



# POLICY BRIEF

For LGA Key Decision Makers, Policy Makers, Policy Champions at State LGAs

BE VOLUME 1

## FORGING POLICY AND PROGRAM DIALOGUE IN SUPPORT OF BASIC EDUCATION IN COMPASS PROJECT STATES AND LGAS

### Introduction and Background

Education in Nigeria has evolved over a long period of time, with a series of policy changes. The 1976 Universal Primary Education Program (UPEP) gave every child the right to tuition-free primary education. Later, the 6-3-3-4 system was introduced, establishing six years of primary education, followed by three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education.

**T**his policy brief attempts to contribute to the process of forging policy dialogue and programmatic actions in COMPASS States (including LGA and community levels) on basic education and, in particular, the UBE Act.

The passage of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act in April 2004 marked another phase in the Government of Nigeria's history of seeking to ensure basic education for all (EFA). The Federal Government also noted that UBE is the hope for the nation to actualize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015<sup>1</sup>. This policy brief attempts to put into context the nature of changes being enacted and reasons for the enactment of UBE, and how the change in policy that UBE represents, is intended to take place at federal, state and local government levels.

The policy change which UBE represents is desirable in order to enable Nigeria to carry out its commitment to achieve the MDGs as well as those of EFA. These targets are not short-term achievements. The country's effort at achieving these targets could very well be tied to the successful implementation of the UBE Act, since it promises to provide young Nigerians with the opportunity to improve their quality of life through the pursuit and acquisition of education and skills.

### Highlights

Introduction

Hindrances in Education

Changes enacted under UBE

### MDG Education Related Goals:

Ensure all children complete primary education of adequate quality.

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.

**EFA Goals:**

Expand and improve Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Universal Basic Education

Equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills program

Achieve 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2005.

Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and gender equality 2015

Improve quality of education

**THE NATURE OF CHANGE ENACTED UNDER UBE**

To articulate and coordinate the achievements of the EFA and MDGs, UBEC was established and formally came into being on 7<sup>th</sup> October of 2004. The Act establishing the National Primary Education Committee (NPEC) with its related affiliates was repealed. The UBEC has replaced the NPEC while the State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs) were repealed and replaced by the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs).

The current UBE policy underscores the need for free compulsory basic education. It makes a funding commitment as one of the key drivers of actualizing the policy agenda. The UBE policy requires that:

A child completes a 9 year basic education comprising 6 years of primary and 3 years of Junior secondary School (JSS).

The policy on UBE provides an opportunity for greater allocation of financial resources to the basic education sector.

Compulsory Free UBE is made mandatory for a child of school age (6 – 11).

A child is not expected to pay a school fee or pay for school services such as books, instructional materials, classrooms, furniture and lunch.

The purpose of making the education free is to afford all children physically challenged as well as other disadvantaged groups such as orphans, nomadic migrants, and the poor the opportunity for basic education.

Operational guideline on sub-sector allocations exist (ECCE, Primary and JSS) paying attention to infrastructure development, instructional materials and teachers' professional development.

The policy has made UBE compulsory and also empowers the appropriate court authority to penalize the parent or guardian who refuses to send his/her child to school and ensure that he/she completes a 9 year basic education.

The policy also makes it an offence to collect fees for services outlined as free and recommends the appropriate penalty.

The UBE encompasses ECCE, the six years of primary schooling, 3 years of JSS, adult literacy and non formal education, skills acquisition program and education of special groups such as nomads and migrants, girl children and women, almajiri (students from informal Islamic schools who are sent out to beg) and disabled groups. This is an expanded scope from the past. 5% of the total amount earmarked for the UBE intervention

**WHY A CHANGE IN EDUCATION POLICY IS NEEDED**

The following reasons can be cited, namely, there is:

