

THE EXTENT OF ACHIEVEMENT OF UBE IN NIGERIA FOR SUSTAINABILITY: MDGs GOAL 2

Emmanuel Onyebueke

Department of Primary Education

Federal College of Education,

Kano.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent of achievement of the UBE scheme. In an attempt to explain this, the paper try to analyze the MDG goals, the objectives of UBE programme; the extent of achievement (1990 – 2001), enrolment, completion rate and literacy rate. Nigeria MDGs report 2010, the ratio of boys to girls in education, major challenges facing the achievement of UBE scheme, government supportive effort and conclusion: The paper also proffers some recommendations on how to ensure that the scheme succeeds.

Education has been identified as a cornerstone of development. Yeusuf (1991) defined education as a learning process and a basic instrument for the development of human personality. It is indispensable for an effective integration of society, economic, development of human personality. It is now clear that societies which are underdeveloped are those which do not invest in or see education as their overriding priority. 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 include

ensuring that by 2015 all children should have access to 9years free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Nigeria responded to this by introducing Universal Basic Education (UBE). The implementation document of UBE (2000) explained the meaning and scope of UBE as the foundation for sustainable life long learning for the acquisition of numeracy skills. In Nigerian context basic education include primary, junior secondary and nomadic education as well as adult education. It is observable from the national objectives of UBE that it is not a static term but a process of evolutionary development needs, spread over a period of nine years. The programme is directed towards the acquisition of functional literacy, numeracy and life skills especially for adults.

UBE is expected to create a foundation for the members of the society to have an opportunity for life long learning. Basic education is meant to address primarily the acquisition of the three “Rs” namely, reading, writing and arithmetic by the generality of members by the society. The provision of basic education will help the need for effective communications and numeric skills as well as to promote the level of social effectiveness of the people by equipping them with the capacity to view issues of the environment better (Nzeribe, 2004:41). UBE is an important education programme in the nations aspiration for development. It is also the pivot of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015.

What does MDGs means: MDGs refers to Millennium Development Goals, these are goals set by the United Nations (UN) and agreed to and signed by 189 countries including Nigeria. The international community committed to a specific agenda for reducing global poverty. This agenda listed eight (MDGs) which not only identified the gains needed but quantified them and established yardstick for measuring improvement in peoples lives to be achieved by the targeted date 2015.

Analysis of the Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty And Hunger

- Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

- Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

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

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

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

Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality

- Reduce by two thirds between 1990 and 2015, under five mortality rate

Goal 5: Improve Material Health

- Reduce by three quarter, between 1990 and 2015, the material mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

- Have halted by 2015 and began to reverse the increase in malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes

and reverse the losses of environmental resources.

- Halve by 2015 the promotion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
- Address the special needs of the least developed countries.
- Address special needs of landlock countries and small island developing states.
- Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.
- In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies especially information and communications.

Objectives of the UBE

- Develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- The provision of free universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improve relevance qualities and efficiency.
- Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or the other have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level of literacy, numerals, manipulative and communicative and life skills as well as ethnical moral and civic values for laying a solid foundations for life long learning.

In view of this basic education is expected to provide the qualitative, free and compulsory education to every Nigerian child from primary school level to junior secondary school level.

Defining Sustainability: Essentially sustainability refers to human's ability to survive by means of rational use of renewable resources by refraining from disrupting the ecosystem or over exploiting natural resources and by reframing from activities that will destroy cultures or societies and instead allow them to reach their potentials.

Accordingly therefore, sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present generation under the following economic needs – Environmental needs, social needs, cultural needs and health needs, political needs. (Brundt and Commission, 1987).

UBE: The Extent of Achievement (1990 – 2001)

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, established in 1999 aim to provide access to all students to at least the first nine years of schooling.

But today, the trend in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), (the best available indicator of participation in the country) have witnessed considerable fluctuation over the last decade (1991 – 2001). It increased steadily from 68% of 1990 to 86% in 1994. It declined thereafter to 81% in 1995 and further to 70% in 1996. The latest multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS, 2000) by Federal Offices of Statistics (FOS) indicated a GER of 1999 as 92% in 1999, 95% in 2000 and a declined to 93% in 2001.

The decline in GER has been blame on economic downturn, unfavorable political climate and poor financing of education. As a result of this, it was not possible for Nigeria to achieve the Jomtien Education For All (EFA) goal of 2000.

