

**ACHIEVEMENT OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)
ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY: A FOCUS ON TEACHER
EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a set of eight point agenda adopted by World leaders on how to stem the problem of poverty and its attendant horrors in the least developed countries of the world. The goals include namely; Eradication of poverty and hunger, Achieve universal basic education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop global partnership for development. The MDG goal on universal basic education is most likely to be achieved in 2015 than every other goals. But some challenges are working against improvement of this achievement. Among the challenges is acute shortage of qualified teachers, poorly motivated, ill-equipped and unskilled teaching force. This study therefore discussed the ways of sustaining this achievement with regard to controlling the challenge on shortage of teachers in the UBE schools.

International cooperation, under the auspices of United Nations Organization, attained a laudable landmark in 2000 with the strong emphasis on making exceptional progress in key areas of human development at the dawn of the third millennium. Eradication of poverty and

hunger, attainment of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction in child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environment sustainability, development of global partnerships for development

are the eight original formulations (Mwabu, 2008). This work is concerned with the second goal because education is the key to human centered sustainable development which empowers people to get out of poverty, improves their living conditions, acts as an instrument for social mobility.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In order to address the problem of poverty and promote sustainable development, the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000. This declaration is called Millennium development goals (MDGs) and it is expected to be achieved by the year 2015. The millennium development goals (MDGs) is a set of eight point agenda adopted by 149 World leaders on how to stem the problem of poverty and its attendant horrors in the Least Developed Countries (LDGs) of the world. The goals are as follows (UNDP Nigeria, 2011)

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal basic education
- Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop global partnership for development

The Objectives of the Goals

The objectives of the UN member nations on these MDGs are summarized and briefly discussed by the Secretary General of United Nations, Ban Ki-moon as follows (Barton, 2010)

Eradicate Poverty and Hunger;

The MDG objective is to reduce by half the proportion of those who suffer from hunger. Can we truly say we have achieved that target even by a tenth? Some countries do not even have agencies that keep statistics therefore measuring how close or otherwise we are to the MDG's is impossible.

Achieve Universal Primary

Education: The world hopes to achieve this by ensuring that every national government spends a minimum of 26% of its annual budget on Education. Without education, poverty and underdevelopment will remain with us for a long time.

Promote Gender Equality: The world hopes to have women participate in every sphere of life like the men by 2015. For instance, in some predominantly Islamic communities, they frown at education for the girl-child. They do not even want to hear it. Compare that to the western world where many more women are making it into the boards of corporate global firms. In that part of the world, women hold seats in their legislative houses and some of them even have female leaders. Countries

such as Iran, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Pakistan just to name a few still see their women as second rate, inferior citizens. So the global culture toward women has to change.

Reduce Child Mortality: The aim here is to reduce the mortality rate among children under 5 by at least two-thirds. Each country is expected to build more specialist and general hospitals to transform the world's health systems.

Improve Maternal Health: This objective is an extension of the above. However, in addition to the targets above, it also insists on improving the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel. The only way children will live healthy lives beyond their first 5 years is if we are confident that they are exposed to the best possible professionals the local health system has to offer.

Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases: The aim is to examine current efforts at these and fund more research into their control and possible eradication.

Ensure Environmental Sustainability: The objective is to control certain aspects of our environment such as controlling global warming by reducing fossil consumption, and stop or reduce hurricanes, quakes and volcanic eruptions? When these natural disasters occur, they are so devastating that they leave losses of property in their billions. People also die in the process.

Develop a Global Partnership for Development: The objectives are simple: put in place an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

In response to the challenges posed by MDGs, The President of Nigeria; Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, in his address to the United Nations MDG +10 High level Summit of the UN General assembly in New-York 20-22 September 2010 said "Nigeria had since 2000 mainstreamed MDGs-related programs and interventions as part of our periodic development planning and budgeting process. However, this was given a further boost with the Nigeria's negotiation of debt relief, with the gains directly targeted, since 2005. On MDGs-related activities across relevant sectors of our economy. Nigeria has fully integrated the MDGs into medium and long term national development strategies. The government had also introduced widely acknowledged innovation and initiatives to reduce poverty and improve public services performance, in pioneering schemes such as the Virtual poverty Fund CVPF) that tags and track funds allocated to poverty reduction from debt relief; compulsory free basic education among others (National Planning Commission (NPC). 2011).

This work is concerned with the second MDG which is in education sector. Education has been described by the then minister of state for education Hajiya Aishatu Jibril Dukku as an instrument of development of any nation, an antidote to

poverty and key for unlocking national resources as well as opening door for citizens to participate in development adding that achievement of other Millennium Development Goals depends on its success in the education sector (Economic Confidential, 2010). The involvement of Nigeria in MDGs on education was not the first program that shows her commitment in that sector, Nigeria is a signatory to the Jomtien Conference of 1990 and endorsed the "framework for Action to meet Basic Learning Needs". The country also actively participated in the Ouagadougou (1992) "Declaration on the Education of Women and Girls" and Dakar Framework for Action (2002) which reaffirmed the basic learning needs of all- Education for All (EFA) where six goals were defined. These goals include ensuring that by 2015 all children, with emphasis on girls, children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities have access to 9 years of schooling and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

In Nigeria's EFA plan of Action (2001), the following targets are to be achieved by 2015 (National Millennium Development Goal (NMDG) Report, 2004).

