



Impact of Funding Universal Basic Education on Educational Development in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja

Ruth Caleb Luka ¹, Canice Erunke ², Osu Helen Ifeoma ^{3*}

¹⁻³ Department of Political Science Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State Nigeria

* Corresponding Author: **Osu Helen Ifeoma**

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Abstract

This study explores the effect of UBE funding on educational development in the FCT, drawing on John Dewey's theory, it assumed that education is not just a process of acquiring knowledge, but a means of actively reconstructing society to meet new challenges, ensuring that individuals can thrive in an ever-changing social landscape. For the purpose of data collection, the study explore primary data which were collected through questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were collected through the library and internet sources. The findings revealed that the UBE program is funded through the Federal Government's intervention fund, supplemented by local and international donor grants. However, this funding has not significantly improved access to education, teacher quality, or learning outcomes in the FCT. Even though these monies were allotted to assist the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in accordance with government-approved norms, many schools still struggle with problems like poor student-textbook ratios, inadequate teacher development, and deteriorating infrastructure. Furthermore, several states have trouble obtaining UBE funding, which adds to the Federal Capital Territory's (FCT) overall learning crisis and UBE's failed implementation. The study recommends reviewing the UBEC Act, increasing federal intervention funds, amending the Act to allow direct application of funds to infrastructure needs in defaulting states or the FCT, incentivizing states and the FCT for exceptional performance, and constructing additional schools to reduce the distance children must travel to attend school.

Keywords: Impact, Funding, Universal Basic Education, Educational and Development

Introduction

In response to achieving Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated the Universal Basic Education initiative in September 1999 with the aim of enabling free, compulsory and Universal Basic Education (UBE) for all Nigerians of school age. As a policy reform, the UBE Program seeks to address inequalities in the provision of basic education in Nigeria by integrating basic education into both official and informal sub-sectors. The Western (1955) and Eastern (1956) Regional Governments attempted to establish free primary education programs in their respective regions, marking the beginning of the fight to universalize basic education in Nigeria. The schemes were aimed principally at opening more access to primary education and to some extent; the initiatives resulted in considerable increases in primary school enrolments in both regions (Oladimeji & Ogunyebi, 2019) ^[10].

However, the Northern Regional Government was also having difficulty persuading its citizens to accept western-style education, while the Western and Eastern Regional Governments were occupied with making elementary education universal in their respective regions. Nevertheless, the efforts undertaken also resulted in a growing growth in the number of students enrolled in elementary education in the region, despite strong opposition from the populace. Thus, the Regional Governments established and upheld the legal framework for the delivery and administration of education throughout the nation during the colonial era. The federal government did not fully assume responsibility for educating all students in the nation until 1960, when the country gained its independence (Guda & Mando, 2020) ^[5].

At the time of its take-off, for example, far more children enrolled than planned for. Indeed, the scheme's exclusive focus on broadening access to primary education led to significant rise in enrolments that far outstripped the more modest increases in teacher numbers in many states across the country, raising serious concerns for the quality of education and for meeting the growing demand for trained and qualified teachers in the system. Moreover, the recruitment into the system of many untrained and unqualified teachers to bridge the emergent teacher gaps further worsened the problems of quality and learning outcomes.

At the inception, the Federal Government took on full financial responsibility for the UBE scheme. This worked out well for the scheme for as long as the government's major source of revenue, sale of crude oil, remained stable in the international market. From the late 1970s and early 1980s, the country's revenue dropped as a result of dwindling global oil prices. The effects of the fall in revenue accruing to the Federal Government were severe enough to lead to the introduction of austerity measures in the country. As a result, the UPE scheme was severely affected by inadequate funding. Teachers were owed months of salary, which led to frequent industrial disputes, strikes and closure of schools for many months in some states. However, improved economic situation in the 1990s converged with an international commitment to basic education for all (EFA) to drive an ever-expanding educational sector that culminated into the introduction of free Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in the country under a newly elected civilian regime in 1999 (Izuka, Uche & Chukwuemeka, 2022) [6].