Enrolment: -

When the GER is examine by sex, it was observed that the GER for males was constantly higher than that of female by over 10 percent point over the period 1990 and 2001. Since the inception of the present civilian administration in 1999, boys in the five Eastern states have resume school due to supportive educational policies targeted at encouraging boys to have basic education. There was also increase in enrolment of boys in other regions. This does not mean that there was no increase in female enrolment. There was an increase in female enrolment especially in the North.

Table 1: Primary School Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) (National)

	1991	1992	1994	1995	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
%M	87	91	95	88	77	85	98	105	103
%F	77	75	77	74	65	66	85	85	82
%M/F	79	83	86	81	71	76	92	95	93

Completion Rate: Another worsening participation rate at the primary school level is the unimpressive trend of primary six-completion rate in Nigeria. Primary six completion rate stood at 60% in 1991 and increased steadily reaching on all time high of 75% in 1994. It declined thereafter to 69% in 1995 and 64% in 1996, 67% in 1997 and thereafter increased consistently from 73% in 1999 to 83% in 2001. These were however imbalances in completion rate between boys and girls in favour of boys in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994 and 1997-2001 while the girls were slightly favour in 1993, 1995 and 1996. There has been fluctuation in the completion rate during

the years under review. This is partly due to the rising incidence of poverty in the country resulting in modest drop out rates. There were also incessant strikes by teachers in public schools on account of non-payment of salaries and generally poor conditions of service.

Literacy Rates: The literacy rate in the country has also witnessed considerable deterioration especially within the 15 – 24years age group. The literacy rate for this group was 71.19% in 1991. The literacy rate in urban areas was higher than rural areas, these were 84.9% and 62.1% respectively. By 1999 the overall literacy rate had decline to 64.1%. The trend was in the same direction for male and female members of the 15-24years group. The rate for male decline from 81.35% in 1991 to 69.8% in 1999. The decline rate for female was 62.49% to 59.3% during the same period. The declining trend is not unconnected with the high rate of unemployment, rising income poverty and the discouraging working conditions of teachers in Nigeria which constituted great disincentive for acquiring formal education. However teachers salary have been revised upwards by the civilian administration.

Table 2: Literally Rate: 15 – 24 Years Olds.

	National	Urban	Rural	Male	Female
1991	71.9	84.9	62.9	81.4	62.5
1999	64.1			69.8	59.3

In view of the year under review 1990 – 2001, it will be notice that there was a decline in the enrolment rate but it is expected to increase due to the support of the civilian administration on education. This paper uses Adepoju and Adebisi on UBE 2007 which is a recent research to clarify more on the extent of achievement of UBE in Nigeria.

The wide scope of UBE meant that it is expected to touch on the life of some 77% of Nigerians (at a time when the country population was estimated at 120million current population estimation of 148million). This was given the high rate of illiteracy in the country and the large number of school-age children that were out of school.

Potential Beneficiaries of UBE

S/N	Group	Estimated Number 2000/2001 school year	Group as % of Nigeria's Total Population of 120 million
1.	Children age 0 – 5years	15 million	17%
2.	Primary School going children	18 million (42% girls as national average both as low as 20 – 25% in some states	15%
3.	Junior Secondary School children	5 million (only 25% girls)	4%

4	Illiterate adults (48% of 80million adults)	39.6 million (60% national average)	33% women
5	Out-of-school youth	15 million girls (70% national average)	17%
	Total	92.6 million	

Source: Adepoju and Adebisi on UBE 2007

From the above information it is clear that many children have not been touched. Going by this it will be difficult to achieve the vision of education for all. Many children and youth are out of the school and we have many illiterate adults. From this it is observed that many people do not have access to education. Also the quality of the education they receive matters. For effective management and success of the UBE programme access and quality of education is important.

The research report shows that limited scope do exist here and there. Adepoju and Fabiyi (2007) assessed the perception of stakeholders on a scale that ranged from 5 (very high) to very low (1) and concluded as table three shows that there was low perception of UBE, with the exception of one aspect teacher availability.

