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**PLANNING AND MANAGING MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO EDUCATION: THE
NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

By

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INTRODUCTION

This discussion is concerned mainly with Nigeria's attempt to address the 'education deficit' with which it came into the 21st century by the introduction of a UBE (Universal Basic Education) programme in September 1999. The discussion will outline the goals and coverage and implementation of UBE, examine the extent to which these are in line with meaningful access. We will end with a suggested 'meaningful access model' that we feel could help in moving the process forward.

WHAT IS 'MEANINGFUL ACCESS'?

In preparing for a pan-African conference on the Education of Girls in 1993, the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (UNESCO/BREDA) presented a 'beyond access agenda' indicating that attention should shift from 'girls' enrolment' to 'girls participation in the real sense of the term'ⁱ. This became the guiding principle for the entire conference and influenced its recommendations for policy directions in African member States.

The concept was recently re-affirmed by the African Union Commission and its International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA) while making a distinction between gender parity, gender equity and gender equality in Education in the following words

'Gender Equality in Education is to be distinguished from gender parity (equal enrolment of boys and girls), gender equity (comparable education experience for boys and girls). It is a concept that goes beyond mere enrolment or physical access to attendance, progression and successful completion. It also includes equality of after-school experience and covers all opportunities for self fulfilment, through opportunities for lifelong learning and the pursuit of careers and other forms of socio-economic life'ⁱⁱ

This concept has been further expanded in our work on developing girls' and women's education strategies with seven states in northern Nigeria in 2003, in which five dimensions of Access were distinguished.

a. Economic access: Poverty and poor economic situations, especially at the household level, create great problems in generalising access to basic education. Even though basic education is meant to be 'free', education always has some overt/hidden, direct/indirect, legal/illegal costs for individual families. There are also cases in which parents are not able to forgo the contributions made by children's work in the home, in the fields, and in petty trading.

b. Physical access (or *geographical barriers to expanding and generalising access*) the problem is usually one of long distances between home and school. In the Nigerian context, this situation can manifest in a variety of forms:

- Lack of places in schools in the immediate neighbourhood of the child.
- Difficult and impenetrable terrains separating human settlements, such as in swamps, creeks, hills and mountains, desert environments, forests,
- Sparsely populated areas.
- Groups that reject the educational facilities in their immediate neighbourhood

c. Sociological access: Even when educational facilities may be physically (or geographically) within reach, the potential beneficiary's social conditions could be either a help or a hindrance. Problems related to SOCIOLOGICAL ACCESS can be seen in the following examples:

- Groups that have been excluded from formal education for generations.
- Groups, which normally do not come together but are forced to share common educational facilities.
- Children who are forced or tempted to leave school prematurely, most usually for 'petty' employment or commercial/family activities, or to contribute to household work.

d. Psychological access: Educational facilities are 'accessible' only when the school is able to respond appropriately to children's learning needs and learning styles. Problems related to PSYCHOLOGICAL ACCESS (children being physically in school but not learning sufficiently well) are a common feature of the educational scene of Nigeria, and the following are illustrative examples:

- Under aged and over aged children, both of whom are likely to have a feeling of 'not fitting in'
- Children with disabilities and special learning needs
- Children who are new comers to the community in which the school is located
 - Children who have not been adequately prepared in the home for school learning
 - Children who may receive insufficient attention from the teacher because of inherent bias
 - Children who find classroom activities not relevant to their daily lives and circumstances.

e. Cultural access. Cultural issues as barrier to access seemed to have derived mainly from aspects of colonial education, some of which have persisted in spite the spate of post-independence reforms. The following are notable examples of the phenomenon:

- The school day and the school calendar do not always match with the *cultural day* and the *traditional societal calendar*
- The language of the school can be different from that of the community

- The school may not accommodate different religious beliefs and practices
- The school may not be sensitive to the social and religious practices of various communities in its neighbourhood.