The authorities have given the educational sector a lot of attention during the FCT development process. The current administration encouraged the leapfrog approach to the sector's development by recently awarding certificates to more than 140 newly approved and accredited schools, bringing the total number of public and private schools in the FCT down to a manageable 572. This was done to ensure that education remains the inalienable right of every child in the FCT. This is before the inspectorate department's assessment, which confirmed that these schools are competent in the areas of academic and support services, environmental protection, physical infrastructure, and, most importantly, welfare. This also necessitated the closure of over 556 illegal private schools for failing to meet the required standards stipulated by the educational board (Dambo & Ben-George, 2022) [2].

In order to improve educational facilities in the FCT, the administration has also paid off its debts in related projects with other foreign partners. In order to bring the FCT up to current with its financial responsibilities to UBEC, the government was able to access the N2.8 billion released counterpart authorized, which included the unpaid arrears of the 2014 teacher's professional development fund.

Several projects have been completed and fully funded to improve education in the Federal Capital Territory. These include the Nigerian-Korean Model School, the construction and rehabilitation of over 400 primary and junior secondary classroom blocks, the fencing of three secondary schools, and the furnishing of classrooms, offices, and staff quarters at both the University of Abuja and the Abuja University of Technology, Abaji. Additionally, laptops were provided to secondary schools in Kuje and Jabi. To address challenges in the education sector and align it with international goals such as EFA, MDGs, SDGs, and Nigeria's Vision 20:2020,

various development plans and initiatives were introduced (Dambo & Ben-George, 2022) [2].

The key indicators used in this study to measure quality education include: (i) access and equity, (ii) standards and quality assurance, (iii) learning outcomes, (iv) teacher quality and management, and (v) funding and resource utilization.

Statement of the Problem

A critical challenge facing the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Nigeria is the persistent issue of inadequate utilization of available funds. Although the UBE Act (2004) mandates that the program be financed through a Federal Government block grant of no less than 2% of the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) and supplemented by local and international donor contributions, significant portions of these funds remain un-accessed by states.

In 2022, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) reported that over N110 billion in intervention funds went unused during the 2021 financial year, while schools continue to suffer from dilapidated infrastructure, insufficient teaching personnel, and a lack of basic educational resources. Despite efforts to lodge counterpart funds, including the N32.5 billion contributed by 26 states and the Federal Capital Territory in 2024, the overall state of basic education infrastructure remains dismal. With approximately 20 million out-of-school children, Nigeria ranks among the highest globally in this category. Those who happen to be in school are doing so under a deplorable condition. This study seeks to explore the disconnection between available funding and its utilization, as well as the impact of these inefficiencies on the quality of basic education in Nigeria particularly in the FCT.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the nature of funding Universal Basic Education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.
2. To assess how funding Universal Basic Education programme impacted on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.

Empirical Review

Nature of Funding of Universal Basic Education Programme and Educational Development

Guda & Mando (2020) [5] examined politics of educational policies and programmes for the underserved groups in Nigeria. Data was generated using secondary sources. The study pinpointed that the inconsistency in the education policies and programmes especially for the underserved is as a result of the interplay between politics and education. The study identified the underserved groups in education to include those that do not have equitable resources as other students in the education circle and those from minority ethnic groups among others. The study also discussed the impact of politics on educational policies in Nigeria. The negative impact of politics as discussed in the study seems to outweigh the positive impact as could be seen in inadequate funding of education, poor school mapping and others. It was also observed in the study that most of the education policies especially for the underserved have political undertone. The political class does not show sincerity of purpose in ensuring that these policies are fully implemented for the benefit of all. Such policies are only used as campaign tool. Based on this discovery, the study recommended that political issues on

education should be made sustainable by implementing educational policies of the previous governments. Full implementation of educational policy should be a matter of priority by the government in power among others. The study concluded that education policies should be pursued with vigour and should not only be used as “votes catching baits” by the political class. However, the nature of funding of universal basic education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory was not explained in the study above.

Oladimeji (2021) ^[9] wrote on the Implementation of Universal Basic Education Program in the North-Central Region of Nigeria. A case study was employed with a purposeful sample of 16 semi-structured interviews drawn from parents or guardians, preschool heads, primary school principals, and officials from the region. Themes were extracted through descriptive coding regarding the preschool education policy’s perceived strengths and opportunities for improvement from collected data transcripts. The emergent themes from the study included early educational and psychomotor development, child supervision, educational sector development, equality and social justice, education for all, school readiness for next level, private and public sensitization, and lack of government financial intervention. The results pointed to evident positive social change in that the established preschools require being well equipped. The study recommended that the collaboration and active participation of all key stakeholders is needed towards effective preschool education policy implementation and the establishment of more quality preschools across the region. The study fails to provide a clear explanation to the nature of funding of universal basic education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.

