

Strategies for Development of Effective Educational Packages for the Universal Basic Education

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Abstract

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme is a properly articulated programme intended to improve the poor condition of the educational system in Nigeria especially as it concerns literacy and skills. For this programme to achieve its laudable goals, there is need to move from topical factual and subject oriented to conceptual contextual learner-based activities that can effectively transform learners and societies. For the fact that the present type of education seems dysfunctional, the only way to cause meaningful change to occur to develop effective educational packages for the UBE, this has promising objectives. Thus, this study identifies three educational packages as -scientific and technological literacy, vocational and enterprise/entrepreneurship passports. These packages which are selected because of their potency in the sustenance of individuals and the society are fully discussed; recommendations and conclusion were also proffered

Keywords: effective educational packages, universal basic education, technological literacy, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was launched on the 30th September 1999 in Sokoto State by the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This was to overcome the poor state of the educational systems in Nigeria which were a fall-out of the crumbled Free and Universal Primary Education of 1955 and 1956 and the Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) of the 70's and 80s. The Universal Basic Education covers a period of six years of primary and three years of secondary education to ensure basic education to all Nigeria Citizenry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

According to the implementation guidelines of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, the aims and objectives of the scheme include the following:

- ❖ Development in the entire citizenry of a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ❖ The provision of free basic education for every Nigerian child of school 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 people who for one reason or another have to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic educating
- ❖ Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, innumeracy, communicative and manipulative and life-

skills as well as the ethical, moral and civil values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

These aims and objectives are consistent with the provisions of the National Policy on Education (1998) and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from which they are derived. Thus, the UBE, in the Nigerian context, was designed as a close articulation of the formal, and non-formal approaches and mechanism for the reawakening of all-round development of the human potentials (Ehijeme, 2000).

COMPONENTS OF THE UBE SCHEME

According to Ehijeme (2000) the UBE is made up of three components, viz:

Formal basic education involving the first nine years of schooling (Primary and Junior Secondary Education) for all children 5-15 years old. Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen. Literate and non-formal education for out of school children, youth and illiterate adults.

The programme encompasses the broad spectrum of formal and non-formal approaches to education; and covers the education from early childhood and education for junior secondary schooling. This programme has been applauded to be a people's programme. It emphasizes all-round development of its beneficiaries, through due attention to effective instructional designs. It is aimed at reaching the unreached that is, the Nigeria populace (Children, adolescents and illiterate adults) in all Social conditions and geographical locations irrespective of sex, age and creed.

The approaches and strategies for the successful implementation of the UBE scheme are stipulated in the FME (1999) implementation blue-prints. This blue-print should go beyond paper work to concrete and innovative actions that will transform education and its recipients in Nigeria.

Curriculum Imperatives in the Ube

The term curriculum, as it is generally and broadly used today has come to mean those experiences, which the individual has in the school or under its jurisdiction. Gbamanja (2002) stressed that curriculum reflects societal characteristics and trends. Curriculum should be executed. Thus effective implementation of the UBE programme must take cognizance of the goals of basic education which according to the World Conference On Education For All (WCEFA) (1990) preamble is to help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world. To accomplish this, every child, youth and adult needs to participate in the educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. They need knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required to be able to survive, live and work.

Oladosu (2001) noted that to achieve the basic goals, there is need to move from topical factual and subject-oriented and general syllabus to conceptual and contextual learner-based activities. He observed poor curriculum foundation in UBE which is a serious set-back. In essence UBE must therefore be systematically organized into instructional units using educational packages that can effectively engage the learner and transform learners and their societies, since the UBE programme aims at laying the foundation for life-long learning and self-awareness among the citizenry.

The UBE programme therefore calls for skilled manpower such as qualified educators and teachers who are indispensable in the education process. They determine what actually is to be learned and also control the learning experiences through such strategic educational packages that will ensure achievement of the goals of UBE.

Educational Packages for the UBE

Educational packages are selected because of their potency in sustenance of the individual in a competitive society.

They are:

- ❖ An academic passport - which is the traditional role of education, emphasizing the development of literacy and numeracy and the acquisition of knowledge to enable a person play a meaningful and self-fulfilling role in society.
- ❖ A scientific and technological literacy passport - which engenders the ability to

acquire basic but functional knowledge of science and its application in everyday activities of individuals in the society.