CREATE - The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity- has developed a framework for the analysis of ‘meaningful access’ that is possibly the most comprehensive and most empirically researched to date. According to Lewin (2007)

Initial access has little meaning unless it results in:

1. Secure enrolment and regular attendance;
2. Progression through grades at appropriate ages;
3. Meaningful learning which has utility;
4. Reasonable chances of transition to lower secondary grades, especially where these are within the basic education cycle.
5. More rather than less equitable opportunities to learn for children from poorer households, especially girls, with less variation in quality between schools

For CREATE, ‘Access’ is the opposite of ‘Exclusion’ and this goes beyond being denied enrolment in school. The Consortium has consequently developed a conceptual framework based on a comprehensive concept of Exclusion, with six ‘zones’ as follows

0. Zone 0 - children who are excluded from pre-schooling
1. Zone 1 - children who have never been to school, and are unlikely to attend school;
2. Zone 2 - children who enter primary schooling, but who drop out before completing the primary cycle
3. Zone 3 - children who enter primary schooling and are enrolled but are “at risk” of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement, and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning
4. Zone 4 - children who fail to make the transition to secondary school grades
5. Zone 5 children who enter secondary schooling but who drop out before completing the cycle
6. Zone 6 children who enter secondary schooling and are enrolled but are “at risk” of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and silent exclusion from worthwhile learningⁱⁱⁱ

This discussion will piece all the above strands together and will treat MEANINGFUL ACCESS as *full and unfettered educational opportunity devoid of all manners of Exclusion; that which is crowned by successful learning and improved life chances for all classes of beneficiaries whose improved knowledge and skills, positive values and attitudes should contribute to reducing socio-economic inequities and poverty in the wider society*. While a reductionist view of Access says ‘get the children to school’, meaningful access says ‘take them *through* school and ensure that they actually learn’.

Nigeria's UBE adventure will now be critically examined to see the extent, to which it has addressed this concern,

NIGERIA'S UNIVERSAL EDUCATION (UBE) PROGRAMME

The UBE programme came along with Nigeria's return to civil/democratic rule and was intended as one of the 'dividends of democracy' promised to the citizenry. It did anticipate the Dakar EFA goals and had wider ranging scope and objectives (table one) than the universal primary education (UPE) of the past regimes.^{iv}

Table 1: Objectives and Scope of UBE

(a) OBJECTIVES	(b) SCOPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for Education and a commitment to its vigorous promotion ▪ The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age ▪ Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality, and efficiency) ▪ Catering for the learning needs of young persons, who for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling, through appropriate approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education ▪ Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programmes/initiatives for early childhood care and socialisation ▪ Educational programmes for the acquisition of functional literacy, numeracy, and life-skills, especially for adults (persons aged 15 and above) ▪ Out of school, non-formal programmes for the up-dating of knowledge and skills for persons who left school before acquiring the basics needed for life-long learning ▪ Special programmes of encouragement to ALL marginalized groups: GIRLS AND WOMEN, nomadic populations, out-of-school Youth. ▪ Non-formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youth, who have not had the benefit of formal education ▪ The formal school system from the beginning of primary education to the end of the junior secondary school.

The wide scope of UBE meant that it would touch on the life of some 77% of Nigerians (at a time when the country's population was estimated at 120 million - current estimate is 148 million). This was given the high rate of illiteracy in the country and the large number of school-age children that were out of school.

Table 2: Potential Beneficiaries of UBE

GROUP	ESTIMATED NUMBER (2000/2001 school year)	GROUP AS % of NIGERIA'S TOTAL POPULATION OF 120 MILLION
1. Children aged 0-5 years	15 million	17%
2. Primary school going children (including nomadic schools)	18 million (42 % girls, as national average both as low as 20-25% in some States)	15%
3. Junior secondary school children	5 million (only 25% girls)	4%
4. Illiterate adults (48% of 80million adults)	39.6 million (60% women, national average)	33%
5. Out-of-school Youth	15 million (70%girls, national average)	17%
TOTAL	92.6 million	77.1%

An ambitious programme of this nature requires rigorous planning, extensive resource mobilisation and judicious use of available resources, and most

importantly, transformational management. All this did not happen for reasons that were not unconnected with ‘bad politics’.

Instances of Bad Politics

First, politics was given prominence over policies and programmes. This was manifest in two forms, activities surrounding the enabling legislation and Nigerian-type federal-state power play. While the programme was officially launched in September 1999 and the structures for its implementation set up in January 2000, the enabling law was not passed at the federal level till 2004, while the 36 states of the Federation of Nigeria took their time, some passing their enabling acts as late as 2007.