Under funding of basic education

Shortages of infrastructure

Shortages of instructional materials

Many children do not attend school

Lack of teacher professional development

Low learning achievements

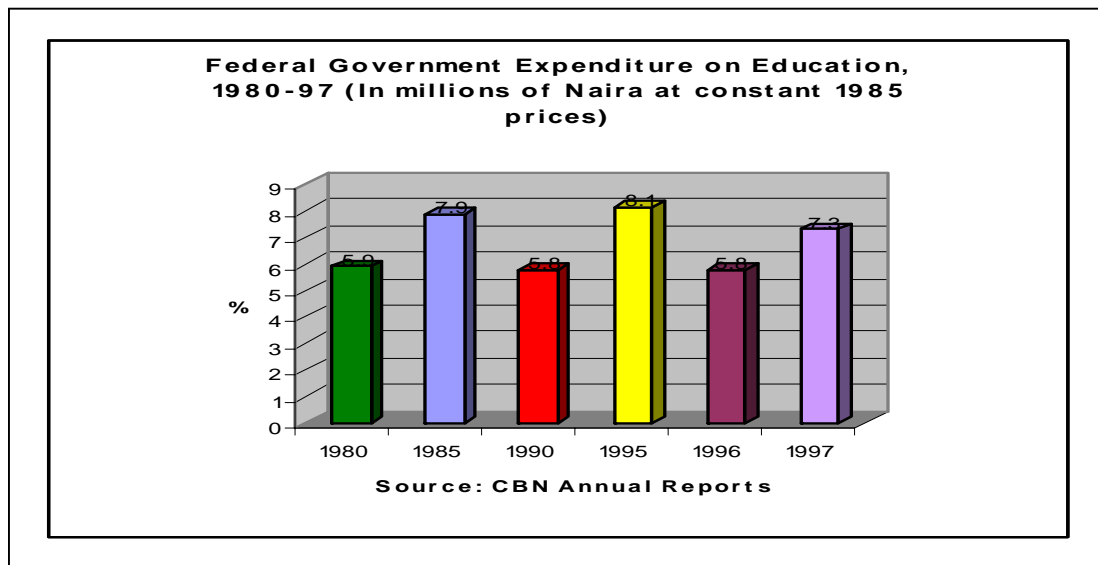
Geographic and gender inequity

Low literacy levels

### Under funding of basic education

The 2006 draft budget proposal to the National Assembly (Vanguard December 7 2006) captured social sectoral expenditure with education earmarked 11%. Although, this compares favorably among the other social sectors' expenditure heads, it falls below United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendation of 26%. The best available estimates (Hinchliffe, 2002, World Bank report) are that Nigeria spent 14% of total public expenditure (in all three tiers of government) on education in 1998, which comprises 2.3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared with the averages of 20% and 4.7%, respectively, for 19 countries across Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) . From 1980 – 97, percentage of total federal government expenditure on education had remained lower than 9%.

### Federal Government Expenditure on Education, 1980—97 (In millions of Naira at constant 1985 prices)



STATE	YEAR 2003		YEAR 2004	
	RECURRENT	CAPITAL	RECURRENT	CAPITAL
KANO	2.2	0.6	2.8	0.6
NASARAWA	2.0	2.1	2.7	2.1

Also, there are very large differences among states and among LGAs in their efforts to fund education. A study conducted under the Literacy Enhancement Achievement Project (LEAP, 2004) in states where COM-PASS is present, shows that there are no established algorithms for determining these allocations; rather,

they are based on ad hoc increments added to the previous year's allocations. Nasarawa and Kano States are cases in point. The funding needed to implement UBE will require a concerted effort by State and LGAs to increased expenditures and strengthen financial management at all levels. This will be required to build and sustain the new educational system that is envisioned.

### Shortages of infrastructure, instructional materials and quality teachers

There are gross shortages of furniture, instructional materials for the classrooms and qualified teachers. The current pupil teacher ratio which is not optimal is worsened by inadequate and dilapidated classroom conditions. This scenario negates a picture of a good school. Fafunwa ex education Minister lamented on the plight of teachers in the schools. As quoted by Breger (Source: THISDAY Oct 5, 2005 Pg. 50,) "Teachers are the best resource of the system in any education system in the world. Without teachers you can not do anything".

### National Summary of Primary Schools Statistics

	Bauchi	Kano	Lagos	Nasarawa	FCT	National Total	National Average
Total schools (pre-primary)	46	181	294	76	140	8,845	239
Primary Schools	1,760	2,670	1,219	1,089	449	5,518	1,366
Total Female Teachers	2,320	470	1,986	3,632	2,897	242,839	491,751
Total Male Teachers	10,143	19,444	4,401	7,640	2,676	248,912	6,727
Total Teachers	12,463	23,514	20,387	11,272	5,573	491,751	13,291
Pupil Teacher Ratio	52.49	52.28	26.40	30.15	34.67	-	39.33

