

PLANNING A CORRUPTION-FREE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Dr. Ogene A. Oyibe
Department of Arts & Social Science Education,
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

&

Dr. Mrs. Blessing Anukaenyi
Department of Educational Foundations,
Geoffrey Okoye University, Enugu

Abstract

The paper focused on planning a corruption-free basic education curriculum towards sustainable development in Nigeria. The meaning, difficulties and the objectives of curriculum planning were presented. The historical antecedence of basic education and UBE as it is in Nigeria were discussed. The UBE act which gave prominence to UBE in the Nigerian education system was also mentioned. The paper also review how corruption undermines the achievement of the objectives of basic education and how basic education if well planned and effectively implemented can contribute for sustainable development in Nigeria. It is in the views of the writers that the inbuilt mechanism for the war against corruption should be incorporated in the curriculum planning since it will help in purging out corrupt practices in the Nigerian system.

Introduction

One of the most urgent challenges facing the world today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. Such a society is neither efficient nor safe. Education is seen as key to enhancing people's capabilities and widening their choices in order to enjoy the

freedoms that make life meaningful and worthwhile. Firstly, the skills provided by basic education, such as being able to read and write, are valuable in their own right. Secondly, education can ameliorate other more negative features of life. For example, free and compulsory basic education reduces child labour. Thirdly, education has a powerful role in empowering those who suffer from social and economic devaluation. Universal education, if attained by all, has a unique and fundamental impact in addressing social and economic barriers within a society and is therefore central to realizing human freedoms. This is because quality education is the primary factor for human empowerment and meaningful development in any society. It is through quality education that a nation can utilize her full potentials by lifting the barriers in all aspects of life.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria was launched in 1999, with the goal of providing free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child aged 6-15 years. This programme was created after several unsuccessful attempts at improving education in the country. It is one of the several reform initiatives by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed at promoting societal development in particular and the social well-being of Nigerians in general. The focus of the UBE according to Obioma (2008) is on the issue of access, equity and quality of teaching and learning that will meet the present day challenges globally. Basic education teaches literacy, numeracy and promotes cognitive, affective and social development which is a pedagogic experience shared in one form or the other by majority of human beings. No matter what other educational experiences that may follow, basic education is generally formative and lasting. It is at this point that the students have the greatest power to effect powerful and positive life altering change. The basic goals of UBE therefore, remain the laying of a foundation for life-long learning for all sections of the populace, whatever be their conditions in life. The National antecedents to UBE are part and parcel of Nigeria's educational history. Unfortunately, although there has been some improvement in enrolment in recent years,

its results have been limited and Nigeria's educational system still rates very poorly in most international rankings.

Achieving quality basic education in Nigeria geared toward sustainable development have become a difficult task over the years as efforts made by the government, its agencies and private individuals in several aspects of our educational system seem not to be yielding the desired results due corruption. Many societal moral values in Nigeria schools such as hard work; diligence, academic excellence, merits, discipline amongst others have been short-changed and swapped for corruption across all the levels of Nigeria educational system. The act of bribery and corruption in Nigeria is not limited to any sectors life. Oyibe and Chukwu (2018) are of the view that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of national life of the Nigerian citizens. Corruption in Nigeria is across all sectors of our national economy. This made Clinton (2015) to laments that the level of corruption in Nigeria is eroding the Nigerian government's legitimacy and global aspiration. Corruption found in the larger society has forcefully and aggressively permeated into the institutions of learning that provide basic education which makes actualization of its goals and objectives an impossible task. Majority of the citizens of Nigeria are wallowing in abject poverty while negligible few whose greed and corrupt practices have kept the populace in penury and hunger are living in affluence. It is disheartening to witness in daily basis, millions of naira being uncovered that cannot even be access by individuals who have stolen them from public treasury but resources to be used in providing quality life to Nigerians are not found despite being the huge amount of money realized from oil. There is a need to champion a course that will stress on the liberation of the people with a strong emphasis on educational opportunities by widening Nigerian's educational base and re-shaping the educational pyramid for sustainable development. The thrust of this paper therefore, focused on planning a corrupt-free basic education curriculum for sustainable development.

