing the education sector belies the recent Nigeria's GDP Rebasement exercise which claims that the country has the largest economy in Africa. Paraphrasing a former Nigerian Central Bank Governor, Vincent Ola, it may be argued that, "If, you spend well on your education, your economy can be adjudged to be doing well". A possible way out of the current crises in education financing in the country is for the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) to declare a state of emergency in the sector with massive financial investment comparable to the funds recently deployed to contain the unfortunate insecurity issues currently affecting the country. However, greater attention would have to be directed at overcoming some of the very factors which contributed to the crisis in the first instance. These include: (i) the lack of political will by the political leadership to take hard decisions that would move education forward, (ii) excessive defence spending at the detriment of the social services (iii) high level of corruption within the education sector, (iv) inefficiency in the utilisation of the available resources, (v) the dearth of quality data for education planning and (vi) the low utilisation capacity within the sector which has consistently resulted in inability to drawdown available resources.

If the quality of education in public institutions is high, will parents still send their wards to private schools? In all probabilities, only a negligible few may. When the then Western Regional Governments of Nigeria was spending between 28.9% and 41.2% of its recurrent budget on education (1954-1966), parents did not hesitate to send their children to public schools because of the government's commitment to education. As a matter of fact, during the first six years of the Free Universal and Compulsory Primary Education, pupils' enrolment jumped from 456, 6600 to over one million<sup>43</sup>.

Worsening infrastructural facilities due to poor funding, amongst other factors, also led to the establishment of private universities in the country. Beginning from 1999, more than 50 private universities have sprung up where students pay higher fees (in one of these universities, fees are charged in United States Dollar).

*(e) Debit Relief Gains (DRGs) support for attaining MDGs*

In 2005, the Nigerian Government received debt relief from some of its creditors and made a commitment to channel the Debt Relief Gains (DRGs) into projects and programmes aimed at the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria. The Virtual Poverty Fund (VPF)<sup>44</sup> was specifically created by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), for channelling the proceeds from the DRGs to be spent on education, health and water resources.

The VPF allocation to the education sector has been utilised by FME and its parastatals in addressing issues relating to UBE, EFA and MDGs. These include: (i) The Federal Teachers' Scheme (FTS) to tackle the chronic shortage of qualified teachers in primary schools across the country by offering a 2-year employment to newly qualified teachers and deploying them to States with shortage of teachers, (ii) Programmes promoting the girl-child education and women empowerment and (iii) Restructuring, reviewing and realignment of curricula of the UBE Programme with the production of 9-year Basic Education Curricula (BEC) in twenty subjects.

While some of these initiatives have produced measurable immediate gains, there are doubts about their sustainability. For instance, the FTS has put 74,000 new qualified teachers in primary schools between 2006 and 2009 and boosted the skills of more than 400,000 serving teachers through in-service training during the long vacation<sup>45</sup>. After the completion of their two-year internship, some States Governments have refused to offer employment to the "FTS teachers" thereby throwing them back to the unemployment market. This clearly indicates poor planning, lack of adequate consultations and agreements between the Federal authorities and their states' counterparts.

A Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS) was established by the Federal Government to avail the States and Local Governments the opportunity to access the VPF in order to improve governance, service delivery, financial management, transparency, and accountability as well as the attainment of the MDGs. Three local governments per State Government accessed funds to provide services at the Local Government level in the first year. Each Local Government Technical Team was expected to select the prioritised projects to be funded under the CGS through a participatory approach.

A 2011 monitoring of the utilisation of the VPF by a CSO in six States showed that while the CGS projects/programmes in some state were satisfactorily executed and completed. But, there were serious implementation challenges. The key challenge was that the communities complained of not being consulted before the formulation and during implementation of CGS projects. This has serious implications for ownership and sustainability of the project and more importantly that some projects implemented under the Conditional Grants Scheme (CGS) were not demand driven<sup>46</sup>.

*(f) Private provision of basic education*

Government's desire for partnership with private providers in the delivery education was contained in the 1998 National Policy on Education which read:

*"Government welcomes the contributions of voluntary agencies, communities and private individuals in the establishment and management of private schools alongside those provided by the state and local governments, as long as they meet the minimum standards laid down by the Federal Government"*

However, over the years, government itself has not been able to adhere to the minimum standards that it has set for the delivery of basic education. Government's schools lack adequate teaching facilities, the conditions of the classrooms are not conducive for proper teaching and learning, teacher recruitment and deployment process has been politicised and students' learning outcomes have continue to be on

the downward trend. These and other factors have led to the loss of confidence in the public school system and the rise in the patronage of schools run by non-state actors.