Akpan (2021) ^[1] reviewed the policy analysis of UPE and UBE implementation with their objectives and attempt of various Nigeria governments to provide basic education for its citizens in the context of the challenges faced by the government on the implementation of the policies. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) is a goal stated in many national development plans and pursued with vigour by governments of most developing countries. Primary Education is seen as the first step in laying the foundation for future educational opportunities and lifelong skills. The study concluded that if UPE and UBE policies are properly implemented, it will help in building sustainability safeguards into its on-going effort to bring basic education to all and, through education, contribute to the attainment of the MDG goals. One of the recommendations was that, for effective, management, and implementation of the UPE/UBE, there is need of full participation and cooperation from the public, professionals, and the government. The study did not describe the nature of funding of universal basic education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.

Impact of Funding of Universal Basic Education Programme on Educational Development

Oladimeji and Ogunyebi (2019) ^[10] evaluated the degree of UBE program implementation in South West Nigeria. The study was led by three hypotheses and three research questions. Descriptive research using survey and ex-post facto methods is the research design used in this study. To collect the data for this investigation, three instruments were created. These include the Questionnaire for Managers of the

UBE Program (QMUBEP), the teachers assessment of implementation of the UBE questionnaire (TAIUBEPQ), and the students' questionnaire on perception of the level of success of the UBE program (SQPLSUBE). The results showed that, among other things, the percentage of qualified teachers working in the Southwest zone was lower than what the UBE implementation guidelines allow, and that teachers' motivation, retraining, and retention levels were only partially in line with those guidelines. The government should provide for and get ready for the training of skilled teachers, according to the study's recommendations for increasing the number and caliber of instructors. Additionally, businesses and wealthy people ought to be urged to support the growth of UBE. To keep teachers, staff, and other stakeholders informed about the value of the facilities offered and their proper application in each school within the geopolitical zone, regular seminars and conferences should be planned. How funding the universal basic education program enhanced educational development in the Federal Capital Territory was not covered in the study. Mustapha, Aloba, and Yusuf (2019) ^[8] explored the politics surrounding universal education in Nigeria. Their study delved into the concept of politics and traced the historical development and implementation strategies of the Universal Primary Education program in Nigeria. They also examined the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, highlighting its key features, components, objectives, and the core issues in the 2004 Compulsory, Free, and Universal Basic Education Act. The study further analyzed the management and implementation strategies of the UBE scheme, identifying factors that hindered its successful execution. It concluded that the policies, plans, and implementation of the UBE program were influenced by the ruling political party's ideology. Among their recommendations were the need to amend the educational objectives in the constitution, to reduce political interference in the program's implementation, and to improve remuneration and working conditions for educational personnel to ensure their commitment. However, the study did not address how the funding of the UBE program has impacted educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.

Similarly, Izuka, Uche, and Chukwuemeka (2022) ^[6] conducted an assessment of the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program in Anambra State using a Universal Basic Education Questionnaire (UBEQ) as the data collection tool. The study found that while most facilities for implementing the UBE program are available, they are inadequate. It also revealed that although quality teachers are involved in the program, the teacher-student ratio is significantly insufficient. Furthermore, the UBE program has not made significant progress in providing free basic education to children in the state, and there are substantial challenges in its effective implementation. The study concluded that improvements are necessary to meet the demands of quality basic education. The findings suggest that the current state of the UBE program is far from achieving its objectives despite government efforts. However, the study did not address how the funding of the UBE program has impacted educational development in the Federal Capital Territory.