Curriculum Planning

In every aspect of human life, planning always entails determining in advance where one wants to go and how to get there. Emeruwa in Oteh and Akuma (2010) is the view that curriculum planning is the process of building a programme of learning experiences calculated to result in the attainment of set of goals for a particular people. Curriculum planning is the process of structuring academic experiences, using expertise knowledge of the teacher. It is the activity which teachers get involved in before the actual implementation. The process concerned with making decisions about what to learn, why, and how to organize the teaching and learning process taking into account existing curriculum requirements and the resources available. This involves taking decisions that are informed by wider range of factors.

Difficulties in Curriculum Planning

The rapidity with which curriculum change at basic education level has occurred in Nigeria in the two last decades and specially in the last seven years contrasts with the curriculum stability of the previous fifty-two years of independence. Much curriculum change since the independence was unplanned, and the curriculum was altered particularly as a result of political influences. On the contrary, after the curriculum change of 2012, not only was the importance given to some subjects like Civic Education, Security Studies amongst others in basic education in the curriculum changed, but also subjects' syllabuses like Social Studies and Christian Religious Knowledge were much modified to provide Religious and National Values as curricular subject. Nevertheless these alterations were introduced, year by year, and were not based on a general curriculum plan. As a result, many basic school teachers expressed the idea that it was necessary to change the basic curriculum in order to meet up with the current trends in the Nigerian society such as war against corruption and entrepreneurial education for self-reliance.

We believe that an awareness of the different influential aspects on curriculum planning and development could provide the parameters within which curriculum planning could be

undertaken. It was the researchers' contention that the institutional context may offer several difficulties in curriculum development which result from an inadequacy of the educational structures at different levels: central, state and local. For instance, the insufficiency of support given by the central administration to schools and to teachers, for example, financial, organization of in-service training, and so on); a deficient development of component states' structures and an insufficient number of equipped rooms, teaching resources, trained staff and poor school organization could be serious difficulties in curriculum planning. We also understand that the attitudes of heads of basic schools, teachers and students could also be difficulties in curriculum planning due to resistance or inadaptability to innovation, specially explained by the fact that innovation was not followed by the needed alterations of educational structures. We of the consideration that basic school teachers' and students' attitudes towards curriculum innovation are fundamental to the process of curriculum planning and development. It was also our contention that parents, textbooks writers and publishers could also be influential on curriculum planning and development.

Difficulties in curriculum planning according to Gonzales (2014:321) include: limited funding capacities, unavailability of school facilities, teaching and learning resources, quality and quantity of teaching staff as well as poor time management by school administrators and teachers.

1. Limited funding capacities - The economy of a nation will determine the success of curriculum implementation. In developing countries, the numbers of pupils and teachers have kept on rising but government money available for education is less.
2. Unavailability of school facilities - Equipment like classrooms, libraries, resource centers, offices, desks, schools halls and others. The fact that the education sector is under-funded by the government means that the availability and quality of facilities in learning institutions is affected negatively.
3. Teaching and learning resources - There is limited procurement and supply of these resources in schools. Instructional materials and equipment are all in short supply or may not be available at all – no books or writing material, no chalk, no science apparatus, inadequate or out-of-date library.
4. Quality and quantity of teaching staff - Teachers are the most important human resource in curriculum implementation since they are the ones who adopt and implement the ideas

and aspirations of the designers. This implies that success of the curriculum depends on the teachers.

5. Poor time management by school administrators and teachers - Curriculum implementation is also hindered by what goes on in learning institutions. Pupils' learning time is mismanaged by administrators and the class teacher.

The educational landscape though serves as the bedrock for human resource development; it still has challenging academic experiences in basic education in Nigeria. The realization is that, transitional stages of schooling seem not to have curriculum alignment that reflects the contemporary trends in the society. Agreeing with the above, Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) are the view that basic education has been criticized for not preparing adequately to face the challenges of the complex society in which they live. Yearning for flexibility, harmonization and synchronization of the curriculum, the paper seeks to explore missing interest areas, talents in order to discover inspired paths that underpin enrichment of the school curriculum.