Source: Federal Ministry of Education Baseline 2001

### National Summary of Primary School Teachers with NCE Certificate

#### (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2002)

	Female	Male	Total
Bauchi	361	1,365	1,726
Kano	1,055	3,341	4,396
Lagos	4,660	2,076	6,736
Nasarawa	1,199	2,464	3,663
FCT	1,581	1,321	2,902
National	126,526	79,903	206,429
Average	3,420	2,160	5,579

Source: Federal Ministry of Education Baseline 2001

## Many children are out of school

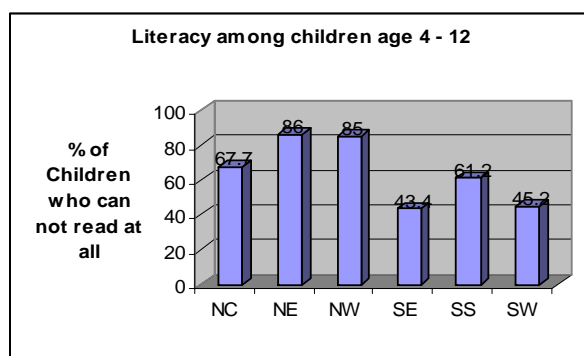
About 40% children are out of school with more girls out of school than boys. 60% of the primary school-age children (age 6 – 11) attend primary school. Males are more likely than females to attend primary school (64 percent versus 57 percent respectively). In addition, there is sizeable urban- rural difference in the net attendance ratio: 70 percent of children in urban areas attend primary school, compared with 56 percent in rural areas (NDES, 2004). Also acknowledged by Breger (WB), “First there is progress being made and from the Bank’s point of view very happy for the government making a very big and serious effort is getting the MDGs. However, where we are today, we will need more to be done. We are at 88 percent gross enrolment, which means that if you subtract the repeaters and the over aged children then you will have a net enrolment of about 60 percent. That leaves about 40 percent children out of primary school.”

## Low learning Achievements

The 1996 nationwide test score conducted under Measuring Learning and Achievement (MLA) project coordinated by Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) revealed lower than 40 pass marks in all subjects taken by primary 4 pupils in public schools. National averages were (Numeracy 32.2, Literacy 25.17 and life skills 32.62). While Kano and Bauchi states Numeracy scores were 43.59 and 16.6 respectively with Lagos achieving 37.07 in literacy. These results also were not significantly different from the scores obtained from the private schools. Also, results from JSS show credit pass rates in English, Mathematics and Integrated Science to be within the range of 16 and 30 percent between 1985 and 1998. Nigeria Demographic Health Survey (DHS) Education Data 2004 below shows similar discouraging learning achievements in numeracy and literacy skills with variation across the six (6) geopolitical regions.

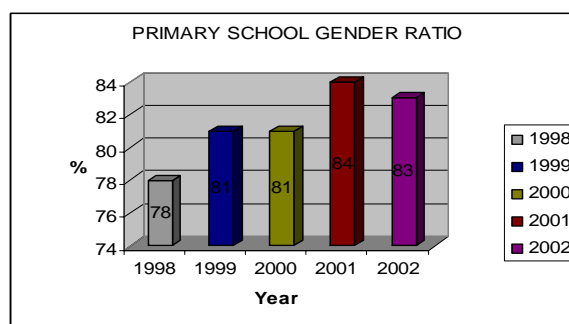
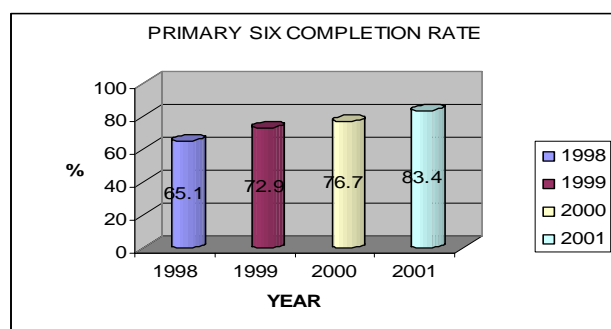
As Breger puts it “Memorization and rote learning are not the only achievement you should take from the system.

