

Capacity Building of Curriculum Implementers in Nigeria for the Achievement of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) - 2: The Journey So Far and Challenges Ahead

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Abstract: The paper examined the capacity building procedures of the curriculum implementers (Teachers), for the achievement of MDG – 2. Four research questions guided the study and a descriptive survey using ex-post facto design and brief interviews were adopted as the design and information gathering techniques using the Nigeria Teachers' Institute (NTI) BRIEF and TESSA training manuals. The findings showed that sequential training procedures for selection and their packages were in force for the workshops. There were obvious challenges facing the training workshops like the double selection of participants and the late release of funds among others. Recommendations were made like the prompt release of funds for the organization of the workshops in order to ensure the success of the programme.

Key words: Capacity • Building • Curriculum and MDG

INTRODUCTION

Teachers as curriculum implementers play key roles in determining the 'What' and 'how' of education and to guide learners aright. They are trained to impart knowledge skills and attitudes to learners. The goals of teacher education are stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2013:8). The policy went further to stipulate means of effecting these changes through the establishment of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in a variety of ways. Education is an industry that depends more on the stability of its staff and since teachers are the pillars of the education system, its success depends on them. Their recruitment, training, retraining and motivation need to receive serious attention if they are to be effective. Teachers are trained to be competent and skillful in order to impart knowledge to learners effectively.

The aim of the UBE programme was to enhance the reform in the education sector; hence its inauguration in 1999. In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria enacted the Basic Education Law which led to the provision of 29% of its consolidated revenue funds to financing it (Universal Basic Education Document, 2010). UBE as laid down in the National Policy on Education (2013) aims at

free and compulsory education for all for the first nine years; hence it is universal. The scheme is based on the realization that education should be opened to all irrespective of economic and social backgrounds. The emphasis of the programme is quality education as an indispensable pre-requisite for coping with issues and problems of the modern world and laying sound foundation for sustaining life long education.

According to Federal Government of Nigeria [1] the objectives of UBE programme as specified in the implementation guidelines of the Federal Government of Nigeria include:

- Ensuring unfettered access to 9 years of formal basic education.
- Provision of free UBE for every Nigerian child of school age.
- Reducing drastically, the incidence of dropouts from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency and
- Ensuring the acquisition of appropriate level 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.

Nigeria is a signatory to a number of internal protocols that seek to uphold the right of every child to quality education and life: Among them is the Dakar Framework for Action (2010). According to Federal Republic of Nigeria [2] this framework is machinery put in place to achieve education for all by 2015, which is the essence of the MDGs and the UBE scheme in the Nigerian context. These Nigerian initiatives made it clear on how quality education for all should be achieved, hence the need to examine how the curriculum implementers have been packaged for this great assignment.

In September, 2000, 189 Heads of States and Government gathered to reaffirm their faith in United Nations and to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration for improving the citizens of developing and under-developed nations of the world. Gbenedo [3] states that the 8 key goals and 21 targets were set out to be attained on or before 2015. The 8 key goals are:

- Goal 1: Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Promotion of Universal Primary Education
- Goal 3: Promotion of gender equality and empowerment.
- Goal 4: Reduction of child mortality
- Goal 5: Improvement of maternal health
- Goal 6: Combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases.
- Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability and
- Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

The set target year for the achievement of these goals is 2015, which is just a year to go. As education is a veritable tool for achieving sound national development, the Federal Government of Nigeria has shown keen interest in the achievement of this global declaration. Of interest to this study is goal 2 - 'Promotion of Universal Primary Education' (UPE). This was designed to provide quality education for children of primary school age to junior secondary school. Kupoluyi [4] reiterates that the Federal Government of Nigeria has shown serious commitment in achieving goal 2 by aiding the states of the federation in expanding and maintaining their basic education and providing instructional materials and building the capacities of teachers. This accomplishment is ably backed up by Nigeria Teachers' Institute (NTI), whose major aim is to empower teachers in diverse ways to achieve the education goal.

Basic education is the foundation for other levels of education; so it requires improvement in order to ensure

meaningful impact. To achieve this, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Federal Teacher's Scheme (FTS) as a way of handling quality teachers for the basic education level. This programme was funded from the Debt Relief Grants (DRGs) and implemented under the Millennium Development Goal Projects [5].

The author explains that the government had to establish the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in order to quicken the capacity building of teachers. The procedure was to organize workshops for unemployed Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers to equip them. Also, the commission with the help of NTI had to select Colleges of Education and Universities across the country for the workshops using standard training manuals developed by NTI and evaluated and supervised by UBEC. These efforts have led to the present study in order to determine how the curriculum implementers' capacities have been built for the achievement of MDG –2.

