

# PLANNING AS AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT FOR IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE)

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## **Abstract**

"...Education for All and Framework of Action to meet Basic learning needs", declared in the Conference organized by the World Bank, in conjunction with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) held in Jomtien, Thailand, is not without planning as an effective instrument in the implementation. Education in the past suffered from inadequate management due to poor planning. Since planning is an integral part of a developmental plan, this paper therefore examines the concepts of planning, its advantages in the implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE), evolving a new education culture in Nigeria and suggests some planning processes necessary to make Universal Basic Education (UBE) successful. This paper would enable the Federal Government policy makers on Universal Basic Education (UBli) avoid paying lip-service and use the available resources in achieving Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme nationwide.

## **Introduction**

Adesina (1981) describes educational planning as "the process of applying scientific or rational procedures to the processes of educational growth and development so as to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system". It is a blueprint for future educational development and recommends courses of action for the achievement of desired objectives. Nations have been known to have benefited from planned educational systems which are effective instruments or comprehensive in nature, providing for all the various levels of education from pre-primary, secondary to tertiary levels. A comprehensively or effectively planned or an overall planning of education is a continuous systematic process, involving the application, and co-ordination of social research methods and of principles and techniques of educational administration, economics and finance, with the participation and support of the general public in education for the people with definite aims in well-defined stages to providing everyone with an opportunity of developing his potentialities and making the most effective contributions to the social, cultural and economic development of the country".

In scope, it encompasses the entire range from planning the flow of pupils, providing buildings and equipment and training teachers to a detailed working of functional curriculum, and teaching methods.

To provide any objective plan for achievement of meaningful educational purposes, the planners must be clear in their minds about the type, level and scope of education envisaged.

Anderson and Bowman (1967) defined educational planning as the process of preparing a set of decisions for future action pertaining to education. Coombs (1974) says that educational planning in its broadest generic sense, is the application of rational systematic analysis in the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society. During the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) International Conference on Educational Planning (August, 1968) educational planning was defined as the application to education itself a rational scientific approach to examining one's alternatives, choosing wisely among them, then proceeding systematically to implement the choices thus made (UNESCO, 1969). According to Kaufman (1977) planning is a process of determining "where to go" and identifying the requirements for getting there in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

With the launching of Universal Basic Education (UBE) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo is true that a new education culture has been ushered in Nigeria. Article 1 (one) of

the Implementation Guidelines of Federal Government of Nigeria (February, 2000) has shown the specific objectives of the Federal Government:

- i. Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion;
- ii. The provision of free, Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school-going age;
- iii. Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency);
- iv. Catering for the learning needs of young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of Basic Education.
- v. 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.

Article (2) two of the guidelines is the requirements of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) the education objectives which are stated in Section (18) eighteen as follows:

"...Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels.

"...Government shall eradicate literacy; and this and Government shall as and when practicable provide:

- a) Free, compulsory and Universal Primary Education;
- b) Free University Education; and
- c) Free adult literacy programmes.

These and other statements in the guidelines are policy statements which cannot be quantified. In policy sciences, Dror (1963) define planning as the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, directed at achieving goals, by optimal means.

### **Educational Planning**

Denga (1986) is of the opinion that educational planning involves the formulation of educational policies and objectives, the co-ordination of various educational proposals, the projection of enrolments, compilation of school statistics, educational costing and budgeting, establishment of new schools and the expansion of existing ones.

Today, educational planning is concerned with the social, economic, and manpower development of the nation. It is by nature a complex process. This complexity is made greater by the fact that in the educational industry a major part of the inputs and outputs consist of human capacities and skills which are not quantifiable as the inputs and outputs in other sections of the economy. Thus as Ghaussi (1966) rightly observes, educational planning has to face all the complications that derive from the capacities of human beings variable factor in the process of production.

### **Rationale for Educational Planning**

Coombs (1970) and Ukeje (1992) are of the opinion that the education of any country should be carefully planned for these reasons:

- i. The time and resources available to man are scarce, therefore man must plan so as to make the best use of available resources in a given time. There are many other social services in the society competing in development from the scarce resources, among which education is one. Therefore education cannot continue to demand for more,
- ii. Human beings are very important resources in education. They cannot be manipulated into action. The administrator must think and plan carefully and effectively in order to get the co-operation of human beings,
- iii. Our complex society is changing fast, so the administrator must plan carefully. There may be political, sociological, or technological changes in the society. For education to maintain an

equilibrium in an over-changing society, education administrators must anticipate the future and plan

accordingly,

- iv. Lack of planning leads to loss of time, energy, resources and leads to inefficiency,
- v. Education is a very complex function. It involves many people, a lot of materials, equipment and money. Planning is necessary so as to translate predetermined goals into action smoothly. Planning helps to avoid random decisions.

### **Planning Process**

Wheeler (1968) says that the planning process consists of the following major processes,

- i. Issuing of directives,
- ii. Preparing of the plan,
- iii. Approval of the plan by the government,
- iv. Implementation of the plan,
- v. Evaluation or the review of progress achieved in the fulfillment of the targets of the plan.

#### **(i) Issuing of Directives**

Before a planning unit of the Ministry of Education sets out to prepare a plan for any educational programme either in the State or country, it must be given legal authority or directives about the aims. These directives or policy can only be formulated by the highest political authority (i.e. Federal Government) in accordance with its general policies in the political, economic and social field. The National Policy on Education (1998) stated the aims and objectives of each tier of education in the country.