What you should take from the system is that at the end of the day, a Nigerian child coming out of primary or junior secondary school should have a number of competencies and basic skills which include good communication, being literate, in reading, writing, mathematics and science and having a positive and a good attitude to working in teams, group work, being able to do critical thinking, to define problems and to propose solutions, having at least knowledge of one or two other languages than the mother tongue and in general being ready and being able to learn how to learn.” – THISDAY Oct. 5 Pg. 49



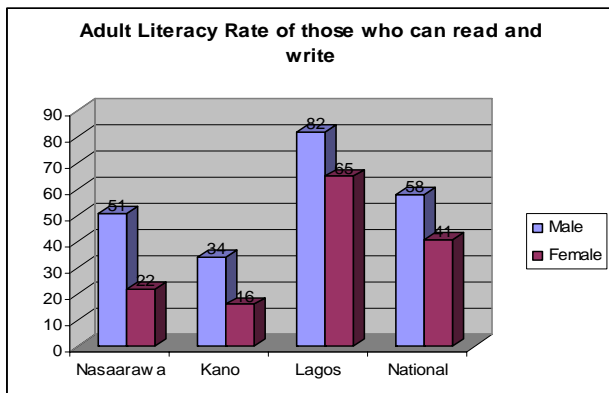
## Geographical and gender inequity

Geographical inequity exists with implications for achieving UBE by the year 2015. Wide variations in the enrolment rates, completion rates and learning achievements across regions, states, gender, location and household incomes exist. Absence of strategic objectives for short, medium and long term targets based on these differences may jeopardize the achievement of UBE goal by 2015.



Source: Federal Ministry of Education April 2003,

## Low Adult literacy level



Literacy rates are lower among females than males and in Kano and Nasarawa; the averages are lower than the national figures. A high illiteracy level has a strong correlation with a high level of poverty, as shown in these two states, as well as contributing to a vicious cycle of low pupil enrolment. Though agencies for mass literacy exist at national, zonal and state levels, functional literacy and funding issues are keys to improving current dismal figures while also paying attention to women. Some government efforts to improve adult literacy have been showcased by Jigawa State. For example, Jigawa SUBEB has concluded all necessary arrangement to establish 270 literacy

classes in the existing twenty seven local councils of the state. The executive chairman of the board Alhaji Babangida Hussaini stated while speaking with the Vanguard in Dutse, “the introduction of the literacy classes was part of the present administration’s commitment to curtail illiteracy among its citizens, adding that about 8,100 people are expected to benefit from the program and government will provide an enabling environment for them to acquire knowledge.”

## Lack of meaningful involvement and participation of parents and community in children’s education

Though many people are involved in delivering basic education at the state and federal levels, there is limited participation by the community in primary schools. For example, the role of Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) consists of mobilizing parents for labor work as opposed to managing the schools in any way. The increasing push for the community to be more involved in the management of the schools, to address the perennial concerns of quality and access as well as sustainability, remains a priority. Relevant State and LGA functionaries should therefore increase support for and commitment to Community Coalitions (CCs). This can be done by involving the CCs through dialogue sessions with traditional leaders and other community members to articulate their needs and concerns in BE and provide them with the wherewithal to address those needs. For example, COMPASS is planning to offer grants to PTAs to renovate and rehabilitate schools; to provide in-service teacher training, and support for interactive radio broadcasts to enable distance learning.

Increased community participation in the affairs of the schools is desirable because it

- Provides an opportunity to promote dialogue to support increasing girls’ access to schools in areas where girls’ enrolment is on the decline
- Promotes ownership and effective local coordination
- Encourages private partnership in support of increasing funding to sustain efforts

## HOW IS THE CHANGE IN POLICY TO TAKE PLACE AT FG, STATE AND LGA LEVELS

FGN share of the consolidated revenue (2%) is to be dedicated to UBE Program

75% of the FGN share of the consolidated revenue is to be shared equally among the states.

Both FG funds and that contributed by the state (50% equal match) will be shared between Primary, JSS and ECCE in a ratio of 60, 35 and 5 respectively.

Funds allocated to Primary, JSS and ECCE will be spread across three key components namely infrastructure, instructional materials and teachers' professional development also in a ratio of 70, 15 and 15 respectively.

Needs Assessments have been conducted nationwide and this exercise is expected to further clarify how the remaining 25% of the FG grant is to be shared across the disadvantaged states 14%, advantaged states 5%, school feeding 2%, and special education 2%. The remaining 2% is for overhead cost of running the UBE by UBEC

Quarterly work plans by the states will precede the release of funds but this will be changed to an annual work plan beginning in 2006 with quarterly releases of funds made upon the certification of monitoring reports by the school, LGEA official, SUBEB official and UBEC. Monitoring is expected to be done in 3 phases from the beginning of a project to its completion phase particularly with infrastructural development. UBEC zonal offices are also to support the UBEC Headquarters in the monitoring of UBE in the states.

