

---

**PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF  
UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE)  
IN NIGERIA**

---

*Edited by:*

- ▶ Prof. Taiwo Ajayi
- ▶ Dr. J. O. Fadipe
- ▶ Dr. P. K. Ojedele
- ▶ Dr. E. E. Oluchukwu

# **Strategies for a Successful Implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in Kwara State**

By

Dr. (Mrs.) **A.T. Alabi**

*university of Ilorin*

## **Abstract**

*This paper highlights the problems and prospects of the Universal Basic education (UBE/ scheme vis-a-vis I lie problems leading to the collapse of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the early eighties. These problems included, among others, inadequate planning, insufficient funds, and inadequate personnel and physical resource for the UPE scheme. The current statistics of available and required resources, using Kwara State as a case study, reveal the need for provision of additional infrastructure and teachers before the take-off of the scheme. Based on these revelations, some strategies are suggested for a successful take-off and continuous sustenance of the shceme.*

## **Education**

Education is an indispensable tool for personal and societal development. It has therefore come to be accepted as a great investment in human capital. It was perhaps in recognition of this fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) in September, 1976. However, the Western Nigerian Government had earlier introduced UPE in 1955. It was free and promotion of pupils from one level to another was automatic. Taking a cue from the Western Nigerian Government, the government of Eastern Nigeria took off its UPE scheme in 1957. These 1957 and 1976 attempts at universality of education in Nigeria failed due to serious lack of planning before t he take- off. Especially as it related to the provision of personnel and infrastructure to take care of underestimated pupils population.

With inadequate finance, primary education was greatly expanded without due regard to adequate provision of teachers, leading to the appointment of untrained people as teachers. The over-enrolment of pupils led to over - crowded classrooms which could result into ineffective classroom management. Instructional facilities such as textbooks were also in acute shortage (Shika. 1999). Thus, the implementation of UPE scheme which was conceived as a pre-requisite for equalization of opportunities for education across the country, as well as a vehicle for removing the educational imbalances among the states of the country, was marred by poor planning.

In further recognition of education as a potent tool for an all-round development of the human potential and a unifying force for national development, the UPE has been re-introduced but renamed Universal Basic Education (UBE). The UBE as been expanded in scope and dimension to include junior secondary schools and mass literacy programmes. The UBE scheme was launched in Sokoto by the Obasanjo - led administration on September 30, 1999, bearing in mind the factors that led to the failure of earlier attempts at universal education in Nigeria. This paper is aimed at suggesting strategies for the successful take - off and continuous implementation of UBE scheme, towards achieving its set goals and objectives, with particular reference to Kwara State.

## **Concept of Universal Basic Education (UBE)**

The concept of basic education incorporates all educational programmes geared towards ameliorating illiteracy level among people of all ages. Nigerian educational system takes place in four stages, namely, primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and tertiary levels (6-3-3-4). In the new administrative structures for the 6-3-3-4 system, the first two stages (primary and junior secondary) conceive education mainly as a social service. At the last two stages (senior secondary and tertiary), education is tied to manpower and economic development (FRN. 1978). UBE falls within the level of education as a social service. In the Nigerian context, basic education encompasses the formal, the non-formal and informal approaches for an all-round development of human potentials towards life - long education. Specifically basic education involves:

1. Programmes/initiatives for early childhood care and education:
2. Education programmes for the acquisition of functional literacy and life- skills, especially for adults (persons aged 15 and above);

3. Special programmes for nomadic populations:
4. Out of school non-formal programmes for up-dating the knowledge and skills of persons who left school before acquiring the basics needed for long-life learning:
5. Non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescent and youth who have not had the benefit of formal education: and
6. The formal systems from the beginning of primary education to the end of the junior secondary school (FRN. 1999. p. 5)

Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced in Nigeria as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Specifically, as contained in its implementation guidelines (FRN. 1999). the objectives of UBE are as follows:

1. Developing in the entire citizenry strong consciousness for education and a Strong commitment to its vigorous promotion:
2. The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age:
3. Reducing drastically the incident of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency);
4. Catering for young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling as well as other out-of-school children 'adolescent, through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education; and,
5. Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills as well the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long education. UBE is thus intended to help the Nigerian child attain his full potentials and become a responsible and dependable citizen of his country. In addition, UBE could further serve to remedy the imbalances in the development of education in Nigeria.