Aims of Curriculum Planning

Oteh and Akuma (2010) maintain that aims are referred to as the distant targets that can be achieved after many years of exposure to the educational programmes and experiences. While Nigerian Educational and Research Development Council (NERDC) (2013) is of the view that aims is the general statement that provide shape and direction to the specific actions designed to achieve future product and behaviour. The aims of curriculum planning are to:

1. Strengthen ethical and spiritual values in such a way that will: promote respect for human right and foster love of humanity, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, encourage creative and critical thinking, and develop moral character and personal discipline in the learners.
2. Promote work experiences which develop orientation to the world of work and prepare the learner to honest and gainful work.
3. Promote and intensify knowledge, identification with and love for the nation and the people to which he belongs.
4. Provide learning experiences which increase the child's awareness of and responsiveness to the changes in the society.
5. Provide knowledge and develop skills, attitudes, values essential to personal development and necessary for living in and contributing to a developing and changing society.
6. Provide general education programs which will promote national identity, cultural consciousness, moral integrity and spiritual vigor
7. Discover and enhance the different aptitudes and interests of learners in order to equip them with skills for productive endeavour.

These if achieved are expected to be transformative. Transformation in all spheres of human endeavour has become the world's latest agenda recently. The global transformations are multidimensional which impacts are felt in technological, economic, social, cultural and political development of human communities particularly those of developing societies like ours (Nigeria). Education in global perspective is a calculated gadget for social and economic transformation and the focus of educational system all over the world is the development of the human capital required to meet present and future challenges of globalization and knowledge economy.

Universal Basic Education

All attempts to combat and possibly do away with illiteracy have become an inflexible dilemma to the world in general and developing countries in particular. This led to the world conference on Education for All (EFA) held in Jomtien, in Thailand, in March 1990 and to the Education for All summit of nine High populations countries including Nigeria held in New Delhi in December 1993 (UNESCO, 2003). This is because provision of basic education for national and individual development is a global phenomenon with the signing into law, the education charter of the United Nations Organization in 1945. The United Nations General Assembly, according to Okorosaye (2008: 1) proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26, Part 1 of the Declaration states: everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

The dilemma has contributed to revising, updating and adjusting of Education Policies of many countries including Nigeria. The attempts at universalizing education to enable citizens of each country acquire basic knowledge, hence the nomenclature Universal Basic Education (UBE). Basic Education is a technical term defined by the World Conference of Education for

All, meant to capture the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the economy and in our democracy and meant to comply with our state's constitutional paramount duty. Therefore, it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex. Obichie (2015) is of the view that The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced by the Nigerian federal government in 1999. The scheme was introduced with the aim of providing free, universal and basic education for every Nigerian child between the ages of 6 and 15.

Universal Basic Education as It is in Nigeria (ACT 2004)

The most important lesson from the international context has to do with what has become popularly known as the Jomtien Goals. The Jomtien (1990) Declaration and framework of Action on Education for All (EFA) detailed basic education as follows: Basic Education is not a package but a process, Basic Education is not a question of years of formal education but a question of acquisition of skills, Basic Education as an essential part of broad-based policy on inclusive education, Basic Education is that foundation level that emphasizes literacy, numeracy, basic life skills and most importantly learning to-learn skills as well as Basic Education emphasis learning, de-emphasizing repetition and dropouts. In pursuance of the actualization of these objectives, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was formally launched in Sokoto by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September 1999 but the Act was an executive sponsored Bill sent to the National Assembly to give a legal backing to the Universal Basic Education which was signed into law on 12th May, 2004. The Bill according to Athanasius (2017) has the following legal implications:

- To provide a compulsory, free Universal Basic Education (UBE) for all Children of primary and Junior Secondary School age, it further seeks to provide punishment for parents for failing to comply with its provisions.
- Its policy objectives aim to provide universal free and compulsory education at the primary and the first three years of secondary school and to provide functional literacy for adult illiterates.

- Universal Basic Education (UBE) has now become everybody's obligation including governments, civil society, and organized private sector, the formal and informal sector, Parents Teachers Association, students and parliamentarians.
- The problem of poverty being an impediment to schooling has been eliminated
- There are sanctions for parents who failed to send their children and wards to school.
- UBE is inclusive education since it embraces both the formal and the non-formal settings.