- ❖ A vocational passport - which focuses on education for work and self-reliance in a world of rapid technological change and diminishing public work employment opportunities
- ❖ An enterprise/entrepreneurship passport - which will empower individuals/pupils to be innovative and inventive in their life-long callings.

Promote the ability to coordinate and participate even at early age the various activities in the society for efficient production, creation and distribution of services and wealth. These educational passports represent the panacea for sustainable development of any society. If the UBE is to be well focused, its curricular ingredients should reflect these areas of education.

By the end of the decade - 1990's academic passport seemed to have played its role out. By this new millennium, the 21st century, the additional passport needed for the sustenance of the individual and these societies are;

Scientific and technological literacy passport; Vocational passport; Enterprise/entrepreneurship passport; Scientific and technological Passport.

The main ingredients of this passport is to prepare children in formal schooling and occupational settings (e.g. Nomadic children and others) to acquire scientific and technological literacy to enable them make informed decisions in their daily lives and function effectively as citizens in a contemporary technologically based society.

Access to scientific and technological literacy must begin in the early primary years of education and extend though non-formal, informal and formal life-long learning. It must be available for all: females, males, poor, rich, rural and urban pupils in all cultures and societies. If we start early to inculcate in the pupils through a sustained UBE programme the basic science and technology culture, over time, hopefully we will develop a community of scientific and technologically literate populace.

Science and technology have been described by (Millstone and Crouch, (1986) as agents of both intellectual and material liberation. Science offers true knowledge that liberates mankind from superstition and ignorance. Technology provides control over the material world and hopefully liberates mankind from hard work, hunger, and poverty, inadequate housing, poor health, etc. by eliminating material scarcity and want, Technology would eliminate the causes of conflict and bring us

peace and plenty. Therefore, the inclusion of science and technology education in basic education should become the priority goal of any educational system.

The Bangalore Conference on Science and Technology Education and Future Human Needs (1987) identified a set of basic/technology knowledge topic areas needed for scientific and technological literacy viz

- ❖ Health
- ❖ Food and Agriculture
- ❖ Energy
- ❖ Land, Water and Mineral Resources
- ❖ Industry and Technology
- ❖ The Environment
- ❖ Information, Communication and Technology
- ❖ Ethics and Social Responsibility.

Bowyer (1990) opined that knowledge in these topics has the potentials for improving traditional ways of carrying out economic and life-sustaining activities. It is our view that serious attention be given by appropriate institutions and planners of the UBE programme and indeed educators and educational managers to designing a curriculum for science/technology literacy suitable for local needs and for educating and empowering the pupils and the citizenry. Such curriculum should be endogenous and community/society based. Bowyer (1990) suggested the following steps for the development of science/technology curriculum:

STEP 1: Educators and learners should get involved in needs and resources assessment of their community.

STEP 2: Data from the assessment are then analyzed to identify specific local problems and implications for curriculum planning.

STEP 3: Involves developing a teachable curriculum to reflect the specific problems of the locality within the school and community environments.

STEP 4: The curriculum is applied in teaching so as to create awareness of the identified problems. Learners and teachers are engaged in discussing the problems and solution options. The school (learners and teachers) and the community and local authorities are involved in solving the problems

STEP 5: Involves the assessment of the effect of the curriculum on the learners/Community and implications for scientific and technological literacy on the society

The above curriculum package helps to serve the following function;

- ❖ Re-enforcing literacy and numeracy
- ❖ Application of knowledge to the solution of personal and societal problem
- ❖ Logical reasoning
- ❖ Scientific thought and process

Development in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a commitment to its promotion and life-long learning

The Curriculum is processed to be:

- ❖ Responsive to societal and individual needs;
- ❖ Comprehensive and covers the three “hs” (the head, the hand and the heart);
- ❖ Adaptable to changing times. Changing needs and changing conditions.

Vocational Passport

Vocational passport focuses on education for work and self-reliance in this era of diminishing work opportunities. The main import is to prepare the citizenry-primary and secondary school pupils, adults at home or informal and non-formal occupations to acquire some skills that make for self-reliance and life-long occupational independence. It is only when the citizens possess these productive skills that each can make a meaning for himself/herself and contribute effectively to societal development.