Statement of the Problem: Year 2015 was set as a target for the attainment of the MDGs and this has led to the establishment of MDGs offices in each State of the Federation of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory. Basic education being the foundation for the other levels of education requires improvement in order to ensure meaningful impact. Status of MDGs in Nigeria indicates that the country may not likely meet up the targets in some areas including education. National Commission for Mass Literary, Adult and Non-Formal Education (2014) has it that 35% (56 million) of Nigerians are still considered to be illiterate [6]. Howbeit, some strides have been made to attain MDG–2 on education, as there are now high number of children in school and a lot of adult getting basic education. The problem posed by this study now is: How are the capacities of curriculum implementers built for the achievement of MDG –2 so far and what are the challenges ahead?

Purpose of the Study: The study aimed at examining:

- The selection pattern and involvements in the capacity building programme for curriculum implementers
- What is involved in the training packages, selection, procedures and scope of programme for the training of the implementers?
- The roles of partners/stakeholders in the monitoring of the training programmes and
- The challenges in the training programme.

Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the teachers' selection patterns and involvements in the capacity building of curriculum implementers?
- What are the training packages and scope of the programme of the capacity building of the curriculum implementers from 2006-2012?
- What are the roles of partners/stakeholders in the capacity building of teachers for the achievement of MDG -2?
- What are the challenges facing the training programme of the curriculum implementers for the achievement of MDG -2?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of the Study: A descriptive survey research type involving ex-post facto design/ minor interviews was adopted. It entailed a detailed examination of the National Teachers' Institute Training Manual – BRIEF on capacity building of teachers under the 2012 MDGs and Project and training/retraining resource materials– Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA). The ex-post facto design was considered appropriate for the study because, it dealt mostly with the examination of the said documents that cannot be manipulated or changed for now until they are updated. Skeletal interviews were conducted on some of the teachers in Ebonyi State to authenticate the contents of the NTI training manual, as the researcher was also one of the facilitators in the State for the 2013 programme.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the patterns of teachers' selection of the capacity building for the achievement of MDG –2 in Nigeria from 2006-2012?

Table 1 presents the data that answered research question 1.

Table 1 presents the pattern of selection from 2006 to 2012. Targeted population for 2006 was 143, 140, but the actual number trained was 141, 144 with a short fall of 2, 996. Year 2007 was used as an appraisal/adjustment year to tighten loose ends for better outputs. In 2008, the targeted population of teachers was 158, 600, but 156, 592 were actually trained, leaving a short fall of 2008. 120, 000 teachers were selected to be trained in 2009, but only 115, 415 made it with a shortfall of 4, 585. In 2010, a population of 140, 000 teachers was drawn for the training, but only

136, 029 teachers were actually trained, recording a shortfall of 3, 971.

Again in 2011, 118, 089 teachers were selected for the training and 118044 were successfully trained, while 45 teachers could not make it. Finally, in 2012, 40, 000 teachers were selected for the training; 39, 928 were actually trained, leaving a shortfall of 72. The result in table 1 shows that they have been giant strides made by the Federal Government to build the capacities of the teachers for the achievement of MDG – 2. On the whole, the estimated number to be trained for the 6 years running was 719, 829, but 707, 152 were successfully trained, leaving a total shortfall of 12, 677.

Research Question 2: What are the training packages, selection procedures and scope of the programme for the capacity building of the curriculum implementers of MDG - 2?

Table 2 presents the data that answered research question 2.

Table 2 is the picture of the training packages, selection procedures/scope for the training of the implementers of MDG –2. The training covers the basic core subjects of English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Basic Sciences and Technology and ICTs for both the primary and secondary school teachers. In addition, school based assessment and improvisation and basic teaching methods are added for the primary school teachers. The comprehensive training manual/ materials of Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) are used for the training and they are constantly being reviewed. State Ministries of Education through their various organs like: State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB); Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) and Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA) help in the selection of the participating teachers based on the following criteria: (a) The teacher must be teaching in a public school; (b) S(he) must not have less than 3 years to go before retirement from the service and (c) The teacher must not have participated in the previous workshops. So far, the organization of the training and its schedule shows that the Federal Government has shown some levels of commitment in teachers' capacity building for the achievement of MDG - 2.

Research Question 3: What are the roles of partners/ stakeholders in the capacity building of curriculum implementers for the achievement of MDG – 2?.

Table 3 presents the data that answered research question 3.