Second, the enabling legislation laid more emphasis on the political governance of the programme than on its substance. There was emphasis on such issues as the creation of two posts of deputy executive secretaries for the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBE) and the establishment of zonal offices of the Commission in each of what is known as the ‘six geo-political zones of the Federation’.

Third, the enabling acts retained the existing multiplication of structures for the management of basic education by the retention of a national commission for nomadic education and another for mass literacy. This arrangement runs against the spirit of the expanded view of basic education embodied in the original objectives and scope of UBE that put all forms of modes of delivery of basic education under a single umbrella. (Table One)

Fourth, and worse still, Nigeria still went on in 2000 to establish an EFA (Education for All) secretariat in spite of the existence of UBE. This had the responsibility for developing the national EFA plan in the perspective of year 2015. The structure did engage in some planning activities, mobilising national expertise at all levels. Its deliverable (Nigeria’s EFA Plan) is however yet to be produced.

Fifth, the political management structure at the state (regional) level is such that promotes conflict of interests, instead of collaboration and synergy. In each state of the federation both the Commissioner (Minister) for Education and the ‘Executive Chairman’ of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) are appointed directly by the Governor. While the Commissioner is responsible for Education in the State, he/she cannot give directives to an executive chairman who is responsible directly to the State Governor

Reverse Order Planning

Lewin (2007) refers to prevailing methods of educational planning as largely ‘aspirational’ and criticizes them for their tendency of leading to a dead end that he calls the ‘Zone of Improbable Progress’ (ZIP). He therefore suggests the alternative of ‘*Target generating planning* based on the estimates of the highest

sustainable rate of expansion that does not degrade quality to unacceptable levels'. Nigeria's UBE seems to have invented a third model which publicizes a product before any serious thought is given to the shape it is likely to take and the exact purpose it is intended to serve. Thus, the sequence of 'planning' for UBE was as follows

- Adoption of UBE by Government at the federal level - first week of September 1999
- Formal launching - third week of September 1999
- Appointment of a national coordinator - December 1999
- Mobilizing the constituent states of the federation - January 2000 onwards
- Formalizing the structures of its operations - January 2000 onwards
- Flurry of activities to make the programme 'visible': January 2000 onwards
- Passing of the enabling legislation -2004
- Formal constitution of Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)
- National school census and a national EMIS policy - 2005
- Medium Term Targets - 2006
- UBE Commission 'Charter of Service' - 2006
- Passing of enabling Acts in the States - 2004 to 2007
- Integration of UBE into the strategic education plans of some states - since 2005 and on-going

The medium term targets (box one) begin with Access (in the conventional sense of simple enrolment).^v It also talks of Quality, emphasizing teacher qualifications and the setting up of mechanisms for monitoring 'teaching and learning processes at all levels'. It then goes on to list goals for curriculum, information technology in schools and HIV/AIDS. The setting of the targets does not seem to have resulted from any attempt at rigorous situational analysis. Moreover, most of the targets also lie outside the constitutional mandates of a federal institution, since they are challenges that are best addressed at the local level.

The Charter of Service of the Universal Basic Education Commission (2006) represents an improvement on planning-related activities of UBE. It is also much more focussed on the mandates of the UBE Commission as a federal (general guidelines and coordinating) agency. It list the focus areas of the Commission from 2006 to 2008 as

1. Policy Guidelines - formulating policy guidelines for the successful implementation of the UBE Commission (possible intention: the UBE programme)
2. Receiving (and disbursing) block grants and allocations
3. Prescribing of minimum standards for basic education
4. Establishing a data bank on basic education
5. Teacher development for UBE
6. Curriculum development and instructional materials
7. Sensitization and mobilization for basic education
8. Development partners' intervention

9. Monitoring and Evaluation of Basic Education

10. Capacity Building for managers of basic education in Nigeria

Box 1: UBE Midterm Targets: 2006 – 2008

*** Access:**

* 100% to graduate from Basic Education (BE) in situations, possessing literacy, numeracy and basic life skills so as to live meaningfully in the society and contribute to national development.

*** Quality:**

* 80% of B.E Teachers to have the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE).

* 50% of B.E. Schools have conducive teaching and learning environment.

* 60% of Head and Assistant Head-Teachers undergo training in School Management.

* *Establish an efficient institutional framework for monitoring learning and teaching process at all levels.*

*** Periodic Review and Effective Implementation of Curriculum:**

* Complete Revision of B.E. Curriculum to conform with the reform agenda.

