

Innovative Strategies for Funding Education for Sustainable Development Goal Four in Nigeria

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Abstract

Funding education for sustainable development goal four in Nigeria was viewed in terms of what sustainable options for funding education are to be adopted. Innovation is the process of translating ideas into a good or service that creates value for which customer will pay. Also, educational innovation refers to new ideas, technologies, policies, activities and knowledge introduced into the educational system to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness for quality service delivery. Sustainable development refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own development needs. Sustainable development goal four (SDG4) is geared towards all inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all. The study therefore viewed the objectives of sustainable development goal four (SDG4) which include amongst others, by 2030, to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. The study also analyzed innovative strategies which are considered as ways of resourceful funding of education in Nigeria as income generating strategy, cost saving strategy, macro-economic strategy and partial deregulation of the education sub sector. The study concluded that, in order to generate more funds, there is need to introduce macro-economic strategy where the government needs to diversify to other sectors of the economy. The study suggested amongst others that government should recognize basic education as a public good and therefore, accept the responsibility of providing it free for all citizens.

Keywords: Innovative, Funding, Sustainable development.

Introduction

Education is the supreme vehicle for national development, socio-economic, scientific and technological advancement. Generally, education is seen to be an indispensable tool for nation's economic growth and development. It has been empirically proven and universally acknowledged that unless the citizens of a country are well educated and appropriately trained, the achievements of rapid economic and social development cannot be guaranteed (Ahmed, 2018).

Nigeria as a nation has been making several efforts to ensure access to qualitative education. This is because of the place of education as a primary agent towards sustainable development and increasing people's capacities to transform their vision for society into reality. Hence, education is seen as an instrument par excellence for achieving national development. It is as a result of the premium placed on education that made the federal government of Nigeria in 1969 to organize the first ever National Curriculum Conference in education (Ikpeze, 2010). The outcomes and resolutions of that conference gave rise to the national policy on education which was first powered in 1977 and has been revised in 1981, 1996, 2004, 2013 and 2014 respectively. These revisions involved huge financial investment. According to Nwagwu (2017), since the implementation of the national policy on education in 1981, there have been a lot of innovations and reforms in the education system. Despite these reforms and the continuous huge investment by different regimes of government in Nigeria, it has not sufficiently lifted the nation from the morass of technological, political instability, social decadence and under-development. He further stated that most of these innovations and reforms are poorly implemented due to unsustainable funding. Therefore, for effective national development, there is need for adequate funding of education for sustainable development in Nigeria. The development of such option for funding will provide relevant data and evidence for some policy decisions on our educational enterprise which will lead to sustainable national development.

The financing of education is at the heart of the educational crisis in many countries of the world. In Nigeria, there appears to be a perennial crisis of funding and lack of definite structures and strategies in funding of education. With the economic revolution that is on-going in the rapid developments in information and communication technology (ICT), it is obvious that any country that wants to be reckoned with in the global arena must be outstandingly advanced in education. This ascertain conforms with Owoye (2016), that the objectives of education in any country represents the country's statement of intentions regarding what aspect of its social, economic and political needs and aspirations can or should be addressed by educational system. A review of the country's past would reveal that the role of education has always been appreciated. In spite of this notion of objectives, what is equally obvious is that, all the strategies introduced have been poorly implemented due to several reasons prominent which is unsustainable funding. Education empowers an individual to realize his/her potentials. However, this empowerment comes with the quality of education received. When positive changes are intended, vices such as inter-ethnic conflicts, anti-social behaviours, oppression, dishonesty, corruption and other unpatriotic acts cannot find space in the lives of Nigerians. Thus, sustainable development evolves when people perform efficiently with everyone perceiving it as a sense of duty and responsibility to contribute towards the well-being of others. Obayan (2019), asserted that providing education for the citizenry is a must, yet there can be no quality education without funding. The challenge of funding education in Nigeria has to do with lack of commitment on the part of the government to provide quality education to its citizens. This is evident in the last ten years where the total number of student's enrolment tripled while public resource allocated to the education sector continued to decline. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2018),

argued that the Nigerian government over the years has not met the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector despite the government's allocation towards education on a yearly basis. The reason for public funding of education is to equip people with the requisite knowledge, skills, and capacity to enhance the quality of life, productivity and enable them to participate actively in the development process. Education is being funded through internally generated income which includes consultancy services, farm products, investment and monitoring of consultancy educational programmes.