#### **(ii) Preparation of the Plan**

Wheeler (1968) rightly observes that the plan is prepared in accordance with over-all aims as set out by government's objectives but influenced by the amount of resources and objectives, while Dror (1963) observes that the goals of the society must be achieved by "optimal" means.

However, the degree to which "absolute optimally" can be satisfied in the planning process depends primarily on the amount of relevant information available to the planner at the time of preparing the plan. Effective planning needs a lot of statistics and reliable information.

Kaufman (1972) asserts that the outcome or products of the planning process depends specially on the data used to identify and resolve educational problems. Educational plans have greatest utility of valid data to predict practical and realistic results and also for forecasting. Baughart and Trull (1973) state convincingly that educational planners need data related to people, data related to plan, data related to movement, data related to economics and data related to education; hence planning is an effective instrument for implementing any educational programme such as Universal Basic Education.

### **Planning as an Effective Instrument for Implementation**

Effective planning is concerned with implementing the approved plan. Implementation is planning progress. It is the putting the decisions reached and agreed upon into action.

Except the following problems are resolved planning as an effective instrument for implementing Universal Basic Education (UBE) may be jeopardized as Universal Primary Education (UPE)

- i. The lack of wide and reliable data and information;
- ii. Insufficient staff;
- iii. Corruption;
- iv. Organizational complexity and over-stretched bureaucracy;
- v. Perversity and inflated aspiration;
- vi. Poor supervision;
- vii. Political instability;
- viii. Political climate or influence;
- ix. Financial constraints;
- X. Statistics constraints;
- xi. Public involvement;

## xii. **Statistics Constraints**

An adequate educational planning is based on appropriate and reliable statistical data. Reliable records of what have been, and what averagely is available aids planners to know the population of the beneficiaries and the anticipated population rise in future and also the employment structure.

Census data cannot be used for educational planning, although this was used in UPE and thus crippled that programme due to political domination and over-zealousness to have stronger representation in central government.

## (xi) **Public Involvement**

There should be adequate public enlightenment about the programme since Jomtien declaration and framework of Action on Education for All is the RESPONSIBILITY OF US ALL (Federal Government of Nigeria, Guidelines, 2000). Along with experts, education planners, interested bodies like all stakeholders in education, Chiefs, village-heads, churches, mosques, Radio-stations, Television net work, town-criers, Schools, Dailies and Posters should be utilized or involved. The extent of the acceptability and support and subsequently, the effectiveness of the implementation is based on the extent of the public enlightenment about the proposed plan. It will influence Financial contributions and donation of lands for the programme.

## (xii) **Poor Communication System**

The implementation of educational goals and objectives is shared responsibility between political decision-makers and the planners, as well as the administrative bodies. Political decisionmakers must be guided by advice and information concerning the needs, the resources, the constraints and alternatives which exist. It is the planners and administrative staff who supply such information. Much therefore depend on the quality of communication and mutual understanding between the various groups.

## **Planning Processes Necessary for Implementing Universal Basic Education (UIJE)**

Plan implementation involves the following processes:

- i. Preparing a programme of action;
- ii. Obtaining legal authority and approval;
- iii. Organizing the implementing units, and
- iv. Co-ordinating and controlling the implementation of education plan.

Co-ordination is the process of scheduling activities to eliminate conflicts so that objectives may be achieved. The diverse activities and purposes of the various educational agencies are coordinated and controlled to ensure adherence to the plan through regular evaluation.

Plans are translated into programmes and projects. Implementing a project means building infrastructures in an institution, while programme preparation means studying the social structure of the place, identifying the real needs in terms of society size, space available, diverse culture, class structure, ideology and the financial resources available.

The success of implementation depends on the co-operation of those concerned and the application of Programme Evaluation, Review Technique (PERT) to avoid missing any key step in the relationship, in the programme arranged logically in order of priorities.

The advantages are:-

- i. A clear picture of all the activities in the project and their inter-relationship is seen and followed suit,
- ii. An estimate of the total time/cost likely to be taken to complete the project will be noted and necessary action taken without delay, and
- iii. The possibility to readjust resources allocating in the light of changing circumstances is there.

## **Recommendations**

Federal Government should use the planning processes mentioned above. Political influence or sentiments should be devoid of for teamwork to achieve success. Federal Government should use the available resources to fund Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme directly or through a

department set up to take charge nationwide. Such a department should be supervised for efficiency and effectiveness to avoid lapses such as fraud and inept attitude of the Nigerian factor of cajoling. State and Local Governments should be given functions in terms of: i. Teacher quality improvement, ii. Up-dating of infrastructural facilities, and iii. Enhanced availability of instructional materials.

Statistics offices be set up in each Local Government Education Area (LGEA) and in all States Ministry of Education or Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) -apart from the headquarters in Abuja for reliable and valid data collection in respect of pupil enrolment, qualified teachers, infrastructural facilities, instructional materials available and expected by projection (Baughart and Trull, 1973; Wheeler, 1968; and Dror, 1963) both see the need for effective planning and implementation of educational programme necessary. This is to avoid the ugly experience of the defunct Universal Primary Education (UPE).

There should be an information unit for enlightenment of the masses on every step of development of the programme.

Evaluation should be enforced hence its importance in gingering and motivating the populace to contribute willingly and freely (Campbell, 1957).

Since law harnesses and directs the effort of human beings, it is pertinent that a legislation be enacted to promote and protect Universal Basic Education Programme (UBEP) legalizing it so that privately owned Universal Basic Education Schools (UBES) may be out of competition, that is, cost of establishing schools by individuals should high so that they should not be able to open schools.

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