States are to be guided by the minimum standards contained in the national policy on education, as well as national education curriculum, while committing the funds on infrastructural development, instructional materials and professional teacher development.

A technical committee comprised of staff from the planning, research and statistics, procurement, audit, and legal, departments in UBEC will examine the feasibility and costing of the states' work plans to ensure that they can be implemented as intended.

The Governing Board of UBEC is the "eye" and "ear" of the presidency that approves expenditure for the commission's overhead running costs.

#### **"Nasarawa sets pace allocates 26% to education" (Source: Vanguard November 10, 2005)**

Nasarawa has become first in the federation so far, to allocate 26% of its budget to education, in compliance with UNESCO recommendation. Nasarawa Commissioner for health, Dr. Mohammed Ahmed, revealed that 26% of the state budget goes to education while delivering a speech recently in his capacity as chairman of the school feeding program launching committee. By this disclosure, Nasarawa seems to take a lead in giving primacy to education in budgetary allocation, even far ahead of the federal government whose education budget is still less than 10%. Dr. Ahmed further said for a nation to be prosperous, it should educate and feed the children. Nasarawa has taken up the challenge to feed its pupils in order to fulfill the goals and aspiration of qualitative education and human development. The health commissioner noted that the national school feeding program was conceived by President Obasanjo to reform the education sector for attainment of the MDGs, the UBE, and elimination of human hunger among children by providing liquid foods to meet health needs of our children in the school system. According to him, "this is practical expression of our love to ensure the well being of children, our hope for the future."

#### **"El-Rufa'i Committed to success of UBE" (Source: Daily Trust December 19, 2005)**

The Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Malam Nasir Ahmed el-Rufa'i, has assured that this administration is ever committed to the realization of the UBE program in the FCT. The minister represented by the executive secretary (FCTA), Engineer Sani Alhassan, said it at the launch of FCT (UBE) program which was held at Gado Nasko Primary School Gwagwalada, last Thursday. The minister noted that the conceptualization of the UBE program was indicative of the fact that the nation was not lacking innovative ideas needed for the rapid transformation in the educational sector. "I wish to assure you that all the necessary assistance that will facilitate the smooth implementation of the programme in the FCT such as renovation/rehabilitation and building of schools, provision of infrastructural materials will continue to be given attention."

He stressed that in order to enhance faithful implementation of UBE program it must require dedicated commitment on the part of all stakeholders, including International Development, UNICEF, World Bank as well as JICA. Mallam el-Rufa'i assured all FCT residents that he had taken steps to ensure the sustainability of the UBE program. In a welcome address, the FCT secretary for education, Dr. Auwalu Anwar, represented by the Director, FCT Agency for Mass Education, Mr. Samuel Awodo, said that the UBE program gives priority to securing the completion of primary and secondary school by all children of suitable age, adding that at the age of nine years of continuous education, every child would have acquired appropriate level of literacy. The education secretary further disclosed that about 56 Junior Secondary Schools had been separated from the senior secondary schools in the FCT in order to facilitate the delivery of the quality basic education in the country. Dr. Anwar used the occasion to appeal to well-meaning Nigerians to aid the programme by way of contributing morally and financially to assist in the realization of the objectives of the UBE in the FCT and the nation in general.

**Endnotes:**

This piece has been derived from literature review and extensive consultations with UBEC and key focal persons in SUBEBs.

National UBE Act, UBE Act for States (Kano, Plateau, Ebonyi etc)

Education for All in Nigeria Development Partners Perspectives of 10 July, 2003

World Bank Group Strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria in partnership with DFID (2005- 2009)

The Capacity of Nigerian Government to deliver Basic Education Services

School Education in Nigeria - Preparing for UBE (World Bank report)

National Policy on Food and Nutrition

National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development (2004)

A Hand book of Information on Basic Education in Nigeria (FMOE April 2003)

The 2003 NDHS - South west Zone (July 2004)

The 2003 NDHS - North Central Zone (July 2004)

Nigeria DHS Ed Data Survey 2004

Problems of Education in Nigeria - Education Sector Analysis/UNESCO