The Concept of Innovation

Innovation refers to the act of bringing in new ideas, a change in what has been. It is a change in status quo for a better functioning of an organization. It not only adapts to new conditions, but also creates new conditions. Okoye (2018), opined that innovation is a multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into improved products, services, and process in order to advance and differentiate themselves successfully, in the market places. It is the successful utilization of process, programmes or products which are introduced as a result of decision made within the organization. However, innovation is generally the process of translating ideas into a good or service that creates value for which customers will pay. It is the adopting of an idea or behaviour that is new to the organization for better outcomes. Educational innovation therefore refers to new ideas, technologies, policies, activities and knowledge introduced into the educational system to ensure greater efficiency, effectiveness for quality service delivery. It is based on looking beyond the status quo and developing new ideas that will improve the jobs, services, school climate, school culture, curriculum instruction and learning, and also impact positively on the activities that go on in the school environment. According to Akomolafe (2016), educational innovations have a link with performance and growth through improvement in efficiency, productivity, quality delivery and societal relevance. He further stated that educational innovations are specific changes or alterations in the educational organization which are geared towards improvement of the society at large, not just the education system, hence, constitute an instrument of necessary and positive changes needed for sustainable development.

The need for innovation in education is necessitated as a result of the old system not being relevant, not being adequate, not being effective in its service to customers, stakeholders, and students, and also not being compliant to the changing global trends. Peter (2017) asserted that since education serves the need of the society, it is indispensable for the thriving and survival of the society, hence should not only be comprehensive, sustainable and excellent, but must also continuously evolve to meet the challenges of the fast, ever changing and unpredictable globalized world. The level of education of a country ascertains the quality of its citizenry and this has made it imperative for educational innovations to be a necessity. However, its importance can never be over-estimated ranging from the pressure to increase value and improve educational outcomes for student, to being effective and efficient, being relevant to the

society, being satisfactory to customers and at the same time advancing the goals of education for sustainable development.

The Concept of Funding Education

For any education system to function and operate effectively, it must be adequately funded. In most countries of the world, education is funded by the government at all levels. Education is a social service that involves and requires adequate financial provision from all levels of government for successful execution of its programmes. Government's ultimate goal is to make education adequate and sound at all levels. Funding of education may not only include financial or material support such as payment of school fees, buying books, school uniform and other learning materials, it may also include to the large possible extent what government is not doing for education today. Educational funding include amongst others:

1. Funding of capacity building
2. Funding of educational infrastructural development
3. Funding of laws and policies formulation and implementation in education
4. Recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff and payment of their salary
5. Funding of monitoring and educational policy and programme implementation
6. Payment of school fees by parent/guardian
7. Provision of facilities such as library books, school buses, ICT facilities, etc.
8. Provision of counseling service in the schools, etc
9. Providing school with good nutrition
10. Extra-moral lesson by the local community (FRN, 2004).

Funding of education comes from several sources. The major one at all levels of government is public revenue from taxation. Education funds are reported to be distributed among primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels in the proportion of 30% and 40% respectively (Bulurni (2014). The public funding includes direct government expenditures in the form of subsidies to households such as tax reductions, scholarship, loans and grants. It also includes payment from Education Tax Funds (ETF) mainly for capital expenditures. Adewala et al., (2016) opined that presently, private sources account for about 20% of total national donors. The underlying rationale for public funding of education is to equip people with the requisite knowledge, skills and capacity to enhance the quality of life and increase productivity and capacity to gain knowledge of new techniques for production so as to be able to participate evocatively in the development process. Since education is regarded as "free" goods by the provider, the demand for it soared to such an extent that by the end of the 1980s, government could hardly cope. While the quantity of education increased drastically, the quality nose-dived to an unprecedented level. Hinchliffe (2015) asserted that federal budgetary allocation to education in normal terms rose from ₦62 million in 1970 to ₦1, 051.2 million in 1975. Thereafter, it declined to ₦667.1 million in 1980, declined in succeeding years before rising to ₦3, 399.3 million in 1987. It further

reduced to ₦1,553 million in 1991 before rising to ₦9,434.7 million in 1994. Thereafter, the declining trend has continued till the present day.