* Produce educational materials

* Establish libraries and information resource centres

* Involve local craft people in the delivery of vocational education in schools.

*** Promote Information Technology:**

* 10% of BE graduates are computer literate

* 50% of school managers are computer literate

* 50% of BE teachers are trained in computer skills.

*** Improve Gender Equity:**

* Eliminate gender disparity in BE by 2008.

*** Reduce Spread of HIV and Mitigate the Impact of AIDS:**

* Achieve 100% awareness by 2008.

*** Mobilize and Develop Partnership with International Partners, Private Sector and Local Community to Support and Fund Education:**

* Improve collaboration

* Achieve 80% community involvement in management of schools.

* Achieve 60% private sector involvement in managing and funding Basic Education.

There are two major problems with the 'wish list' in the service charter. Some of the items on that list are capable of setting the UBE Commission on a collision course with other education service delivery agencies. Curriculum (for example) is the mandate of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), training of managers is the mandate of the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), while teacher development is the major activity of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI).

The second problem has to do with encroachment on the constitutional responsibilities of the constituent states of the Nigerian federation. Social mobilization (a truly grassroots affair) is a perfect example. The same applies to 'monitoring teaching and learning at all levels'

UBE on Ground

Reports by the Universal Basic Education are limited to funds disbursed to states, training programmes organised, local and overseas conferences attended by staff, and advocacy visits to various categories of stakeholders. They are silent on progress being made towards the attainment of EFA goals through the UBE programme.

Research reports of limited scope do exist here and there. Adepoju and Fabiyi (2007) assessed the perceptions of stakeholders on a scale that ranged from 5 (very high) to very low (1) and concluded as table three shows that there was low perception of UBE, with the exception of one aspect- teacher availability.^{vi}

Table 3: Stakeholders' Perception of Significant Aspects of UBE (after Adepoju and Fabiyi)

Significant aspects of UBE	Stakeholder Rating
1. Mobilization of local communities	1 (very low)
2. Politicization of programme implementation	5 (very high)
3. Teacher availability	4 (high)
4. Teacher motivation	2 (low)
5. Crowded classrooms	5 (very high)
6. Conducive classrooms	2 (low)
7. Learning outcomes	2 (low)

Our own summary of the progress of the programme (Obanya, 2007) showed that UBE has made gains in terms of net enrolment but that there were still challenges concerning

- Equity
 - Geographical inequity with a clear north-south dichotomy (geographical and gender inequities)
 - Gender inequity, with a national average GPI of 0.82, but with wide geographical diversities, with GPI in favour of girls in the South-eastern zone of the country
- Quality
 - Primary school survival rate (rising from 83% in 2002 to 87% in 2006 for boys, but declining during the same period from 83 to 71% for girls).

- Teacher-Pupil Ratios at the primary level - a national average of 44, but with wide differences among states (91 in Bayelsa state, 104 in Bauchi)
- Qualified Teacher-Pupil Ratios - a wide range of below 40 in some southern states to over 210 in the extreme north of the country
- Results of the latest Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) exercise - 2003 - still show low performance at the primary (grade) four level, even though there were slight increases in scores in all the skills tested compared with 1999 results
- Relevance - This is with specific reference to the Curriculum that was developed with minimum input from teachers and which also generally considered to be overloaded (table 4)^{vii}

Table 4: Nigeria's 9-Year Basic Education Programme - Official Curriculum

LEVEL	CORE COMPULSORY SUBJECTS	ELECTIVES
Lower Basic (grades 1-3)	1. English Studies 2. A major Nigerian language 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science and technology 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Cultural and creative arts 8. Religious studies 9. Physical and health education 10. Computer studies	1. Agriculture 2. Home economics 3. Arabic language <i>Pupils must offer 1 elective, but not more than 2</i>
Middle Basic (grades 4-6)	1. English studies 2. A major Nigerian language 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Cultural and creative Arts 8. Religious studies 9. Physical and health education 10. French language 11. Computer studies	1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic language <i>Pupils must offer 1, but not more than 2 electives</i>
Upper Basic (grades 7-9)	1. English studies 2. A major Nigerian language 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Cultural and creative Arts 8. Religious studies 9. Physical and health education 10. French language 11. Basic technology 12. Computer studies	1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic language 4. Business studies <i>Pupils must offer 2, but not more than 3 electives</i>

Up-to-date on education in Nigeria is quite an expensive commodity, while there is hardly any systematic monitoring of the progress of Education. Conclusions and inferences therefore have to be drawn from 'the latest year available'. The latest year available (table 5) shows the weight of the out-of-school (or not enrolled) school-age population. Girls are the major victims of the 'not-enrolled' syndrome.