The primary objectives of Universal Basic Education Programme as formally lunched are to provide the following:

- 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 to every Nigeria child of school going-age. - Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).
- Catering for the learning needs of the young person who, for one reason or another has had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy innumeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

In an attempt to achieve these objectives of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2008, through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) developed and introduced the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in schools by realigning all extant Primary and Junior Secondary School Curricula to meet the key targets of the UBE programme. In view of some contemporary and national concerns and to make the curriculum more practical, relevant, interest generating to the young learners and in line with global best practices, the 9-year BEC was recently revised in 2012 and its implementation has just commenced in September, 2014.

Table 1. The Structure of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum

PRIMARY 1-3	PRIMARY 4-6	JS 1-3
Core Compulsory Subjects 1. English Studies 2. One Major Nigeria Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science and Technology	Core Compulsory Subjects 1. English Language 2. One Major Nigeria Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science 5. Social Studies	Core Compulsory Subjects 1. English Language 2. One Major Nigeria Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic Science 5. Social Studies

5. Social Studies 6. Civic Education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) 8. Christian Religious Studies/ Islamic Studies 9. Physical and Health Education (PHE) 10. Computer Studies/ICT	6. Civic Education 7. Cultural & Creative Arts 8. Christian Religious Studies/ Islamic Studies 9. Physical and Health Education (PHE) 10. Computer Studies/ ICT	6. Civic Education 7. Cultural & Creative Arts 8. Christian Religious Studies/ Islamic Studies 9. Physical & Health Education (PHE) 10. Basic Technology 11. Computer Studies/ ICT
Elective Subjects 1. Agricultural Science 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language	Elective Subjects 1. Agricultural Science 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language	Elective Subjects 1. Agricultural Science 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic Language 4. Business Studies
Note: Must offer 1 elective but not more than 2.	Note: Must offer 1 elective but not more than 2.	Note: Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 3.

Table 1: The Structure of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum

The 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum was particularly developed for the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) goals, the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was developed in response to Nigeria's need for relevant, dynamic and globally competitive education that would ensure that learners at the Basic Education level are capable to compete favourably anywhere in the world in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques, values and aptitude. Thus the 9-Year BEC addressed among other things, the issue of value re-orientation, poverty eradication, critical thinking, entrepreneurship and life skills but nothing was said about corruption, its consequences and ways of combating its.

Basic Features of the Revised 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC)

Core subjects are English Studies, one Nigerian Language, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, Religion and National Values, Cultural and Creative Arts, Pre-Vocational Studies, French and Business Studies. The elective (optional) subject: Arabic Language, French and Pre-Vocational studies are introduced in Primary 4 as core subjects. While Business Studies is introduced as a core subject at the Junior Secondary school level. Basic science and Technology, Religion and National Values plus Pre-Vocational Studies are composite subjects

The revised curriculum pays particular attention to the teaching of reading. Consequently, the English Studies curriculum for Primaries 1-3 is focused on the teaching of the following reading skills: Concepts of Print, Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition. The infusion of Drug Abuse Education, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Climate Change, Consumer Education and relevant elements of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) into relevant contents of the curriculum but corruption which is one of the factors that hinder actualization of the goals of education and that of NEEDS was not infused into the curriculum. Teaching and learning emphasis is on skill development: creative thinking skills, entrepreneurial and work skills. i. The systematic connection between Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary schools curricula contents. In the revised edition, the original structure of the 9-Year BEC is retained. The Revised 9-Year BEC is presented as:

- ▶ Basic Education Curriculum-Primaries 1-3;
- ▶ Basic Education Curriculum-Primaries 4-6;
- ▶ Basic Education Curriculum-Junior Secondary (JS) 1-3.

The subjects and contents flow systematically and spirally from Primary 1 to JS 3. In the process of review, particular efforts were made to further reduce content overload, repetition or duplications within and across subjects without compromising depth, appropriateness, and interrelatedness of the curricula content.

Corruption and Achievement of Basic Education Objectives

It is not out context if one says that Nigeria is richly endowed by nature with abundant human and natural resources which should be accessed for the development of this nation and the wellbeing of her population yet over 65% of her citizenry are living below poverty level. Agreeing with this view, Oyibe and Eluu (2015) assert that Nigeria as a sovereign nation is endowed by nature with both human and material resources, yet a large proportion of her human population live below one United State of America dollar (\$1) per day. They maintain that the socio-economic situation of the Nigerian citizen is at its declining rate not minding increasing

revenue generation from crude oil and indication of poverty has been one of the major problems facing developing countries of the world like ours (Nigeria) where the economic conditions of most families have declined to alarming rates. Idikwu and Adole (2018) maintain that majority of Nigeria citizens are wallowing in abject poverty while negligible few whose greed and corrupt practices have kept the masses in penury and hunger are living in affluence. All these happened because Nigeria has been engulfed by corrupt practices in all areas of human endeavours. The public resources required for development and provision of social services such as basic education, health care, pipe-borne water, electricity and many others were diverted by few fortunate individuals thereby depriving the public from the access to basic life-supporting services.