Studies in Lagos State shanty-towns and slums showed<sup>47</sup> that rather than accept the sub-standard public school system, most parents prefer to patronise schools run by private providers and that private schools sometimes outnumber government schools in both urban and rural areas. Similar reasons may be adduced for parents' preferences for the private schools over the public institutions in the other parts of the country.

Most of the private schools patronised by the children of the elite provide better teaching facilities, school infrastructure is good and learners' outcomes are much better those obtained from public schools. The concern is generally on the schools operated in slums and uncompleted building that are patronised mostly by the poor. A greater percentage of these schools are unapproved by the State Government and the teachers, who are lowly paid, are secondary school leavers without teaching qualifications. But curiously, according to a study published in 2006<sup>48</sup>, private schools in Lagos State were markedly superior to those in government schools in terms of teaching activity and teacher absenteeism was lowest in the private schools. Could this be because there are better supervision and monitoring mechanisms in the private schools compared to those in public schools?

In Lagos State, it has been estimated that over one million children (about 40% of total primary school enrolment) are in private schools which are unapproved by the government and considered illegal<sup>49</sup>. However, the State Government's failure to provide for these children in the first instance has made it impossible for it to close down the schools. To do so, would mean providing alternative accommodation and teaching facilities for the children or throwing them into the streets thereby increasing the number of out-of-school children by another million.

This adds another dimension to the number of school-aged children who are out-of-school in Nigeria. Are the children in unapproved schools included in the "10.5 million Nigerian children would be out-of-school by 2015"? Across the country and in particular, where there are Qur'anic schools (predominantly in Northern Nigeria but also in parts of the traditional South western Nigeria with very large Muslim population) many of these children are not included in the official figure of those in school. In the final analysis there may be fewer than the 10.5 million "out-of-school" children in Nigeria by 2015. Whatever this number is, governments still have the responsibility to provide them with quality education which can be jointly delivered with the private providers. But, governments must re-strategize on how to ensure that private providers are encouraged to participate more effectively in education service delivery and in a more friendly policy environment.

#### *(g) Religious education*

Providers of the three different models of Islamic religious-based education, the Islamiyyah, Qur'anic and Tsangaya (IQT)<sup>50</sup> system, constitute a significant proportion of the private sector participation in the delivery of education in the northern States. These schools are recognised by government as literacy centres where parents are comfortable with the teaching methodology for attaining quality education<sup>51</sup>. The proliferation of IQTs results from the deterioration of the public educational system<sup>52</sup> and the decline of educational standards associated with poor implementation of the 6-3-3-4 school system. It has also been suggested<sup>53</sup> that the large numbers of pupils reportedly 'out of school' are enrolled in the Qur'anic and Tsangaya schools.

The zeal to integrate Qur'anic education with the "western" [sic] school curriculum in Kano started way back in the 1920s<sup>54</sup>, and since then, particular importance has been attached to the process of

integrating IQT Schools into the formal secular school system by governments through the UBE Programme and the Northern Education Research Project (NERP) of Arewa House, Kaduna (Ahmadu Bello University). The integration is being pursued for the following two major reasons; (a) the need to ensure that the millions of children attending these schools do not miss the opportunity of acquiring formal basic education, thus contributing to the achievement of MDG 2, and (b) using the integration to solve the social problem of street begging through the reformation of the Almajiri System of education.

Challenges facing the integration of core subjects into IQTE can be categorized as follows: (i) resistance to integration from proprietors of Qur'anic centres who prefer to preserve what they perceive as the pristine purity of Islam from contamination by the forces of modernity symbolised by the state<sup>55</sup>.(ii) parental resistance to mainstreaming into the formal secondary education system; (iii) inadequate funding of the girl-child and Qur'anic education systems , and (iv) lack of permanent structures or basic facilities (toilets, chairs, tables, health care, etc.) for learning in the Qur'anic schools.