Table 5: *Age-Specific Enrolments (%)*: 2005 (source: EMIS 2006)

Age	Enrolled		Not Enrolled	
	(male)	(male)	(female)	(female)
5	8.62	91.38	8.44	91.56
6	72.42	27.58	61.49	38.51
7	64.22	35.78	54.87	45.13
8	59.44	40.56	51.07	48.93
9	57.26	42.74	48.82	44
10	52.11	47.89	44.45	55.55
11	43.92	56.08	37.49	62.51
12	10.38	89.62	13.75	86.25
13	10.26	89.74	8.79	91.21
14	9.81	90.19	8.42	91.58

UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) however has data to show that even in terms of enrolment, the UBE programme does not seem to have made much positive difference (table six). As at 2007 (seven years into the operation of the programme) GER and NER are still below the regional (African) average. Transition to the secondary cycle is low. Pre-primary education is available only to 16 per cent of children, evidence that Exclusion sets in right from the early years of the life of the child.

The indication seems to be, therefore, that UBE has not even succeeded in getting Nigerian children to school, let alone getting them through school and ensuring that they actually learn.

UBE would require some form of re-positioning for it to be able to move Nigeria towards the goals of Education for All, which has to be at some later date, as

international development watchdogs have already indicated that the country is unlikely to achieve both EFA and MDGs by the year 2015.

Table 6: NIGERIA – participation in education (Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics)

Pre-primary GER (%)		1999	2002	2007	2007 regional average
	MF				16
M				16	16
F				16	16
Primary (GER %)	MF	91	95	93	98
	M	101	104	90	103
	F	81	85	87	90
Primary (NER %)	MF	60		61	74
	M	66		64	76
	F	54		58	71
Secondary (GER %)	MF	24	35	30	33
	M	25	34	34	37
	F	22	25	27	29
Secondary (NER %)	MF			25	
	M			28	
	F			22	

RE-POSITONING UBE THROUGH A ‘RE-KINDLED MEANINGFUL ACCESS STRATEGY’

A New Focus

A re-kindled meaningful access strategy is one that

1. Spreads the message of meaningful access among stakeholders
2. Makes meaningful access the goal of EFA-related programmes
3. Ensures the inclusion of the various dimensions of meaningful access into its strategic framework
4. Probes deeply into the various zones of Exclusion to determine their root causes
5. Builds its intervention on addressing the root causes of Exclusion in various zones
6. Incorporates action research-monitoring and evaluation procedures that dwells on progress towards the attainment of meaningful access.

Strategic Planning of UBE

For this to work in the Nigerian setting, would require a shift from the current practice of *Reverse Order Planning* to the institutionalizing Strategic Planning of UBE- a process that should include

- a. an over-arching sector-wide approach that fits UBE into the broader scope of an all-embracing education sector strategy
- b. systematic and strategic planning from the local level upwards
- c. plans based on the identified UBE/EFA deficits of every LGA and every state of the federation, focusing on identified barriers to meaningful access
- d. implementation strategies adapted to the specific requirements of every local government and every state of the federation
- e. carrying the people along all through the process
- f. built in monitoring-reporting-review mechanism, built around an action-research agenda

To ensure that future UBE plans (to be developed mainly at the state and local government levels) do not stop at merely ‘getting children to school’, it would be advisable to go ‘beyond access’ and factor in other challenge areas that would need to be carried along in ensuring Meaningful Access (table 7)

Table 7: Beyond Physical Access Issues in Planning UBE

1. Access and Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment at various levels/forms of Education • Attendance/drop out/repetition/completion/success/transition to next level • Opportunities for education out-of-school • Gender parity and equity in educational opportunities (all levels/all forms) • Geographical and social coverage of educational opportunities
2. Quality and Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational INPUTS (policy, management framework, teachers, materials, infrastructure, curriculum, funding) • Educational PROCESSES (school level management, teacher-pupil classroom interactions, opportunities for out-of-class learning, inspection/supervision/quality control measures) • Educational OUTCOMES (student learning, examination success rates, learner-behaviour/values/attitudes, types of skills acquired through education) • Level of appropriateness of education to children and society’s current and future needs • Relationship between school curriculum and the world of work

3. Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher education level/qualifications • Teacher competence/knowledge • Teacher experience • Teacher effectiveness/work ethics/level of creativity • Gender sensitivity among teachers • Learner readiness/attitudes/study habits/work ethics • School and classroom environment/including gender-friendliness levels • Guidance and Counselling services • What students actually learn/or fail to learn • Parental/societal support for school learning
4. Management and Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System level management • Institutional level management • Decentralization/devolution of authorities in educational management • Society involvement • Wastages in the system (in what forms at different levels) • State of Education data • Structures and mechanisms for education service delivery • Level of synergy among parastatals and agencies and departments
5. Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of resources for Education • Extant policy on Resourcing Education • Education budgeting methodology • Overall education sector budgetary allocations • Sub sectoral allocations within the education sector (basic/secondary/higher education/non-formal education) • Education service-related budgetary allocations (teachers, infrastructure, materials and equipment central and LGEA administration). • Targeted budgeting for girls' and women's education • Fund release methodology • Auditing and education budget tracking • State and conditions of non financial resources • Resource availability and use at the school level

Strategy-Directed Management

This simply means management aimed at achieving agreed strategic targets. In this specific case, the strategic targets would be inputs-processes-outcomes that have a strong bearing on getting children through school and ensuring that they learn. In practical terms, and in Nigeria's peculiar circumstances, this would translate into

1. Streamlining the policy direction and coordination mechanisms at the central (federal) and regional (state) levels
2. Eliminating micro-managing by the central authorities
3. Appropriate re-skilling of local level managers (local government education authorities, school management committees, etc)
4. Devolution of financial and technical resources to the local level
5. Development of objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) on INCLUSION and MEANINGFUL ACCESS
6. Systematic monitoring of progress towards INCLUSION and MEANINGFUL ACCESS
7. Regular policy dialogues at all levels, based on the results of action-research-based monitoring
8. Systematic monitoring of progress towards INCLUSION and MEANINGFUL ACCESS
9. A shift from reporting mainly on 'how-much-has-been-spent' to reporting on 'how we are moving towards meaningful access'
10. Sustain
 able funding - This is an item with multiple facets. It simply means that UBE has to be funded as one of the conditions for its success and this must be assured at all times. Funding however stands the chance of being sustainable when certain golden rules are respected, for example:
 - I. Scientific budgeting procedures based on correctly assessed needs and performance/delivery expectations
 - II. Accurate investment and expenditure plans to match program goals
 - III. Diversified and reliable resource base
 - IV. Timely release of funds
 - V. Transparency and accountability
 - VI. Using funds for the purposes for which they are intended
 - VII. Targeted funding for specific program goals
 - VIII. Emphasis on concrete results
 - IX. Built-in expenditure tracking
 - X. Emphasis on investing in Education (funding high impact and positive multiplier-effect items; over the tendency to merely spend on Education (directing funds to areas of doubtful results).

CONCLUSIONS

One major problem with Nigeria's ambitious UBE programme is that Access was seen in its restrictive sense of enrolment figures. While there have been marginal increases in enrolment, issues concerning equity, quality and efficiency have not received adequate attention. The enrolment increases have not even tackled the problem of Exclusion, as a large proportion of school-age children are still un-enrolled. Thus, UBE cannot be said to have 'taken the children to school'. To achieve the EFA goals Nigeria has 'get the children to school' and also 'get them through school'. A re-positioning framework has been suggested to inform future directions of UBE. This includes adopting the meaningful access principle, the institutionalization of strategic planning, and the adoption of Strategy-directed management of the entire process.

In addition, re-positioning UBE cannot do without functional EMIS (Educational Management Information Systems) at all levels of governance (federal, state and, local government). It also has to benefit from sustainable funding, with the emphasis shifting from reeling out the quantum of the budgetary provisions, the amount of money released, etc to showing clearly what the money is invested in and the extent to which the results of the investment is leading the nation towards the attainment of its UBE/EFA goals.

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