Strategies of Funding Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

According to Akinyemi (2017), funding education in Nigeria is a crucial national challenge. The political, social and economic factors which currently have significant impact on the world economy, have necessitated the need to diversify the sources of education funding mainly because reliance on only one source of revenue can hinder educational growth. However, these are some possible options of funding education.

- 1. Income Generating Strategy:** The following are considered as good for generous license in all levels of education.
 - i. Seeking assistance from international denors such as UNESCO, Uunicef, world Bank, etc.
 - ii. Establishing standard nursery, primary, secondary school which can generation a lot of money for the university.
 - iii. Through consultancy service such as sandwich programmes, post-time programmes.
 - iv. Establishing well stocked bookshop for commercial purposes.
 - v. Involving faculty members in carrying out functional research. Such projects would interest industries and other commercial enterprises that would pay for them.
 - vi. Establish endowment funds which should be properly managed.
 - vii. Seeking support and grants from states, local government and catchment area of the school.
 - viii. Establishing guest house within and outside the institution.
- 2. Cost-Saving Strategy:** Several investigation studies have shown that overall cost can be reduced if the following strategies are adopted in the education sector.
 - i. Merging smaller university or other schools of learning.
 - ii. Designing multi-purpose accommodation in the universities as in Britain. Only few houses should be rented outside by school authorities.
 - iii. Increasing student/teacher ratio and reduction of number of expatriate are available locally.
 - iv. Direct labour in executing small school projects
 - v. Taking inventory of all the material resources available in the institution and putting them to proper use.
 - vi. Adequate maintenance culture which wound greatly minimize wastage
 - vii. Adopting scientific/computer-based time table for space allocation.
 - viii. Stringent financial management and accountability to check fraud and financial mismanagement.
- 3. Macro-Economic Strategy:** The provision of extra resources for education is dependent on a durable and dynamic economy, an economy that is multi-directorial that is not

dependent only on the crude oil but assessing all other sectors of the economy so as to improve the financial capacity of the nation which will invariably affect the tertiary institutions. According to Samuel (2019), a multi-directional economy will provide a head long attack on poverty and a macro-economic strategy will improve the Gross National Products, Gross National Income and the per capital that will enable the government and the households to have additional resources to efficiently and effectively fund education.

4. **Partial Deregulation of the Education Sub-Sector:** The partial deregulation enable the government to bring in additional resources through different tax funds, private sector financing and managing some facilities, foreign aids technical assistance etc.

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) in Education

Sustainable development is mostly regarded as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own development needs. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) concisely expressed that, Sustainable development is an organizing principle for global development that supports the welfare of both people and planet. There are quite a number of Sustainable development goals in practice in Nigeria, example, Sustainable development goal 1,2,3,4, even up to goal 17. However, emphasis is on sustainable development goal 4 which is focused on quality, equitable and all inclusive education.

Sustainable development goal 4 (SDG4) is geared towards all inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. According to Sarchs (2015), the emphasis under this goal has worldwide coverage of quality education from pre-school though, at least secondary education and then on to more advanced skills training. He further stated that the ambition of the goal is to build a nation that will facilitate a realization of the full potential of each child in order that he/she can contribute to building a just, tolerant, and equalitarian Society. The vision of an inclusive quality education reflects on the idea of education for all, principally for those groups who are seen to be vulnerable. Particular emphasis is on equal access to all and lifelong education. It then means that those who lead education in several countries must give attention to all forms of education, both formal and non-formal. Zenelaj (2020) asserted that education is also perceived as the first step of sustainable development and a very significant step in improving a generation of people to appreciate the importance of sustainability. As reaffirmed at the UN conference on sustainable development, full access to quality education at all facets is an indispensable condition for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication, gender equality, and women empowerment, as well as human growth, for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including goal 4, and for the full involvement of both women and men especially young people. Sarchs (2015) saw sustainable development as a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individuals and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potentials over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and

environmental systems. He further stated that education plays a vital role in sustainable development by teaching and training the citizens to live responsibly and think about tomorrow and the future generation in their endeavours.