### **Level of preparedness for UBE Implementation in Kwara State**

The new comprehensive package of UBE is a confirmation of the government policy FRN (1989). *National policy on education* that education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise but a huge government venture. It should be noted, however, that education is a complex process and one that requires expert handling, particularly at the planning stages. As such, certain provisions need be made for a successful

Take -off of UBE programme. Such provision include expansion of schools, training and re-training of teachers, adequate learning infrastructure and caring for teachers" welfare. Adequate planning is a must to prevent a repeat of the collapse of UPE scheme. In Kwara State, important seminars, workshops and local level policy dialogues relating to the implementation guidelines for UBE have been organized by the State Primary Education Board (SPEB).

Universal Basic Education is expected to kick- off on May 27, 2000. with the registration of Primary 1 pupils of the year 2000/2001 academic year. From the report of the state of readiness for the take-off in Kwara State, a clear picture of available resources and areas of need, particular y classroom facilities and teachers demand and supply, are as shown in Table 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Statistics showing the state of Classroom Facilities in Schools for a successful UBE Programme in Kwara State**

S/No	E.G. A	No of Schools	Total C/Rooms	C/Rooms in good Condition	C/Room Requiring Rehabilitation	Additional C/Rooms Required
1.	Asa	124	470	94	376	520
2	Barn ten	105	372	74	298	812
3.	Edu	82	303	61	242	651
4	Ekiti	30	157	31	126	178
5	Ifelodun	140	2.076	415	1.661	70
6.	Ilorin East	70	675	135	540	755
7.	florin South	36	412	82	330	462
8.	Ilorin West	47	730	146	584	869
9.	Irepodun	63	537	107	430	40
10.	Isin	24	403	81	322	11
11.	Kaiama	62	624	125	499	676
12.	Moro	117	395	79	316	565
13.	Offa	38	398	80	318	27
14.	Oke-Ero	17	212	42	170	236
15.	Oyun	58	494	99	395	35
16.	Patigi	60	355 "	71	284	23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>8613</b>	<b>1722</b>	<b>6891</b>	<b>55930</b>

*Source:* SPEB (2000). Report By Kwara State Primary Education Board on the state of Readiness for UBE p..2

Statistics in Table 1 show that out of the existing total classrooms of 8613 in all the 16 LGAs of the State, only 1722 classrooms (19.99%) are in good condition. Similarly 5.930 classrooms are still required to effectively accommodate pupils for the UBE programme in the State. This situation is critical, considering the fact that construction of buildings is capital intensive, and the fact that inadequate classroom facilities was one of the key factors responsible for the failure of the UPE scheme. No meaningful teaching and learning can take place in overcrowded classrooms and inconducive environments.

**Table 2: Statistics on Teachers Demand and Supply for a successful UBE Programme in Kwara State.**

S/N	L.G.A	No of Sch.	No of Stream	No of Tchrs.	Additional Tchrs required	Pupils Enroll	Unemployed NCE Graduates (K/State)
	Asa	124	940	876	768	18,807	42
1	Baruten	105	1,116	724	1,022	26,011	41
2	Edo	82	909	775	815	17,098	133
3	Ekiti	30	313	382	238	7,895	94
4	Ifelodun	140	2,076	1,570	856	26,470	408
5	Ilorin East	70	1,350	1,123	870	30,409	218
6	Ilorin South	36	824	658	534	17,550	64
7	Ilorin West	47	1,460	1,506	963	52,776	363
8	Irepodun	63	573	945	40	15,270	308
9	Isin	24	403	450	11	4,059	156
10	Kaiama	62	1,248	524	800	19,509	28
11	Moro	117	885	1,277	799	28,526	97
12	Offa	38	398	898	27	10,305	297
13	Oke-Ero	17	424	345	24	9,103	119
14	Oyun	58	494	783	35	13,101	214
15	Patigi	60	355	771	23	8,721	52
	Oter						468
	Total	1,073	13,733	13,307	7,825	305,610	3,202

Source: SPEB (2000). Report By Kwara State Primary Education Board On the state of Readiness for UBE p. 2

Statistics on teachers demand and supply in Table 2 show that 13307 teachers are engaged in teaching in the primary schools, while 7825 teachers, representing

58.80% are still required. Also, 3,202 NCH graduates are unemployed in the State. If all these graduates are employed, there is still a short-fall of 4,623 teachers. There is, thus, the need for concerted efforts to be made to ensure adequate supply of the necessary resources—teachers, classroom and other instructional materials—for a successful take-off and continuous implementation of UBE in the State.