The prevailing situation, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country has exacerbated the situation in (i) getting more children, particularly girls, to enroll and attend school, (ii) accelerating the integration of Qur'anic education into the formal school system and (iii) achieving the EFA goals by Nigeria.

#### *(h) National Policy on Gender in Basic Education*

The National Policy on Gender in Basic Education was developed (2007) in the context of the Girls' Education Project (GEP), a collaborative project between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), DFID and UNICEF.

Forging strong partnerships with CSACEFA and the governments of the six northern States with low girls' enrolments proved to be a useful strategy in the take-off of the project in 2005. The positive changes occasioned by GEP included increased awareness of the value of girls' education and changes in parents' and communities' attitudes towards the education of the girl-child, leading to increases in the enrolment and attendance of girls, school-community partnerships , and improvements in school management practices. The Female Teacher Training Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS), Student Tutoring, Mentoring and Counselling (STUMEC), School-based Teacher Development (SbTD), School Based Management (SBM) and School Grant System, developed under GEP, contributed to the success of the policy<sup>56</sup>.

Support for the policy came from traditional and religious leaders, through sermons, advocacy, community sensitization, and school visits. A major boost for the policy was the inauguration of the States' Chapters of the Nigerian Girl's Education Initiative (NGEI) in 2008 by the former Nigerian First Lady, Hajia Turai Yar' Adua, who was also the grand patron of NGEI.

However, another independent evaluation of GEP in 2010<sup>57</sup> noted that there was little evidence of concrete improvements in the quality of teaching and learning processes in spite of the other contributions of the project to the policy.

#### *(i) The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development*

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) in Nigeria, which was launched in 2007, provides a big picture-approach to the development of the Nigerian child as it was jointly developed by the line Ministries with the support of UNICEF.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) provided the boost for the implementation of the policy with the development and production of the National Early Childhood Curriculum for children aged 0-5 years. On their part, the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) have established pre-primary classes as part of the strategy to promote the implementation of the policy. However, private individuals, religious organizations and communities continue to be the largest providers of ECCDE using premises of industrial and business organizations, church/mosque premises, town halls, residential building as well as uncompleted buildings in slums<sup>58</sup>. As part of its contribution for the implementation of IECD, UNICEF supported the SUBEBs and LGEAs to develop advocacy strategies to ensure increased enrolment of children of pre-school age.

Early Childhood Care (ECC) centres were virtually non-existent in public primary schools in the country prior to 1997<sup>59</sup>. However, by 2010, over 23,000 ECC centres were available in the 59, 007 public schools across the country with net enrolment of 1,529,311<sup>60</sup>. Figures for ECC centres established by private providers are not available but it is safe to assume that their numbers will be more than those in the public domain as demonstrated by the overwhelming patronage reported<sup>61</sup> in studies of private schools serving the poor in low-income areas of Lagos State. The ICED policy has, to a significant extent thus, contributed to the realisation of EFA Goal Number 1 on expanding early childhood care and education.

There are challenges, however as governments at the Federal and State levels have been criticized<sup>62</sup> for not: (i) paying attention to quality of instructions being given after granting permission for private investments in the provision of early childhood education; (ii) ensuring effective supervision of these centres in order to maintain standards; (iii) making provision for training specialists for this level of education to cater for the acute shortage of qualified teachers/caregivers and (iv) implementing its policy on the use mother-tongue or language of immediate community as medium of instruction for children at this level of schooling.

#### *(j) Mass Literacy, Adult and Non Formal Education & Nomadic Education*

The drive towards improving mass literacy, adult and non-formal education as well as nomadic education pre-dates the EFA Movement; however, their success would impact positively in achieving the EFA goals. Support for the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) and the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) have come from donor agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF), Federal and State institutions (FME, SMOEs, SUBEBs and LGEAs) and non-state actors (Action Aid Nigeria) targeting out-of-school children, adolescents and youth between the ages of 8-18 years, who are unable to complete formal primary education, or have never been to school through the following programmes: (i) Non-Formal Girls' Education, (ii) Non-Formal Qur'anic Education and (iii) Non-Formal out of school boys' Education<sup>63</sup>.