Basic education is said to have a powerful role in empowering those who suffer from social and economic devaluation and its objectives if attained by all, has a unique and fundamental impact in addressing social and economic barriers within a society and is therefore central to realizing human freedoms. This has not been realized in Nigeria because every sector of the nation's socio-economic life is led by corrupt leaders. There is no atom of transparency and accountability in governance in Nigeria since all the leaders from top to bottom are involved in corruption. This is one the reasons why our school curriculum seem to be irresponsive to the needs of the society. There is a need for new curriculum at the basic education level that takes care of all other issues as raised in the BEC with the addition of content of what the law described as corrupt practices in public offices, its consequences to human and national development. The emphasis here should be 'Catch them Young' that will aim at laying down and restoring the foundation of moral and ethical norms of every decent society. This should be the bedrock on which a wholesome efficient, just and prosperous nation like Nigeria can be built upon.

Sustainable Development and Basic Education in Nigeria

Education for sustainable development is lifelong process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having the creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and co-operative actions. Universal Basic education is the education for sustainable development since its focus according to Obioma (2008) is on the issue of access, equity and quality of teaching and learning that will meet the present day challenges globally. It teaches literacy, numeracy and encourages cognitive, affective and social development is a pedagogic experience shared in one form or another by majority of human beings. No matter what other educational experiences that may follow, basic education is generally formative and lasting. It is at this point that the students have the greatest power to effect powerful and positive life altering change. The basic goals of UBE therefore, remain the laying of a foundation for life-long learning for all sections of the population, whatever be their conditions in life.

Basic education enables people to develop the knowledge, values, and skills to participate in decisions about the ways we do things, individually and collectively, locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet in the future. And Sustainable development is an approach that combines the development needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of the future while also maintaining ecological integrity. This implies that sustainable development is a development process that is equitable and sensitive to ecological and environmental issues which is anchored in education. It depends on the initiative, resourcefulness, and discipline of human beings who are the managers of developmental programmes. Therefore, achieving inclusive and equitable basic education for all will require increasing efforts, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and for susceptible populations, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people, refugee children and poor children in rural areas. It requires a holistic approach for school management and the curriculum, not a separate subject. It therefore necessitates reflection on what to teach, and how to teach in order to clarify and extend

the ability of students to think for themselves, encourage students to reflect and debate issues to enable them to form their own opinions, foster learning that emerges from discovery and is relevant to the learners' life experiences.

Basic education should be recognized as a process by which human beings and societies can reach their fullest potential. It is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address the environment and development issues. It is believed that basic education has a role to play in combating these problems. It must be emphasized here according to Nnabuo and Asodike (2015) that for a nation to have the ability to develop and achieve sustainable target, education must come to play. This has been the propelling force behind the clamour for the Universal Primary Education (UPE) declared by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1976 and the recently Universal Basic Education (UBE), an innovation of UPE declared in 1999. The essence of basic education is to increase basic literacy and numeracy level of the citizen, as they are indeed fundamental tools needed for development and its sustainability. Sound basic education is also fundamental to the strengthening of higher levels of education of scientific and technological literacy and thus to self-reliant, sustainable development.

Conclusion

Education in Nigeria has passed through many phases. From Universal Primary Education (UPE) to Universal Basic Education, from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals. The problem is not of what but of how these goals will be reached in Nigeria. The problem is not in the policy but in its curriculum planning and effective implementation. Nigeria has permitted politics to come into education and continue to change school curriculum either to upturn what the predecessor has done or to create an avenue to embezzle public fund. There is no continuity in governance and as such school curriculum is half-hazard by planned without wider consultation. Policies such as the UBE act amongst others

that are not implemented or half implemented should be fully implemented to achieve its purpose.

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