Dambo and Ben-George (2022) ^[2] analyzed Nigeria's economic situation, its education system, access to education, and the barriers preventing children from accessing primary education. They identified inadequate funding, unqualified

teachers, home circumstances, religious beliefs, poor policy implementation, and child disabilities as key factors contributing to unequal access to free and compulsory primary education in Nigeria. In order to improve education quality, particularly in rural areas, the paper suggested that the government increase funding for primary education, establish enabling environments, and provide financial and technical resources for the creation and execution of an Inclusive Primary Education Initiative (IPEI) for children with disabilities. They also demanded measures and regulations to guarantee that primary school-age children stay in school, finish their six years of primary school, and advance to upper basic levels. The study did not, however, examine the ways in which money for the UBE program has aided in the advancement of education in the Federal Capital Territory.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in John Dewey's (1916) theory of "education as a necessity of life." Dewey views life as encompassing a broad range of human experiences, including customs, institutions, beliefs, successes, failures, recreations, and occupations. He argues that education plays a crucial role in reshaping outdated societal systems to reflect and accommodate revolutionary changes in society. For example, Dewey's play schools were designed to address the specific needs of young learners and adapt to new family dynamics shaped by industrialization and urbanization, which were vastly different from those of feudal or colonial societies. These schools not only catered to the needs of young learners but also responded to the evolving needs of society and families. According to Dewey, the complexities of a modern society cannot be effectively passed on to future generations without formal education. The basic assumption of Dewey's theory is that education is not just a process of acquiring knowledge, but a means of actively reconstructing society to meet new challenges, ensuring that individuals can thrive in an ever-changing social landscape.

Dewey's theory also highlights the child's rights, particularly the right to education, and addresses the need to reform an outdated, class-based educational system to meet the demands of a rapidly changing era. This was crucial as America transitioned from a rural, agrarian society to an industrial and urban one during Dewey's time. He argues that formal education is essential because it provides experiences that young people cannot acquire through informal interactions. Mastering books and symbols of knowledge equips them to comprehend the realities of their environment, develop survival strategies in a shifting and challenging world, and prepare for future changes.

The relevance of Dewey's theory to this study lies in its alignment with the goals of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which seeks to ensure that basic education is a fundamental right for all Nigerian children. Just as

Dewey's theory bridges the gap between outdated systems and the needs of a modern society, the UBE program aims to transition Nigeria from its colonial past, where formal Western education was not a priority, to the present, where education is essential for national development. Education in Nigeria must equip learners with the skills to thrive in the digital age and global community, allowing them to compete on par with their counterparts worldwide. Given this, it is imperative that the Nigerian government fully implements and supports the UBE program, ensuring that every child receives this basic educational foundation, which is key to improving the quality of life and fostering national progress.

Methodology

The primary research design used in this study was a descriptive survey. Respondents were selected from individuals with pertinent knowledge of the topic and from pertinent government agencies. The FCT, which acts as the operational hub for numerous federal government organizations responsible for financing the Universal Basic Education program and educational advancement in the Federal Capital Territory, is where the majority of respondents were chosen. The Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Capital Territory Education Secretariat, the FCT-Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council (NERDC), the National Teachers Institute (NTI), and the Education Resource Center are the suggested government agencies that took part in this study. Therefore, the total population used in this research work is 2,163. The sample size of 322 was arrived at based on Krejcie and Morgan method of determining sample size.

Respondents were chosen for interviews using a purposive sampling procedure, and the questionnaire was administered using a straightforward random sampling technique. Both primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. Oral interviews and questionnaires were examples of primary sources. Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD), and undecided (U) were the possible answers on a modified five-point Likert scale. Textbooks, online resources, magazines, newspaper stories, seminar papers, symposiums, and publications were examples of secondary sources. Data from questionnaires was presented and analyzed using straightforward percentages and tables, while content-wise analysis was done on data from secondary sources and interviews.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of three hundred and twenty-two (322) copies of the questionnaire distributed, three hundred and fourteen (314) copies were filled and retrieved. Thus, 314 out of the 322 copies of questionnaire were used to analyze the data. The responses from the questionnaire were presented according to the objectives of the study using frequency tables (frequency, count and percentage). The responses were supplemented with information from interview and the extant literature, including reports and official documents.