### **Strategies for Universal Basic education (UBE) Implementation**

Implementation simply means putting a plan, scheme, decision, policy or idea into effect. Implementation, according to Mezieobi (1993), is the moving force of any plan without which the plan is only a good intention. Implementation of UBE therefore refers to the procedures for effectively carrying out the activities of the scheme with a view to achieving the specified educational objectives. Obviously, the objectives of UBE therefore refers to the procedures of effectively carrying out the activities of UBE scheme are laudable. However, a major problem of the Nigeria's education industry is how to operationalise well-intentioned and innovation-packed programmes through full commitment to their implementation. The following strategies are therefore suggested to successfully effectuate the UBE scheme intentions in practice:

#### **Planning**

The Planning process set in motion to assess the situations on ground in terms of the necessary resources, is a good start. However, the crucial stage of planning where provision is made for the needed resources is still far away. Adequate time should be given to identify other relevant variables and adequately provide for them. For examples, classrooms need to be renovated and many more need to be built. more teachers need to be trained for employment. All these activities require funds and time to plan for the take-off of the scheme. In addition, accurate data are needed. In the opinion of Obioma (1999), it is important to have base-line data on all relevant variables in order to make adequate financial and material provisions for planning purposes. Such data include census figures, and flow and stock statistics in the schools. Based on these data, adequate provisions should be made and handed over to the schools before the commencement, to avoid crash programmes.

Thus, the workability of UBE still needs to be ascertained before plunging into it on a nation-wide scale. The political policy has been made, but implementation resources such as funds, personnel, statistics and other facilities must be provided for, not being expected. It could also be progressively implemented, based on the

Availability of these resources, starting with the primary schools, before extending into secondary schools. The end should justify the means.

### **Funding and Financial Management**

Funding is the most important factor in the implementation of UBE scheme. It is on it that other factors relating to the procurement of resources are hinged. The need for improved funding of UBE by the federal, state and local governments is emphasised in the UBE implementation guidelines. Towards this end, the budgetary allocations of the three tiers of government would be further reinforced with revenue from Education Tax Fund, private sectors and civil society. Education fund is also to be established to be deducted directly from the Federation Account. In addition, due to the new clear direction of Nigerian polity, foreign aids to education could be a source of fund for UBE;. However, the genuineness of each of these sources should be ascertained, to avoid building castles in the air. This could be done by ensuring that, in addition to substantial governments' allocations, Education Trust Fund is fully committed to education - no diversion. Moreover, the sources, quantity and timing of foreign aids to education should be authenticated. Every government should be committed to allocate a sizeable proportion of its budget to the scheme. These measures become very necessary in view of expressed fears of financial handicap, even before the take - off. The Kaduna State commissioner for Education, while speaking on the state of preparedness for UBE, said:

*the major problem that may pose a serious threat to the smooth take - off of the scheme in the state may be lack of take - off grant from the federal government. Presently, there is a communication gap between the states and the federal government on this matter.*

(New Nigerian on Sunday May 14, 2000, p. 14) It is rather too early to experience any uncertainty;

Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme according to Shika (2000), collapsed due to mismanagement of funds allocated for the scheme by top government functionaries. Hence, in line with the current moves to check corruption in the country, there should be checks and balances to ensure that any amount allocated for a specific project is judiciously used. Funds allocated to States and Local Government Areas should have in-built mechanism for accountability, to prevent conversion of such money to other unrelated areas by state governors and local government officials.



## **Teacher Demand and Supply**

Successful implementation of UBE anchors on trained teachers. This is so Because professionally trained teachers are incontrovertibly perceived as the life wire of any educational system, as no educational system can rise above the level of its teachers (FRN. 1989). Employment of adequate number of well-trained and qualified teachers, who should be well motivated for improved teaching activities becomes important. Sources of recruiting qualified teachers should include the unemployed NCE graduates, and training of more teachers to meet the shortfall in supply- These teachers should be motivated through provision of incentives and conducive teaching environment.