The two programmes however have faced implementation challenges. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) has had to contend with such challenges as<sup>64</sup>: (a) poor funding and non-provision of the much needed equipment for vocational education programmes, (b) lack of political will to move the Non-Formal Education (NFE) programmes forward, (c) absence/ineffective monitoring and coordinating Literacy Committees at State and LGA levels resulting in insufficient community participation and ownership of programmes; (d) non-participation of majority of the target group in the mass literacy programmes as evidenced by poor enrolment figures, and (e) difficulties in mainstreaming of learners from NFE to formal system, amongst others.

On the other hand, the key challenges affecting the implementation of the Nomadic Education Programme, are<sup>65, 66, 67</sup>: (a) the Law establishing the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) expects the NCNE to provide primary education to the children of pastoralist nomads in schools which

are under the control of SUBEBs and LGEAs whereas the Commission itself does not have schools of its own, (b) because the programme was seen to be politically motivated by the then Federal Government, subsequent governments have not paid adequate attention to its implementation, (b) the programme has not been adequately funded and has to depend on UBEC, the SUBEBs and SMOEs to execute its projects, (c) inadequacy of infrastructural facilities and instructional materials, (d) unpreparedness of the nomads for the programme as some of the nomads saw the programme as a disruption to their culture culminating on several occasions to hostility towards the teachers assigned to the nomadic schools, (e) the general lack of supervision and monitoring by the State and Local Governments' supervisors and inspectors, and (f) lack of adequate qualified teachers.

It has however, been observed that instead of retaining the enabling Acts establishing NMEC and NCNE, the basic education delivery system will be better served if these establishments came under the UBE structure<sup>68</sup>. An advantage of such arrangement will be that both the mass literacy and nomadic programmes will benefit from the UBE-IF. However, having these programmes under one umbrella may create a complex organisation which may be bogged down by administrative inefficiency.

### Conclusions: Remaining challenges

The biggest challenge still confronting the education sector is government's inability to adequately fund the sector. It has been observed that the deplorable condition of the sector could only be salvaged if there is the political will to invest massively in the sector. Other key challenges that are worthy of consideration include the need to for government to: (i) curb corruption, ensure transparency and entrench accountability across board in the education sector, (ii) restructure the education sector at the Federal, State and Local government levels to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined to avoid the current tensions between government ministries, departments and agencies, (iii) recognise the important role that private providers are playing in providing education delivery particularly to the poor and therefore create a policy friendly environment for their operation, (iv) ensure that the policy formulating process is participatory enough such that the intend beneficiaries have as much inputs at the design and implementation phases, and (v) minimise the politicisation of the of the position of the Minister of Education by reducing the high rate of executive turnover in the education sector , particularly at the federal level.