Programme for Acquisition of Vocational Passport

Three types of programmes are proposed for the primary segment, namely:

- Proficiency skills
- Artisan skills
- Craftsman skills

The general objectives are:

- i. to provide avenue for life-long education through up-grading of skills
- ii. to provide training skills to primary and JSS pupils who may not proceed to the Senior Secondary Schools.
- iii. To provide vocational training which is directly linked to occupational competence
- iv. To develop entrepreneurship in the recipients
- v. To develop relevant practical skills which will lead directly to making valuable articles or rendering services for income generation purposes
- vi. To provide a foundation for further training in relevant trade or occupations.

Proficiency Skills Package

The goal of this programme is to enable the pupils participate in income earning tasks through self-employment or wage-employment in the non-formal sectors of the economy. According to Fadare (2001) curriculum packages should reflect the culture of the immediate society and as much as possible be community based. Some basic vocational knowledge topic areas needed for inclusive are:

- ❖ Local crafts using local resources.
- ❖ Palm/cocoa/cereal production and utilization
- Food Production
- ❖ ICT (computer software’s communications and technology operations and usage)

- ❖ Business management (Sales and marketing)
- ❖ Management of resources and the environment
- ❖ Farming, animal and poultry production/rearing
- ❖ Road and housing construction and maintenance

Artisan Skill Programme

The programme is intended to equip the recipients with useful vocational skills to enable them perform routine tasks in the society.

Craftsman Skills Programme

The Programme is intended to produce individuals who can perform manipulative skills and to provide adequate practical skills and an understanding of relevant science, mathematics and technology skills in addition to basic decision making-how.

Implementation of the Vocational Education Package

The long term aim would be to design a modular education type curriculum which is adopted to programmed learning or flexible attendance pattern. Each autonomous community in each local government area could have two or more of such primary and secondary schools for learners. Each community should be responsible of the educational machinery of the institutions.

Teachers may comprise of the UBE trainees as well as selected and trained artisans, craftsmen and women, students in higher institutions, National Youth Service Corps members and other willing professionals from the locality and beyond. There should be free flow of knowledge between the participants, the institutions, the family units and the citizens of the area and beyond.

Enterprise/Entrepreneurship Passport

Enterprise passport empowers the individuals and society to be innovative creative and inventive. Entrepreneurship promotes the ability to mobilize and to coordinate resources (human and materials) within a given society for efficient production and creation of services and wealth for the society. To acquire these passports requires an educational system that focuses on the systematic and strategic promotion of creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Collin Ball and others quoted by Ellyard (1989) described an enterprising person thus:

“An enterprising individual has a positive, flexible and adaptable disposition towards change, seeing it as normal and as an opportunity rather than a problem. To see change in this way, an enterprising individual has a security born of self-confidence and is at ease when dealing with insecurity Risks, difficulty and the unknown. An enterprising person is able and even

anxious to take responsibility and is effective communicator, negotiator, influencer, planner and organizer. An enterprising person is active, confident and purposeful not passive, uncertain and dependent...”

The education systems particularly the UBE should start early to develop enterprising pupils for such persons should be a primary goal of education. Imagination, creativity and flexibility have become more important objectives of education than merely ability to ensure that pupils can perform fixed and determinate repertoire of procedures or actions (Millstone & Crouch, 1986).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Scientific technological, vocational and enterprise educational passport represent the engine that can sustain development and improve the quality of life in modern societies. We need to envision an education system, which is a life-long process that can promote these educational passports. The coming on line of the UBE may well be the anchor house of our educational vision. Also UBE implementation document recounts the failure of UPE and list public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement, data collection and analysis; planning, monitoring and evaluation, training and retraining etc as important issues to be addressed so as to avoid a repeat failure. Government both state ,local government areas ,teachers, head of schools are advised to utilize these strategies by implementing them , Research and Development Centre should be involved in monitoring and evaluating the program. Also teacher education curriculum should focus on acquiring scientific and technological skills (Practical Skills) right from early primary years of education .If it is done UBE will be sustained.

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