For the teachers to function effectively, there should be adequate infrastructure and instructional materials such as relevant textbooks. The need for textbooks, at least in the core subjects for UBE, was emphasised by AbdulKareem (2000) when he submitted that concerted efforts must be made for writing, production, distribution, utilization and maintenance of relevant textbooks, for teachers' and pupils' use. Considering the fact that training of teachers takes a minimum of three years (using secondary school as a base) production of qualified teachers cannot be rushed. Effort should therefore be made to ascertain that this crucial implementation resource - teachers - is adequate in quantity and quality before the scheme takes off-Joint Proprietorship

One major problem of UPE, which appears to have been taken care of in UBE scheme, is lack of joint proprietorship. Unlike the UPE scheme which was totally a federal government affair, UBE is to be jointly owned and managed by the three tiers of government and the entire Nigerian populace - teachers, school administrators, parents, community members, philanthropic organisations and individuals. Though UBE requires joint proprietorship for its success, these stakeholders in the scheme should have clear perceptions as to what is demanded of them, to avoid role conflicts and mismanagement. The degrees of participation of these implementations team in the management of the scheme should be clearly stated. The Federal Government should therefore enact an Act specifying the roles and limitations of the three tiers of government (and other stakeholders) and accordingly assign proportional responsibilities for the success or failure of the scheme.

### **Continuous Evaluation Through Monitoring**

There is the need for a continuous quality control mechanism to ascertain the adequacy or otherwise of the different aspects of the implementation process of the UBE scheme. These aspects include improved curricula relevant to the needs of the pupils and the society; and enrolment drive to encourage parents to send their children to schools, especially in the so - called educationally disadvantaged areas (Asa. Baruten.Edu.Ilorin South.Kaiama, Moro, and PatigiL.G.Asof Kwara State).This could be done through adequate enlightenment campaigns and making the schools attractive enough. The attractiveness of the schools has to do with provision of functionall\ aesthetic infrastructure and relevant curricula. Top government functionaries also need to patronise the system by sending their children to such schools.

On the [whole](#), it should be borne in mind that the success of UBE scheme cannot be measured purely on the number of pupilsenrolle or who would pass through the system. Rather, the focus should be on whether or not the children receive the planned education. Priorities should therefore be given to educational goals rather than competition for quantitative supremacy. UBE must not be for scoring political gains alone.

### **Conclusion**

Universal Basic Education (UBE) is a laudable programme aimed at providing universal, free and compulsory education for the Nigerian child. The target of UBE scheme is both personal and societal development. However, considering the lessons of the past and the statistics of resources on ground, certain strategies need to be employed to provide easier and ready guidelines for a more successful and less wasteful UBE implementation. These strategies relate to adequate planning and provision for financial, human and physical resources.

## References

AbdulKareem, A.Y. (2000). "Adequate provision of lextbuokbuude, U,-,;>t<sub>15a</sub>! Basic Education Programme: The way out". A paper presented on UBE local level policy dialogue. Under the auspices of Kwara State Primary Education Board held at Bode Saadu on 11th & 12th May. Federal Republic of Nigeria (1989). *National policy on education*. Uaeos:

Federal Ministry of Education. Federal Republic of Nigeria (1978). *Report on major trends in education*.

Lagos:NERDC.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). *Implementation guidelines for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme*. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education, fvlezieobi, K. A. (1993). *Social studies curriculum implementation*. Owerri:

Whyte and Whyte

New Nigerian newspaper, Sunday, May 14, 2000. p. 14.

Obioma, G. (1999). "The use of census data in planning and implementation of UBE. A lead paper presented at a seminar on Demographics in Nigeria held at University of Calabar, 16th - 18th November. Shika, A. (1999). "Primary Education in Nigeria". New Nigerian Newspaper, Tuesday, September 8, 1999. p. 20.

A comprehensive report submitted by the Kwara State Primary Education Board on the state of readiness for UBE programme, at Abuja, 7th - 8th, March, 2000.