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- <sup>26</sup> Ejere, E.I. (2011) *An Examination of Critical Problems Associated with the Implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Nigeria* International Education Studies Vol. 4, No. 1; February 2011 [www.ccsenet.org/ies](http://www.ccsenet.org/ies) [https://www.google.com/url?url=http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_url%3Fhl%3Den](https://www.google.com/url?url=http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url%3Fhl%3Den) (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>27</sup> Now referred to as Department of Educational Planning, Research & Development (EPRD)
- <sup>28</sup> Adediran, Sulleiman; Akinsolu, Olatoun; and Oladimeji, Eunice (2012) *Support to Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) on School Based Management (SBM) system development nationwide*, <http://www.esspin.org/index.php/reports/download/333-file-ESSPIN-422-Support-to-UBEC-SBM-Development.pdf>, (Accessed: May 15th 2014)
- <sup>29</sup> FME (2012) *4-Year Strategic Plan for the development of the Education Sector*, Abuja, page 9
- <sup>30</sup> The Supreme Court delivered a Judgement in which it ordered that the direct funding of primary education from the Federation Account must be stopped. The Federal Government could no longer administer funds for Primary Education without the authorization of the State Governments
- <sup>31</sup> Adediran, Sulleiman (2003) *Symphony of Service, The OYO SPEB Years (1994-2003)*, Green Dome Publishers, ISBN: 978-006-334-X, Ibadan; p.217-222
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid. 31, p. 219
- <sup>33</sup> *The development of Free Primary Education Scheme in Western Nigeria, 1952-1966: an analysis* (S. Ademola Ajayi) [www.ajol.info/index.php/og/article/download/52320/40944](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/og/article/download/52320/40944) (Accessed: July 31, 2014)
- <sup>34</sup> Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act (2004) <http://www.placng.org/laws/nigeria/node/121> (Accessed: May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014)
- <sup>35</sup> [http://ubeonline.com/financial\\_records.html](http://ubeonline.com/financial_records.html) (Accessed: May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014)
- <sup>36</sup> UBEC expects States to provide 50% of the funds to be drawn down. This is referred to as "Matching Fund"
- <sup>37</sup> Education Tax Law (as amended 1999). <http://www.nigerialaw.org/Education%20%20Tax%20Decree%20No%20%20of%201998.htm> (Accessed: July 25th, 2014)
- <sup>38</sup> Robinson Ugwoke (2013). *Education tax law and administration in Nigeria*: Wudpecker Journal of Public Administration; Vol. 1(2), pp. 028 – 036. <http://www.wudpeckerresearchjournals.org/WJPA/pdf/2013/November/Ugwoke.pdf> Table 1, ( Accessed: July 31st, 2014)
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid., 26
- <sup>40</sup> Oseni, Michael (2012). *Adequacy of Budgetary Allocation to Educational Institutions in Nigeria*: Pakistan Journal of Business and Economic Review Vol. 3, Number 1 (2012). [http://www.journalsbank.com/pjber\\_3\\_4.pdf](http://www.journalsbank.com/pjber_3_4.pdf), Appendix C, Table 1 (Accessed: July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>41</sup> [http://www.journalsbank.com/pjber\\_3\\_4.pdf](http://www.journalsbank.com/pjber_3_4.pdf) (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>42</sup> L. Ezeuwa, J. N. Oruwarl and O. R. Simobi: *Funding pattern as a major education dilemma in Africa: The Nigerian experience* <http://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/world%20educators%20forum/FUNDING%20PATTERN%20AS%20A%20MAJOR%20EDUCATION%20DILEMMA%20IN%20AFRICA.pdf> (Table 1) (Accessed: July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>43</sup> Fafunwa, A. B. (1974) *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: George Allen & Unwin,) p.168
- <sup>44</sup> To showcase Nigeria's ability to spend the funds from the DRG honestly and competently, the government set up a comprehensive and robust tracking system that would transparently monitor and evaluate the impact of the gains from debt relief. The VPF is managed differently from other public expenditures.
- <sup>45</sup> <http://library.sparc-nigeria.com/Delivery.aspx?AttachmentID=6cc691ae-c7c0-11df-958a-00221964e37f> (Accessed: June 2014)
- <sup>46</sup> Centre for Democracy and Development (2011). *Lessons Learnt: Monitoring the Virtual Poverty Fund in 6 States Nigeria* [http://www.cddwestafrica.org/index.php/en/reports/doc\\_download/45-lessons-learnt-monitoring-the-virtual-poverty-fund-in-6-states](http://www.cddwestafrica.org/index.php/en/reports/doc_download/45-lessons-learnt-monitoring-the-virtual-poverty-fund-in-6-states) (Accessed: June 2014)

