

POLICY BRIEF SERIES

**Addressing Education Pitfalls with focus on ~~The~~
Universities: The way forward**

Recommendations to Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies



Background

Education is a tool for developing a nation. It is also an instrument for developing hidden talents in an individual. The importance of education to the development of individuals and the nation as a whole can therefore, not ~~cannot~~ be over emphasized. It is a great investment any country can make to propel for accelerating the development of its technology, economic and human resources.

Needs Assessment of the Nigerian University System~~The University needs as regard Educational Sector Reform~~

A ~~10-man~~ Needs Assessment Committee headed by Prof~~essor~~ Mahmood Yakubu and which include former ASUU President, Prof~~essor~~ (add first name) Awuzie reported ~~discovered~~ ~~asome~~ disgusting state of infrastructure in the Nigerian public university system. The committee found that physical facilities for teaching ~~and~~ learning, and research were grossly inadequate, over-stretched, improvised and dilapidated due to pressure on existing facilities and unplanned expansion of academic programmes. Many of the laboratories and workshops were old, obsolete, with and had inappropriate furnishing. They suffered from overcrowding, scanty and broken furniture, and they lacked ~~lacking~~ equipment and vital consumables. Kerosene stoves were being used as Bunsen burners. Power and water supply problems are the order of the day. Several engineering workshops were under zinc sheds and trees, while many faculties of science discipline were running what can be termed as dry lab as they don't have reagents and tools for carrying out proper experiments.

More than 50 per cent of the universities do not use public address systems in their lecture rooms or theatres; none have ~~none had~~ fully automated libraries; less than 35 per cent are partially automated; many ~~with~~ outdated books; while ~~less than 20 per cent use interactive boards; while and less than 10 per cent of the universities~~ have video conferencing facility. There were a total of 701 physical development projects across all the public universities according to the Needs report, out of which 163 or 23.3 per cent are abandoned. While about 538 or 76.7 per cent are on-going, some of them are fifteen years old, 60 per cent of them funded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). On hostel accommodation, the provision of decent hostel accommodation to at least 50 per cent of the student population in any residential university is proving to

be an uphill task for Nigerian universities. University managers have ~~been~~ over the years, been unable to diversify their means of providing hostel accommodation and associated facilities to students. There has been over the last two decades an upsurge of students' population in ~~almost all~~ Nigerian universities, but there has been ~~was~~ no commensurate improvement of accommodation and other student services." As a result, there is rapid deterioration~~ing~~ of hostel facilities, overcrowding and ~~severe~~undue congestion in rooms, over-stretched lavator~~ies~~y, laundry facilities and poor sanitation. These conditions, coupled with general condition of the universities, produce graduates that lack confidence and sometimes even self-worth."

It was found that there are about 109,509 (about 10.3 per cent of total population) on-campus hostels' bed spaces across all public universities in Nigeria. No university in the country can accommodate more than 35 per cent of its students. Less than 1 per cent of the hostels are provided via Public Private Partnership (PPP). In respect of toilets or lavatories, these are inadequate and unfit for human use in most of hostels of Nigerian universities. The average ratio of toilet to users is 1:20, forcing some students to use the bush or surrounding compounds of the hostels as open toilets. Invariably this poses serious health hazard~~s~~. Basic municipal facilities like water, electricity, transportation, market are either lacking or inadequate. Most of the universities depend on water tankers and boreholes. Healthcare facilities are grossly inadequate. Laundries and common rooms have been converted into rooms where students are living, and so no limit to the number of occupants.



Further look on the Challenges Bedeviling Education (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)

- Lack of proper equipments and laboratories; this is actually one of the 'major' problems because (learning with hands-on practical is the best way to assimilate whatever is being taught). At the end of the day, students get back home with theories they fail to fully don't even understand. It quite unfortunate that many of the public schools (funded by government) are the ones facing this problem, while private (and more expensive schools) are a little better.
- The Secondary school education is mostly theoretical. Do you know that Physical Health Education, is mainly an anatomical class? Students, you don't go to a gym, they are not prepared for actual practice and experience of what you are been thought on paper. Exams become a memory retention tests and meant for those "who can cram the teachers note best passes the challenge"
- Lack of teacher-student relationship. A; again, this is dominant in public schools. In a class you can have about 500+ students if not more, with just a teacher and a black board. H; how then will students at the back (who are willing to

concentrate) understand what the teacher is trying to explain? H, ~~he~~ would be focused on telling those students over there, to keep quite (cause it's not all students who want to learn).