Stakeholders Perception of Significance Aspect of UBE

S/N	Significance Aspects of UBE	Stakeholder Rating
1.	Mobilization of local communities	1 (very low)
2	Politicization of programmes implementation	5 (very high)
3	Teacher availability	4 (high)
4	Teacher motivation	2 (low)
5	Crowded classrooms	5 (very high)
6	Conducive classroom	2 (low)
7	Learning outcomes	2 (low)

Source: (Adepoju and Fabiyi, 2007)

Our own summary of the progress of the programme as observed Obanya (2007) showed that UBE has made gains in terms enrolment but that there were still challenges concerning equity, quality and relevance etc. For more details on UBE we should consider Nigeria MDGs 2010 report.

Nigeria MDGs Report 2010

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

Indicator	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2015
2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education (%)	68	95	95	NA	NA	81.1	84.6	87.9	89.6	88.8	NA	100
2.2a Proportion of pupils starting primary 1 who reach primary 5 (%)	67	97	97	96	84	74	74	74	74	72.3	NA	100
2.2b Primary 6 completion rate (%)	58	76.7	76.7	NA	82	69.2	67.5	67.5	67.5	NA	100	100
2.3 Literacy rate of 15 - 24 year old women and men (%)	NA	64.1	NA	NA	60.4	60.4	76.2	80.2	81.4	80.0	NA	100

Source: Social Statistics in Nigeria Abuja, 2009

Note:

1. Gross enrolment rate based on consultant estimates from provisional data.
2. Base on provisional gross enrolment figures NBS – Annual Abstract of statistics Abuja 2009.

3. Youth literacy statistics NBS – Social Statistics in Nigeria Abuja, 2009

Data for 2007 and 2008 are provided

Net Enrolment in Primary Education

The net enrolment ratio in primary education in Nigeria was 68% in 2000. Since then it has shown a slow but steady increase especially over the past couple of years. As at 2008 the gross enrolment ratio stood at 88.8%. Progress recorded from 2004 to 2007 show that net enrolment has been on the increase. Nevertheless progress need to accelerate if the target is to be met by 2015.

The number of pupils starting primary I who reach primary 5, known as the 'survival rate' is a percentage of the total number of pupils enrolled in primary I in a given school year who reach primary 5. Available data from educational authorities show that the proportion of students who survived in 2000 was 97% but it is currently 72.3%. This shows a decline over the years.

The steady increase in net primary enrolment seems to be at variance with the decrease in the proportion of the student starting primary I who reach primary 5. While there is an increase in the proportion of children of school age who are actually enrolling in school, more of them are also dropping out in the course of their education. Going by the data and information available, it shows that unless measures are taken to address the number of primary school dropouts, the target may not be met by 2015.

In Nigeria, Lagos state has the highest proportion of students that starts primary 1 and reach primary 5 i.e. (98.7%) while Akwa Ibom state has the lowest i.e. (92.1%).

Ratio of Boys to Girls in Education

The proportion of girls enrolment is still lower than that of boys across all levels of education. At the university level (university admissions) the ratio is showing signs of decline.

In 2008 the number of girls per 100 boys was 85.4% in primary schools and there has been a gradual but steady increase from 2000 to 2008. However, assuming the trend continues for the last

five years it will still fall short of the target by 2015.

The situation is worse in secondary education. It has worsened since the baseline year of 2000. In 2000 the ratio was 81 while in 2008 it was 79.9. However, it has risen from the previous year when the ratio was 75.4. On the whole the progress is slow and well below the rate required to achieve the desired result.

Major Challenges Facing the Achievement of UBE Scheme

1. **Financing of Education:** The biggest challenges facing the government is the inadequate public spending on education. Again, the paucity and unreliability of data on educational financing makes it difficult to get an overall picture of the level of resources going into education or how much of these resources are used. There is also a high degree of resource mismanagement through inflation of contract and general official corruption.
2. **Economic Factor:** This is another challenge faced by the government. The level of poverty is so high in some areas that poor families are unlikely to be able to afford the cost of education. The aim of reducing the level of illiteracy through private sector and non-governmental organization, participation may not be achieved because of high level of poverty prevalent in the

country. In some area young boys do not attend school because they believe it is not profitable due to high rate of unemployment.

for instructional delivery and the high cost of provision of further training to teachers cut across all the six geo-political zones.