Table 1: Nature of Funding Universal Basic Education programme and Educational Development in the Federal Capital Territory

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Frequency	Percentage
F.G block grants of not less than 2% of its consolidated revenue fund	158	50.3%	123	39.1%	3	0.9%	19	6.0%	11	3.5%	314	100%
Contributions from Federal Guaranteed Credits	91	28.9%	99	31.5%	2	0.6%	63	20.0%	59	18.7%	314	100%
International donor	22	7.0%	35	11.1%	3	0.9%	144	45.9%	110	35.0%	314	100%
Local donor	87	27.7%	95	30.2%	11	3.5%	68	21.6%	53	16.8%	314	100%

Source: Field survey Data May, 2024. Note: F.G stands for Federal Government

On the Funding Universal Basic Education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, 158 (50.3%) and 123 (39.1%) strongly agree and agree that funding UBE programme and development of education in the Federal Capital Territory is from Federal Government block grants of not less than 2% of its consolidated revenue fund, 11 (3.5%) and 19 (6.0%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 3 (0.9%) were undecided. On the second row, respondents were asked whether funding UBE programme and the development of education in the Federal Capital Territory is from contributions from Federal Guaranteed Credits, 91 (28.9%) and 99 (31.5%) strongly agree and agree, 59 (18.7%) and 63 (20.0%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 2 (0.6%) were undecided.

On the third item, 22 (7.0%) and 35 (11.1%) strongly agree and agree that Funding UBE programme and the development of education in the Federal Capital Territory is from International donor, 144 (45.9%) and 110 (35.0%) strongly disagree and disagree while 3 (0.9%) were undecided. On the fourth row, 87 (27.7%) and 95 (30.2%) were of the opinion that funding UBE programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory is from local donors, 56 (21.6%) and 53 respondents (16.8%) strongly disagree and disagree while 11 respondents accounting for 3.6% were undecided. The above analysis based on respondents' responses in table 1 above indicated that greater percentage of the total respondents' responses strongly agreed that Federal Government block grants of not less than 2% of its consolidated revenue fund is the major source of funding UBE programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory. The analysis is further supported with an interview response as follows:

The FCT has seen an inflow of people as a result of insecurity and the country's current difficult economic climate, which has overstretched school facilities. One intervention agency is UBEC. UBEC is the sponsor of the majority of the buildings in our institutions. For instance, under the School-Based Management Committee-School Improvement Program (SBMC-SIP), UBEC often provides funding to states for the advancement of local schools. We are requesting an expansion of the intervention. The teacher-to-student ratio in our classes should not exceed 1:40, but it is currently 1:70 and above. When they arrive and the facilities are overloaded, we are

unable to turn them away, he added. (Madubuko E. C., FCT-Universal Basic Education Board, May, 2024).

The Acting Executive Secretary of UBEC, Prof. Bala Zakari, made a significant disclosure during an oversight visit by the Senate Committee on Basic and Secondary Education to the Commission in Abuja. While presenting the 2022 capital budget implementation report, Zakari revealed that between 2019 and 2022, N162 billion was allocated to states as Universal Basic Education (UBE) grants, of which N116 billion was accessed by 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), representing 71.52%. However, as of April 30, 2023, a total of N46.2 billion in UBE matching grants remained unaccessed by 36 states and the FCT. Only 11 states, including Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Ekiti, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Nasarawa, Ondo, Taraba, and Zamfara, accessed the 2022 matching grant. The remaining 25 states and the FCT had not accessed the funds. Zakari explained that the inability of some states to pay their required counterpart funding prevents them from accessing UBEC's grants, a situation that undermines the agency's goals of improving basic education across the country.

In order to increase access to high-quality basic education across Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program was launched in 1999. The Federal Government allocates 2% of the Consolidated Federal Revenue (CFR) to assist states and Local Government Areas (LGAs) in implementing basic education in order to accomplish this goal. To be eligible for the FGN/UBE matching awards, the states must provide an equal contribution to counterpart funds. The following formula has been used since 2008 to divide the 2% UBE grant across the states:

Table 2: Nature of UBE FUND Sharing Formula

S/N	Funding	Percentage
i.	Matching Grant	50%
ii.	Education Imbalance Fund	14%
iii.	Good performance Fund	5%
iv.	Special Education Fund	2%
v.	UBEC implementation Fund	2%
vi.	Instructional Materials	15%
vii.	Teacher Professional Development Fund	10%
viii.	UBE Monitoring/Programmes Fund	2%
	Total	100%

Source: UBEC (2023)

Table 3: Budgeted Expenditure and Change in Budgeted Expenditure for UBE (2016 – 2019)

		2016	2017	% Change in 2017	2018	% Change in 2018	2019	% Change in 2019
UBE	Budget (nominal)	77.11	125.00	62.1%	109.06	-12.7%	112.47	-14.22%
	Budget (Inflation Adjusted)	66.65	92.74	39.1%	72.19	-22.2%	69.24	-20.21%