Early Childhood Care and Development:

By 2010, 3% of the National budget is expected to be spent on early childhood care and development programs. By 2015, enrolment in early children program is expected to increase to 70%; and 70% of children enrolling in primary school would

have participated in at least one year of early childhood care and development programme.

Primary Education: By 2006, 100% enrolment of children between 6-11 years in full-time primary school is expected to be achieved. By 2010, completion rate is to be 30% to an overall rate exceeding 90% of those in school, 90% transition rate from primary to junior secondary school, and 80% reduction in the percentage of working children of school age.

Junior Secondary School: By 2015, access should be provided for all children to junior secondary, all young people and adults would have access to formal life- long education and 80% of youths and adults aged 15 plus would have attained National standard set for literacy, numeracy, and problem solving and gender parity. **Adult**

Literacy: By 2010, there should be recruitment and training of 260,000 adult literacy instructors and provision of additional 100,000 training centers for adults' literacy classes for nomadic education, so that by 2015 there should be a reduction by half (20 million) of illiterates in Nigeria.

Universal Basic Education (UBE)

The 1990 world education conference in Jomtien declared the year 2000 as the year of Literacy for All. But the mid decade review in Amman, Jordan observed that much has not been achieved in the world's effort to reduce illiteracy and proposed that the World Education Forum be held in Dakar Senegal to decide the next line of action. Dakar 2000 witnessed the

shifting of the goal post to 2015. There and then, Six goals were adopted, with goal 4 stating that "Literacy rate be increased by 50% by the year 2015:" Nigeria as a member of United Nations was represented at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar 2000 by the then President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. It was at this Forum that, he announced to the whole world that Nigeria introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) as replacing the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Sept 30th, 1999 ahead of the Education for All (EFA) of 2000.

This was with the view of expanding the scope of basic education to include, adult literacy, children under difficult circumstances, nomads and out of school youths (Aderinoye, 2011). UBE programme is intended to be Universal, free and compulsory and specifically designed for the following categories:

- Primary and junior secondary children
- Nomadic education for school age children
- Non-formal education for out-of-school children, youths and illiterate adults.

The specific objectives of the programme are as follows

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of free universal basic education for every

Nigerian child of school going age.

- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who, for one reason or the other, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2002:2).

To achieve these, the government on UBE stated that more appropriate approaches would be made to improve the state of the following:

- Public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement
- Data collection and analysis
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- Teacher: their recruitment, education, training, retraining and motivation;
- Infrastructural facilities;
- Enriched curricula;
- Textbooks and instructional materials;
- Management of the entire process.

Achievements of UBE

Since the launching of the Universal Basic Education programme in 1999, significant progress has been recorded in enrolment, provision of infrastructural facilities and instructional materials, recruitment and training of teachers, and development of a new 9-year Basic Education curriculum. In concrete terms, nearly nine out of ten children, 88.8 per cent, are now enrolled in school, primary completion rates in the state range from 2 per cent to 99 per cent. In the youth literacy target, 64.1 per cent to 80 per cent was recorded between 2000 and 2008 (UNDP 2011). The National University Commission boss, Prof. Julius Okojie, in July 2011, described the success of MDGs in education as follows (Daniel, 2011).

- Funded a lot of projects in the education sector, including giving exposure to teachers to improve on their skills.
- Revitalizing existing infrastructure in tertiary institutions to create an enabling environment for improvement.
- Funding for capital development in education in the past three years is more than the total money budgeted for such in the past ten years.
- In the past three years, government had facilitated the training of 4000 academic staff.

These progresses were as a result of the special intervention fund from Education Trust Fund (ETF), Virtual Poverty Fund (VPF), Non-governmental organizations and other international bodies.

The Challenges of UBE

Notwithstanding the progress above, the UBE faces the following challenges: insufficient and inadequate access, low learning achievement of students, lack of accountability and transparency in the use of funds allocated to education, acute shortage of qualified teachers, infrastructural decay and shortage, poorly motivated, ill-equipped and unskilled teaching force and insufficient instructional materials (National Planning Commission, 2011). Therefore, to sustain the achievement of MDGs in education sector, these challenges need to be addressed. However, the concern of this paper is how the teacher adequacy challenge of the MDG in Nigeria can be addressed. According to Abubakar A. Ibrahim in Daily Trust of Thursday, 31 March 2011, "to say that there is a serious crisis in the education sector is an understatement, to say that there is a huge gap in the number of teachers needed to address this problem is stating the obvious" and the Director of Basic and Secondary Education in the Ministry of Education, Mallam Garba Bello, explained that the problem is not quite as straight forward as it appears. But there are various gaps, there are gaps in terms of teacher number and there are gap in terms of teacher quality too. To buttress this fact, he said there are cases where some large classes have 100 children under the care of one teacher. This is not normal. For the national