3. **Institutional Constraints:** The management of the education system and the implementation of educational policy are hindered by the complicated constitutional and legal framework provisions of the educational system. There is much confusion on the UBE programme i.e. the leading role of federal government, state government and private sector about primary education in Nigeria. There is lack of clarity in responsibility for UBE this leads to lack of proper accountability and create chance for conflicts between the federal, state and private sector.
4. **Culture:** this is a strong and sensitive factor that must be tackled by the government if the UBE programme are to be achieved e.g. purdah system of exclusion serves as a negative attitudinal barrier to girls receiving adequate schooling especially in the northern part of the country.
5. **Quality of Instruction:** There are several major issues that have implications for the quality of primary education. For instance, while the quality of staff is very poor. In certain part of the country, the problem of poor infrastructure

Government Supportive Effort

Prior to the Dakar 2000 declaration, Nigeria had already embarked upon the universal basic education (UBE) other programme.

The Federal Ministry of Education in augurated the National EFA education forum (NEF) as a consultative coordination body that bring together all the stakeholders in basic education to focus on planning analysis, monitoring and evaluation of progress made in the programme. There are mechanism to ensure a more participatory approach to educational policy and planning including partnership with civil society, NGO, CBOS, youth organizations and individuals. The UBE bill has been passed by the national assembly which clarifies roles and responsibilities and defines a new organizational structure at the federal level including parastatals as regards formal education, non-formal programmes, early childhood and nomadic education.

Also insufficient teachers and skill inadequacies are being addressed with pivotal teacher training scheme organized by National Teachers Institute (NTI) and proposed service for National Certificate for Education (NCE) graduates in a new National Teacher Corps. In addition salary increases comparable to their colleagues in the civil service and the private sector.

The government have also tried to enhance the status of vocational and

technical education has been enhanced through the establishment of science and technical secondary school in all the states of the federation. Progress has also been recorded on improving the basic data for education. Furthermore, a survey on monitoring learning achievement of the existing level of literacy and numeracy was also made to provide base line data on achievement in primary schools.

In spite of the problem of data collection and the need for data validation, the ministry has through the base line data survey solved to a large extent the problems of inaccurate data for the basis of decision making.

Conclusion

It has been observed that government alone cannot bear the burden of education due to ever-increasing budgetary constraints. Perhaps this is one of the reason why the objectives of education have not been fully achieved in the past UBE is a laudable educational policy which can help in achieving MDGs objectives while MDGs is another laudable policy by the international community to help especially developing nations like our own, we must not allow this opportunity to pass by. Basic education serves the purpose of making education affordable and accessible to every Nigerian, this will help each individual to develop their potentials and contribute to the achievement of MDGs objectives in the country.

Recommendations

1. Government at all level should as a matter of urgency should show serious commitment toward the success of UBE.
2. Federal Government should increase the budget for education in order to facilitate the success of the problem.
3. Government should create awareness programme to educate the traditional rulers on the need to send their children to school and maintain them.
4. There should be a stakeholders meeting between the federal, state government and private sector to harmonize issues about their perception of the programme.
5. Government should provide the necessary infrastructure and equipment for the programme.
6. Teacher wages and conditions of service should be taken serious to ensure that quality and qualified teachers are employed.
7. There should be constant evaluation of the programme to identify areas of strength and weakness and it should be addressed immediately.
8. Available data shows that the target may not be met by 2015, urgent measures has to be taken by government to ensure that we succeed.

References

- Adepoju, A. & Fabiyi, A. (2007). *Universal basic Education in Nigeria Challenges and Prospects*. Retrieved from <http://uaps,2007.princeton.edu>
- Federal Republic of Nigeria/Federal Ministry of Education (2000). *Implementation Guidelines for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme*. Abuja Federal Government Press.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2009). *Socials statistics in Nigerian* Abuja NBS.
- National Planning Commission (2007). *Nigeria 2006 Millennium Development Goals Report* Abuja Government of federal Republic of Nigeria.
- Obanya, P. A. (2007). *Reinforcing Local Government Authorities (LGAs) for the realization of MDGs*. Universal Primary Education. Presented at a conference of LGAs in Kaduna 12th December.
- Obasanjo, O. (1999). *UBE restoring dignity of learning Sokoto: An Address Delivered on the Occasion of Re-learning of the UBE Programme*.
- UBE (2000). *Programme planning and implementation document*. Abuja, Federal Government Press.
- United Nations (2010). *Global millennium development goals 2010 report* New York.