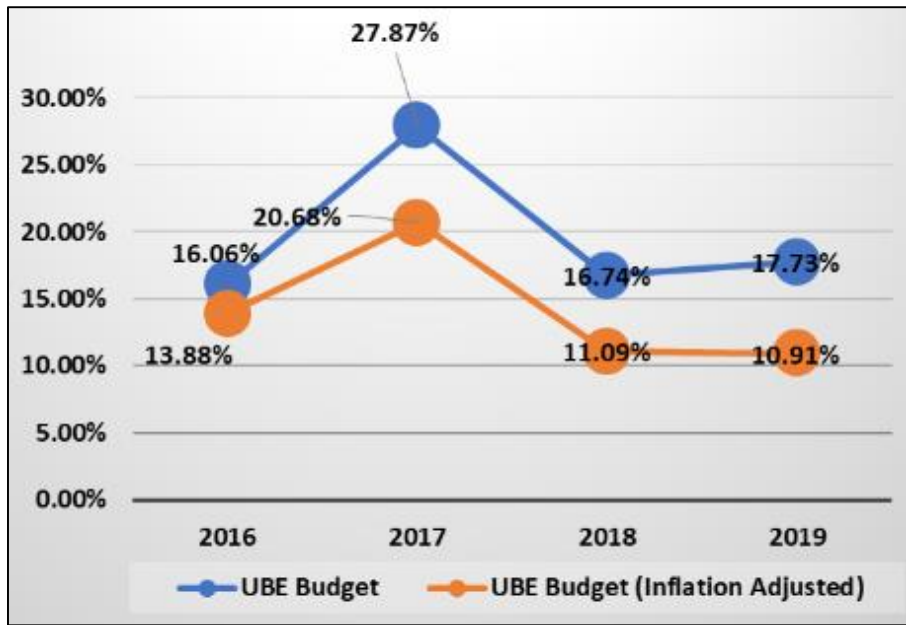
Source: Researcher's Computation from the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Appropriation Act.

From Table 3, it is clear that budgeted allocations to UBE have been in consecutive decline from 2018 to 2019, in both

nominal and real terms. However, the magnitude of decline is much larger in real terms compared to nominal terms. Also,

the share of UBE budget to total education budget reflects the degree of prioritization of UBE’s objectives. From Figure 1, the consecutive decline from 2017 in the share of UBE

relative to the total education expenditure reflects a lower prioritization of UBE’s objectives, especially in the light of increased financial commitments to the education sector.

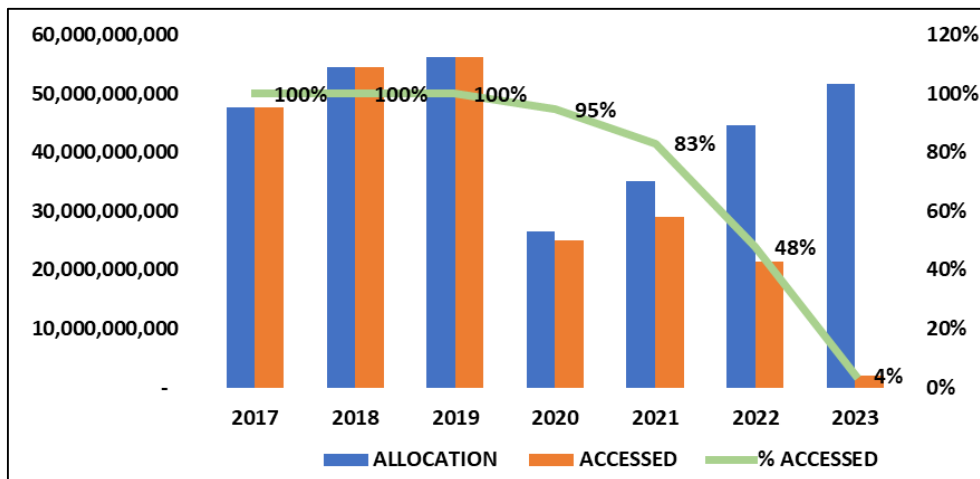


Source: Researcher’s Computation from the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Appropriation Act

Fig 1: Share of UBE Budget to Total Education Budget (2016 – 2019)

Despite this intervention from the federal government, there exists a huge gap in the funding requirement for basic education implementation in the country. Figure 2 below is a graphic representation of UBEC’s matching grants allocation and access to states by year. The figure shows there was a steady increase of matching grant allocation from 2017-2019 with N47.59 billion, N54.53 billion and N56.23 billion

respectively and 100% disbursement to the states. However, there was a sharp decrease in funds allocation from N56.23 billion in 2019 to N26.46 billion in 2020 representing 52.9%. Afterwards, there was an increase of allocation by 32.35%, 27.24%, and 15.89% respectively in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively.