Table 1: Pattern of teachers' selection and involvements from 2006-2012

Year	Targeted Population	Actual No. Trained	Shortfall	No. of training centres
2006	143, 140	14, 144	2, 996	178
2007		<i>RE APPRAISAL/ADJUSTMENT PERIOD</i>		
2008	158, 600	156, 592	2, 008	275
2009	120, 000	115, 415	4, 585	249
2010	140, 000	136, 029	3, 971	280
2011	118, 089	118, 044	45	250
2012	40, 000	39, 928	72	109
Grand Total	719, 829	707, 152	12, 677	

Source: Extracted from NTI BRIEF, 2012

Table 2: Training packages, selection procedures and scope of the teachers' capacity building

Level	Training Packages	Condition/Scope of Selection	Training Manual/sequence	Selecting Bodies
Basic Level; (Primary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Mathematics Social studies Basic Science and Technology In addition, School based assessment and improvisation Basic teaching methods ICTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant must be a serving teacher in public school. Not have less than 3 years to go before retiring from service and Not have participated in the previous workshops 	Training manual/materials of TESSA based on Activity- Based Approach	State Ministry of Education through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) Local Government Authorities (LGEA)
Post Basic Level (Junior Secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Mathematics Social Studies Basic Science and Technology ICTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A participant must be a serving teacher in public school. Not have less than 3 years to go before retiring from service and Not have participated in the previous workshops 	Training manual/materials of TESSA based on Activity- Based Approach	State Ministry of Education through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) Local Government Authorities (LGEA)

Source: TESSA Training Manual, 2007

Table 3: Partners/stakeholders in the capacity building of curriculum implementers

Stakeholders	Specific Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators 	These are experts drawn from Tertiary Institutions that drill teachers on the contents and application of the contents and to impart same to learners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zonal/Centre Coordinators; Supervisors and Mentors 	These are teams of professionals both in active service and those who have retired from service that keenly monitor the training sessions; resolve local issues affecting the zonal /centre activities and report back to the higher authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Ministry of Education Monitoring Teams, UBEC, UBEB, NTI, NUT and TRCN Monitoring Teams 	These teams of experts work in their hierarchical order to monitor down to the grassroots, happenings at various centres and resolved issues that would hinder the smooth training sessions. They rapport with all that are connected with the training and report back to the Federal MDGs office in Nigeria

Source: NTI BREF, 2012

Table 3 presents the data that answered research question 3 on the roles of partners/stakeholders in the capacity building of implementers of the curriculum to achieve MDG-2. A close observation of the Table shows that there are structured activities for all categories of partners. The facilitators are experts mainly drawn from institutions of higher learning to drill the teachers on how to handle their students/pupils in their areas: The monitoring teams of zonal/centre coordinators, supervisors, managers and mentors work hand in hand in

their zones and centres, making sure that the training sessions move smoothly. They write weekly report on their centre or zonal activities.

Again at a higher level, the Federal Ministry of Education works through the monitoring teams of UBEC, UBEB, NTI, NUT and TRCN. Once in a while, these teams that work as a body visit designated centres and interact with the participants, facilitators and the coordinators and resolve higher-order issues that may emanate. The findings showed that there is a structured

Table 4: Challenges facing the training programme of the curriculum implementers

S/N	Challenges	Proffered solutions
1.	Delay in the submission of list of nominees	Timely decision on the selection procedure.
2.	Repeated nomination of teachers that have taken part in the previous workshops.	Proper screening of the yearly list to avoid these repeats
3.	Delay in the release of funds which causes wrong timing of the workshops	Funds to be released on time for the acquisition of the basic infrastructure for the training at the appropriate time.
4.	Difficult terrain and far centres that affect participants' punctuality and regularity to the training	Creating of additional centres within the participants' reach
5.	Deplorable conditions of facilities in the centres and shortage of instructional materials for training	Proper equipping of the various centres with the basic instructional materials.
6.	Delay in the payment of honorarium due to some logistic problems	Such logistic problems need to be promptly tackled in order not to hinder the training programme

Source: Adapted from the NTI BRIEF, 2012:5-6

monitoring programme put in place to facilitate a hitch free training session for the curriculum implementers in order to achieve MDG - 2.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges facing the training programme of the curriculum implementers for the achievement of MDG –2?

Table 4 presents the data that answered research questions 4.