- <sup>47</sup> James Tooley and Pauline Dixon (2005) *Private Education is good for the Poor: A Study of Private Schools Serving the Poor in Low-Income Countries* <http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/tooley.pdf> (Accessed: July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>48</sup> Tooley, J., Dixon, P. and Olaniyan, O. (2006) *Private and public schooling in low-income areas of Lagos State, Nigeria: A census and comparative survey*. International Journal of Educational Research 43 (2005) 125–146
- <sup>49</sup> Larbi, G., Adelabu, M., Rose, P., Jawara, D., Nwaorgu, O. and Yyas, S. (2004) *Non-State Providers of Basic Services*. Commissioned by Policy Division; UK-Department for International Development (DFID)
- <sup>50</sup> The religious schools (Islamiyyah, Qur'anic and Tsangaya) in Nigeria are based on different model : (i) The Tsangaya, which curriculum is basically designed for the memorization of the Qur'an, is a model by which Qur'anic schools operate on the basis of organized isolated settings usually located in rural or very remote environments where human activities are limited;(ii)The Qur'anic (or *Makarantun Allo*) refers to the residential or semi-residential type of Qur'anic schools usually found in neighbourhood of towns and cities. Mosques, family houses and open spaces are used as centres for such schools and (iii) The Islamiyyah model of Qur'anic schools blend Islamic education with formal basic education curriculum of public schools. -*Umaru Ndaqi (Published in Weekly Trust (Nigeria) 29 October 2011)*
- <sup>51</sup> Muhammad S. Umar - *Profiles of New Islamic Schools in Northern Nigeria*, Department of Religious Studies: Arizona State University Tempe, AZ 85287-3104, U.S.A.
- <sup>52</sup> As evident by limited access to schools, inadequate infrastructural facilities in schools, inadequate fund and teachers, corruption, increase in population, inappropriate planning and implementation, and wastage (see Ige Akindele, Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development - An Open Access International Journal ; Vol.3 2014, p65-72;) [www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JPID/article/download/9282/9495](http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JPID/article/download/9282/9495) (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>53</sup> Nasir Mohammed Baba (2011): *Islamic Schools, the Ulama, and the State in the Educational Development of Northern Nigeria*. Bulletin de l'APAD 33 (2011): Religious Elites in the Development Arena <http://apad.revues.org/4092> (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>54</sup> Zahraddeen, M.S. (2006)- *Islamiyyah, Qur'anic and Tsangaya Education (IQTE) Assessment in Kano State: Capacity for Universal Basic Education (FGN/DFID) Project*, Abuja
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 48
- <sup>56</sup> Adediran, Sulleiman (2010) *Assessment of Effectiveness of the School Based Management System in Bauchi, Katsina, Sokoto and Niger States, Nigeria (2008-2010)* Federal Government of Nigeria-UNICEF Country Programme (2009-2012) Basic Education Programme
- <sup>57</sup> EOP-GEP (2010)-DFID, Abuja
- <sup>58</sup> Olumuyiwa Viatonu, Usman Abdulqadri, T. and Dagunduro, O.M. (2012 ) *An Overview of impediments to The implementation of Integrated Early Child Care And Development (IECD) Policy* in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State
- <sup>59</sup> Ibid. 31, p. 173-175; Oyo State Primary Education (OYO SPEB) now re-referred to as Oyo SUBEB incorporated the Pre-Primary Class into the Public Primary School system in 1997 and by 1999/2000 academic session, over 65,000 children aged 3-5 years were receiving instructions in 959 public primary schools in the Oyo State
- <sup>60</sup> UBEC (2010) 2010 Basic Education Profile Fact Sheet, UBEC, Abuja
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 49
- <sup>62</sup> Olumuyiwa Viatonu, Usman Abdulqadri T., Dagunduro O. M.(2012)- *An Overview of impediments to the implementation of Integrated Early Child Care and Development (IECD) Policy in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State; Euro. Sc. Journal Vol. 8 No.10* <http://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/172> (Accessed: July, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>63</sup> *Non-Formal Education in Nigeria: Policy Issues and Practice* (2010) National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) & UNICEF, Abuja, Nigeria <http://www.nmec.org.ng/index.php/download-reports> (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>64</sup> Zion Zadok (2012) The mass literacy dilemma: Why we may miss the 2015 EFA target as NMEC face the challenges of eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/index.php?topic=153899.0> (Accessed, July 31st 2014)
- <sup>65</sup> Aderinoye, R. A., Ojokheta, K.O., and Olojede, A.A. (2007) Integrating Mobile Learning into Nomadic Education Programmes in Nigeria: Issues and perspectives. <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/347/919> (Accessed: July, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>66</sup> Abdulkareem, A. Y. (1992). *Issues in Nigeria education* Ilorin: Kewulere Press
- <sup>67</sup> Nafisatu D. Muhammad and Bashir M. Abbo (2010) *Reaching the Hard -to- Reach Nomads through Open and Distance Learning: A Case Study of Nomadic Education Programme in Nigeria*. [www.col.org/pcf6/fp/NG3135.doc](http://www.col.org/pcf6/fp/NG3135.doc) (Accessed: July, 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014)
- <sup>68</sup> Obanya, P. (2011) *Politics and the Dilemma of Meaningful Access to Education: The Nigerian Story*. CREATE. UK. [www.create-ipc.org/pdf\\_documents/PTA56.pdf](http://www.create-ipc.org/pdf_documents/PTA56.pdf) (Accessed: May 25th, 2014)