policy on education recognizes the maximum number of students in a class to be 40 for primary school and 30 students in secondary schools (Ibrahim, 2011) Large class sizes are indication that teachers are not enough. So with a population of about 150 million people that is rapidly increasing, school enrolment expectedly will continue to increase. But the teachers are in short supply despite the huge population. Moreover, the quality of teachers in most schools, especially at the basic level is questionable. To have a clearer picture of how the gap is Mr. Ngu, the Director and Country Representative of UNESCO, estimated that Nigeria would need to recruit between 408,000 and 1.4 million teachers in the next four years to meet EFA/MDG goals in 2015 (Ibrahim, 2011). The manpower to fill this gap should not be a problem considering Nigeria's seemingly endless manpower pool. The problem is that people are not interested in the teaching profession. Poor remunerations, lack of teaching aids and a general low teacher rating has made the profession lose whatever appeal it might have had. Even those stuck in the line of work are desperate to escape to more lucrative careers and those taking up teaching do so because they lack options.

In a survey conducted in selected schools in the Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State the following distribution was obtained (Table 1). This survey covered twenty schools, twelve primary schools and eight secondary schools chosen through purposive sampling technique. The sample was made up of head teachers with their

assistants and principals with their vice. A total of 24 respondents in the primary schools and 16 respondents from the secondary schools responded to the instrument for data collection, which was constructed by the researchers. Data were collected to answer the following questions

1. How adequate are the teachers for UBE?
2. Which subject areas lack teachers?
3. What is the quality of teachers in UBE
4. What is the teacher /student ratio?
5. How dedicated are UBE teachers to their duties?

Results of the survey show that the number of teachers is not enough, that is 75% of the respondents agree that the number of teachers is inadequate for the school. Also, the same percentage agrees that the number of students per teacher is more than 40 in average. On the quality of teachers, the view of head teachers and principals is that the quality of teachers is low. 70% of the respondents disagree with the statement "Teachers in my school are reasonably qualitative" To answer the question: "How dedicated to duties are the teachers?" the respondents agree that the teachers are not dedicated to their duties, 70% of the respondents agree with the statement "Teachers in my school are not too dedicated to their duties?" Finally, 90% of the respondents agree that the subject area they lack teachers are the sciences. In conclusion therefore, there is shortage of teachers for the UBE.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondent's Responses to the Items in Questionnaire

	Items	Agree	Disagree	Total
1.	My school has adequate number of teachers	10 (25%)	30(75%)	40
2.	Teachers in my school are reasonably qualitative	12 (30%)	28(70%)	40
3.	Teachers in my school are dedicated to their duties	28(70%)	12 (30%)	40
4.	The average number of students/pupils in one class is above 40	30 75%)	10(25%)	40
5.	My school has adequate of teachers for the science subjects	4(10%)	36 (90%)	40

Conclusion

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education has been acclaimed successful in Nigeria so far both by government and private operatives. The Universal basic Education (UBE), the umbrella programme that prosecutes this goal has performed very well. While there has been increase in school enrolment, the quality of these students and academic standard have falling. The class size has become so large because there is shortage of qualified teachers. If government will show more

commitment by employing qualified and licensed teachers these achievement will be sustained and the MDGs on education will be achieved come 2015.

Recommendations for Sustaining the Achievement of MDGs on Education

The Achievement recorded for MDG goal 2 can be sustained if the teacher adequacy challenge could be overcome and if the government will be more committed to MDGs by implementing the following

1. Teacher Preparation: The government should ensure that all unemployed qualified teachers get employment. Recruitment of unqualified teachers through in-service training should be pursued with vigour so that in the next four years all serving teachers will be qualified. The Universities, ministries of Education, National Union of Teachers (NUT), principals, etc should be fully mobilized for this training. The retraining of teachers organized by the state and federal government/ agencies should be made more regular to cover every subject in the basic education.

2. Teacher Remuneration:

- Special allowances should be added to teachers. Therefore the idea of removing some existing allowances (rural and science allowances) by some state governments should be discouraged by all.
- The special salary scheme (TSS) should be sustained and states where this scheme is yet to be implemented

- fully should be encouraged to do so.
 - Teachers on retirement should be paid their benefits in bulk without delay so as to enable them put it to meaningful venture.
 - Appointment into boards in ministry of education should be reserved for retired teachers instead of the practice in some states where politicians are appointed to such boards.
- 3. Professionalization of Teaching**
- Government should be more committed to the professionalization of teaching by employing only people certified by the council into the school.
 - Government should ensure no teacher is under-utilized. Teachers should be deployed to schools where they are best qualified. The situation where teachers are deployed to teach subjects they were not trained to teach should not continue.

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