The International Education frame work and the 2030 agenda, as cited by (Global Campaign for Education, 2019) submitted that sustainable development goal four is the education goal that is objectively based on guaranteeing all-inclusive and equitable education that promote lifelong opportunities for all. Sustainable development goal four is embodied with ten definite targets/objectives which include;

1. By 2023, to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. The provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes should be ensured for all, without discrimination.
2. By 2023, to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pr-primary education is encouraged to be delivered by well-trained educators as well as that of early childhood development and care.
3. By 2030, to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. The provision of tertiary education should be made progressively free, in line with existing international agreements.
4. By 2030, to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Equitable access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) needs to be expanded while quality is ensured. Learning opportunities should be increased and diversified using a wide range of education and training modalities so that all youth and adults especially girls and women can acquire relevant knowledge skills and competencies for decent work and life. Beyond work specific skills, emphasis should be placed on developing high level cognitive and no-cognitive/transferable skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution which can be used across a range of occupational fields.
5. BY 2030, to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. Emphasizing on inclusion and equity, all people, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status, should have access to inclusive,

- equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. Vulnerable groups that require particular attention and targeted strategies include persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and the poor.
6. By 2030, to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. The principles, strategies and actions for this target are underpinned by the contemporary understanding of literacy as a continuum of proficiency levels in a given context. It goes beyond the understanding of a simple dichotomy of “literate” versus “illiterate”. Therefore, action for this target aims at ensuring that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education.
 7. By 2030, to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, amongst others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of culture diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.
 8. By 2030, to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status.
 9. By 2030, to substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small Island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communication technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes in developed countries and other developing countries. Scholarship programmes can play a vital role in providing opportunities for young people and adults who would otherwise not be able to afford to continue their education.
 10. By 2030, to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teachers training in developing countries especially least developed countries and Small Island developing States. Teachers are the key to achieving all of the sustainable development goal four targets. It requires urgent attention with a more immediate deadline, because the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantage areas. Since teachers are fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.

Funding Education for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)

Education is a human right and the most important factor in eradicating poverty and ensuring that individuals and communities acquire the knowledge and skill to ensure sustainable human and social development. However, the world and Nigeria in particular is still faced with a critically low level of investment in education. There are thousands of children and youth who do not go to school. There are still more adults with no literacy skills in Nigeria (Ahmed, 2018). To achieve the sustainable development goal for an inclusive, equitable and quality education for all (SDG4), global spending on education must increase annually. To deliver on the promise of sustainable development goal 4, investment in education must be boosted. According to Paul (2016), the global partnership for education (GPE) replenishment marks the beginning of a new era in education financing to reverse the trend of declining aid for education. He further stated that with increased disbursements over time, the global partnership for education has become the second largest multilateral donor to basic and secondary education. Through its scaled-up disbursement of funds, the education sector will have a chance to have a fund similar to those that have demonstrated large-scale success in other sectors. It is therefore imperative for government to act through sound policies, political will and strengthened partnerships and improved financing.

Conclusion

With the level of underfunding in all levels of education, there is the need to evolve some innovative strategies that will make it possible to advance educational grants and objectives. As part of the funding strategies, it is very vital to adhere to income generating strategies by seeking assistance from international bodies such as UNESCO, etc, establishing a well-stocked bookshop for commercial purposes, establishing endowment fund which should be managed properly, etc. Also, to generate macro funds, there is the need to introduce macro economy strategy where the government needs to diversify to other sectors of the economy. There should also be partial deregulation of the education so as to ensure the provision of additional resources.

Finally, private sector participation should be encouraged which will provide additional resources for the institutions.

Suggestions

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are made;

1. Government, in recognizing basic education as a public good, should accept the responsibility of providing it free for all citizens. In other words, government should aim at guaranteeing the supply as well as the demand for basic education.
2. For tertiary education, the private sector is incentivized to invest in and operate the provision of education based on market demand and supply framework. The private sector should be encouraged to mobilize investment capital.

3. The government should concession out the existing capital assests of its tertiary institutions to private entrepreneurs, whilst using the fees received to support deserving indigent students. With this funding architecture, Nigeria is likely to have an education funding legacy which is sustainable in terms of dynamism, effectiveness and adequacy.

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