Source: UBEC (2023)

Fig 2: UBEC Matching Grants Allocation and Disbursement to States by Year (as at October, 2023)

Many factors were responsible for this decline in allocation and disbursement. These included

1. Failure of many states to provide their counterpart fund to access the FGN matching grants. Many states had not made any significant improvement in basic education due to lack of strong political will and commitment on their part. Yet many of them were and are contending with the crisis of decay in their primary and junior

2. secondary schools. Clearly, this is a case of misplaced priorities and not lack of funds.
2. Reduction of federal government’s revenue, especially during the COVID-19 period (2020-2021), which affected the allocation;
3. Delay in submitting action plans; and
4. Non-accounting for earlier disbursed funds to states.

Table 4: Impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Frequency	Percentage
Less effective	145	46.2%	115	36.6%	3	0.9%	29	9.2%	22	7.0%	314	100%
Ineffective	148	47.1%	112	35.7%	2	0.6%	23	7.3%	25	7.9%	314	100%
Effective	32	10.2%	38	12.1%	3	0.9%	135	43%	106	33.8%	314	100%
Highly effective	3	0.9%	2	0.6%	1	0.3%	187	59.5%	121	38.5%	314	100%

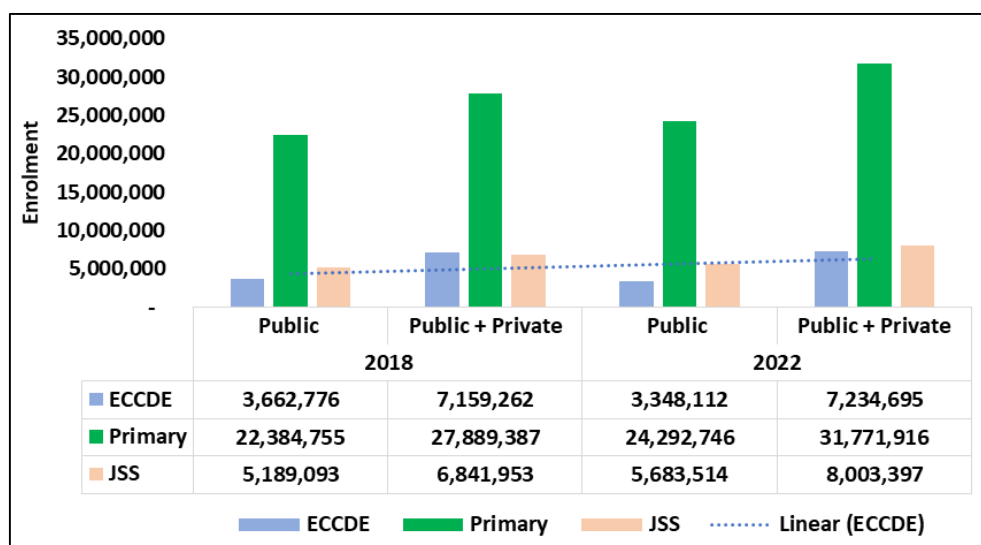
Source: Field survey Data May, 2024

On the impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory, 145 (46.2%) and 115 (36.6%) strongly agree and agree that impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are less effective, 29 (9.2%) and 22 (7.0%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 3 (0.9%) were undecided. On the second row, respondents were asked Impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are ineffective, 148 (47.1%) and 112 (35.7%) strongly agree and agree, 23 (7.3%) and 25 (7.9%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 2 (0.6%) were undecided.