Table 4 depicts the challenges facing the training programme of the curriculum implementers for the achievement of MDG – 2 and the way forward. They include delay in the submission of list of nominees; repeated selection, delay in the release of funds; difficult terrain to and deplorable facilities in the centres and delay in the payment of the honourarum for the participants. Solutions were proffered as can be seen in table 4 to remove these bottlenecks. From Table 4 above, it is obvious that any well meaning programme will have challenges, but need to be properly tackled to achieve the needed results.

DISCUSSION

The study examined the capacity building of teachers in order to achieve MDG – 2. The findings of the study in Table 1 showed that a significant number of teachers are trained in Nigeria for the achievement of MDG –2 right from 2006 to 2012. According to National Teachers Institute [7] achieving quality education depends on the capability of teachers as curriculum implementers. Supporting these findings, Universal Basic Education Commission [8] reiterated that the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Federal Teachers' Scheme (FTS) as a way of handling quality teachers for the basic education level. The shortfall recorded for each year's training was attributed to logistics problems like communication and wrong documentation of participating

procedures. Interviews conducted by the researcher showed that there was selective nomination and favouritism among the officials and participants. The findings showed that there was no workshop for 2007. The year was devoted to assessing the initial take off of the programme in 2006 for future adjustment and for better output.

In Table 2, the findings presented the training packages, selection conditions and bodies involved. TESSA (2007) highlighted the need for retraining teachers in the teaching of the basic subjects at all levels. In addition, the document included extra training for the primary school teachers in school-based assessment and improvisation and basic teaching methods. This might be as a result of most of the teachers at this level not being degree holders in education where they must have been drilled in the rubrics of teaching and assessments. Supporting the findings in table 2, NTI BRIEF Document (2012) emphasized the need to properly select the teachers following the conditions stipulated. To make the selection comprehensive, the State Ministries of Education work with their collaborating bodies to select the teachers under the watchful eyes of NTI. TESSA Document (2007) provides the training sequence guide and materials to be used which is "Activity Based Approach".

The findings in Table 3 showed that there is a hierarchy of stakeholders and their specified duties. The facilitators are there to impart the desired teaching skills to the participants, while the chains of coordinators/supervisors at various levels are there to monitor the training sessions. This is because human beings most times need supervision in order to put in their best. Again, it is just one year to go to reach the target year for the achievement of the MDGs, so urgent attention is needed. Mohammed [5] rightly pointed out that the base line data indicated that the net attendance levels for basic schooling has risen considerably; so there is the need to keep up the pace for better achievement.

The need for monitoring the programme according to Federal Republic of Nigeria [2] is to encourage partnership with NTI and all relevant stakeholders, to make the capacity building of the implementers a huge success. They are encouraged to mobilize the participants, observe the ongoing training sessions, make corrections and write their reports.

The envisaged/encountered problems are presented in Table 4. In line with these findings, FGN (2012) pointed that the obvious decline in the quality of teaching and learning in primary and post basic levels is as a result of inadequate infrastructure, lack of basic teaching materials and non-challant attitudes of parents and school managers and lack of quality teachers. These problems are also encountered in the training sessions. The findings in Table 4 however have proffered solutions to the challenges.

On the whole, the findings of the study portrayed that Nigeria has made giant stride to achieve MDG – 2. With the streamlined pattern of capacity building of teachers for its attainment, Nigeria is at the verge of achieving Universal Primary Education.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed at ascertaining the capacity building of the curriculum implementers (Teachers) for the achievement of MDG–2. This goal is “Achieving Universal Primary Education” which is set to ensure that all boys and girls undergo a complete primary education by 2015. Teachers as curriculum implementers play key roles in this achievement; hence the need for the study. The study findings showed that there are proper selection of the trainers and trainees; well packaged TESSA training manuals/materials with chains of able monitors put in place for proper supervision of the programme down to the grassroots.

Howbeit, the study findings showed that there were obvious challenges in the training programme which include: repeated selection of participants, delay in release of funds; difficult terrain leading to some of the centres; deplorable conditions of facilities and deficient instructional materials for the training, among others. Notwithstanding, the findings showed that Nigeria has made genuine efforts to prepare the nation builders (Teachers) for the achievement of MDG –2, by 2015.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Nigerian government should plead with the United Nations’ Authority to extend the achievement of the MDGs to 2020 for full attainment.
- The concerned authorities should properly screen the nominees’ lists, to make sure that each participant is trained once.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should promptly release the needed funds for the organization of the training workshops in order not to delay the programme.
- The facilitators should be properly monitored in order to ensure that they are doing the right thing and proper orientation done for them.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria should as a matter of urgency, create more training centres and properly equip them for easy training processes.

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