- Lack of adequate knowledge of career path. S, ~~students~~ lack the knowledge of the career opportunities available to various disciplines and within various professions, industries etc., so they just go through the process having found themselves in it without cravings to be the best.
- Lack of Relationship Counselor. I ~~it's~~ been observed that pupils shy away from schools when they perform poorly and when they are being ~~being~~ mocked by their peers, while others are due to bully. T, ~~this~~ seriously calls for relationship counselor's interference to guide and administer support in areas of demand.

Recommendations for tackling the challenges.

- Government should create university infrastructural development fund to build and maintain existing infrastructures that and ~~must~~ be monitored by high-level supervisory committees.
- Teachers should encourage students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing also constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students in the constructivist classroom ideally become "expert learners." This gives them ever-broadening tools to keep learning. When they continuously reflect on their experiences, students find their ideas gaining in complexity and power, and they develop increasingly strong abilities to integrate new information.
- Orientations have to change. Courses ~~causes~~ should be tailored to teach students how to think and act productively, as is required in the real world. We need to start the change from here.

- Government should get human resource HR-companies to form an alliance with universities to help channel their needs. And industrial alliances and placements should be compulsory in all disciplines offered in all universities.
- The university should accommodate females' on campuses; provide adequate infrastructure, security for them because they are more prone to social violence staying of the campus. The research recently conducted by the Women's Health and Action Research Centre (WHARC) showed that female students living off-campus at the University of Benin were more likely to experience rape and other sexually abusive situations.
- The awakening of competition with the cohorts of jet, science, quiz and other fascinating clubs is paramount, for this will challenge the students in their various disciplines, promote collaboration and manifestation of ideas.
- Governments should endeavor to provide means of conveying pupils' to and fro school especially in the urban areas where they have to walk down ~~the~~ highways, exposing them to road hazards and in some cases board public vehicles at the risk of social violence and security treats.

Going Forward...

- The issues raised from the report necessitates expedite actions. Equally of great importance is the rebranding of our institutions as renowned research centres to find solutions to emerging challenges facing the society at large. Apparently, the need for research grants made available by the government for institutions is now, whereby institutions are compelled to identify research areas. Achieving these will not only give credit to our institutions, attract foreign students, but will also encourage students' to think 'out of the box' in their various disciplines, and re-brand our Universities.
- By standard the university should be an environment where ideas are nurtured. Most students are admitted with burning desire to find solutions to challenges confronting them; but unfortunately the dilapidating state of the universities hinder their effort, as it is now seen as a place to go take lectures, exams and acquire a certificate. There is serious need to strike a balance between learning and practice; skills are developed where this balance is struck.

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Conclusion.

A good large number of students are admitted at the beginning of a semester and only few numbers ~~remain~~^{are found} at the end of the semester. Worst still, only fewer numbers are found to be graduating from their course of studies. Such situation cannot be tolerated in a society in dire need for manpower development. We need more practical experiences. We are very practical people this will surely help our development if the educational system, can be designed to fit that concept

This policy brief was developed by the Women's Health and action research centre (WHARC) with funding from the Ford Foundation. WHARC is a non- governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to create a world where all people are treated with equal respect and dignity and where women and young adolescent have equality and access to basic reproductive health information and services. Grounded in a deep love for humanity and a belief in equality and dignity for all people, WHARC works to improve the reproductive health and social wellbeing of women and adolescents in Africa so they can lead productive, fulfilling lives and provide a healthy future for their children. Through its cutting edge research, WHARC educates women, youth, community gatekeepers and policy makers about sexual and reproductive health, and advocates for policy change at the local, state and federal level. WHARC also provides current and effect reproductive health services to women and adolescent girls in Africa.

Conflict of Interest:

References:

Educational Broadcasting Corporation, workshop on constructivism as a paradigm for teaching and learning.

Vanguard news: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/12/education-sector-stinks-infrastructure-bad-now-worse/>

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