On the third item, 32 (10.2%) and 38 (12.1%) strongly agree and agree impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are effective, 135(43%) and 106 (33.8%) strongly disagree and disagree while 3 (0.9%) were undecided. On the fourth row, 3 (0.9%) and 2 (0.6%) were of the opinion that impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are highly effective, 187 (59.5%) and 121 respondents (38.5%) strongly disagree and disagree while 1 respondents accounting for 0.3% were undecided. The above analysis based on respondents’ responses in table 4 above indicated that greater percentage of the total respondents’ responses strongly agreed that impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are less effective. However, an interview conducted with an official of the FCT-UBEC does agree with the analysis above.

According to him, access is the first step towards achieving Universal Basic Education for all children. The desired education in any society must be made accessible to all children irrespective of their gender, socio-economic backgrounds, physical condition, or geographical location. Through a variety of government- and donor-driven educational initiatives, UBEC has since its founding committed significant time and resources to expanding access to basic education for all children, acknowledging the vital role that access plays in achieving the goals of Universal Basic Education. A growing number of targeted funding initiatives, such as school feeding, the Female Teacher Trainee Scholarship Scheme (FTTSS), and other conditional cash transfer initiatives (girl-child education and children from poor backgrounds), are among them. Other initiatives include widespread advocacy and mobilization, as well as separate educational provisions that aim to address the difficulties of access in the organization, structure, and curriculum of mainstream schooling (e.g., nomadic and Almajiri education). Greater emphasis is also laid on the education of children with special needs (Okoli U., FCT-Universal Basic Education Board, May, 2024).

Another respondent from the Federal Capital Territory Education Secretariat, Abuja stated that the Commission has made considerable progress in expanding access to basic education since 1999 when the UBE programme was introduced. Evidence of this progress at the three levels of basic education was documented by the UBEC in its 2018 and 2022 National Personnel Audit (NPA) Reports (May, 2024).



Sources: National Bureau of Statistics/UNICEF (2022)

Fig 3: Trends in Learner Enrolment in ECCDE, Primary and JSS from 2018 – 2022

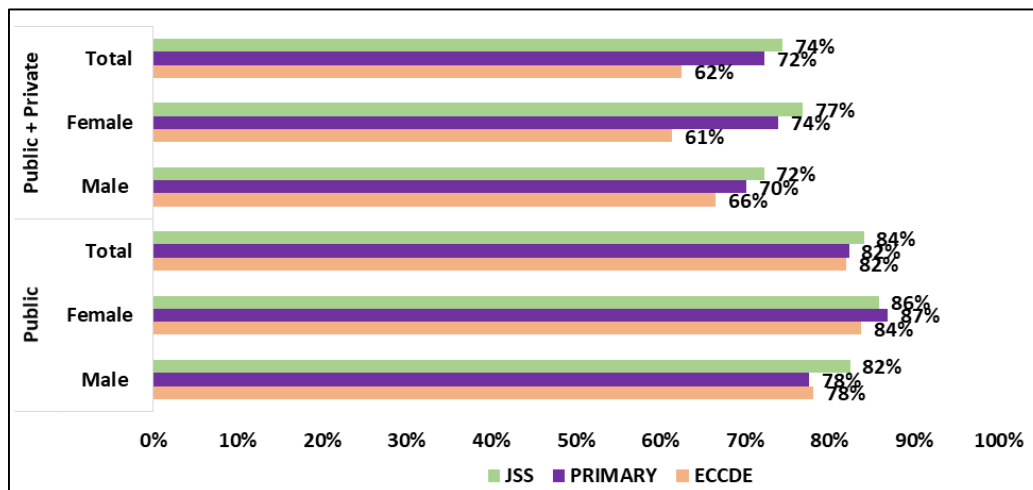
The rates of increase in enrolment across the three levels of basic education are presented in Figure 3. As the data show,

the percentage of increase in enrolment was highest at the primary school level (7.3) suggesting improved access and

quality in Basic Education. There was a sharp decline in enrolment at public ECCDE (-7.7) level where attention had just been focused sequel to the incorporation of that level into the formal structure of basic education following the decision of NCE in 2013.

At the heart of quality basic education is the need to ensure that learners attain the critical foundation skills of literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy. Without these basic skills, many learners will struggle to cope with the prescribed curriculum, further widening the gap in learning disparities for disadvantaged children. In this regard, UBEC has collaborated with states and donor agencies to implement

several strategies for improving the quality of basic education programme, including the provision of quality infrastructure, instructional materials, funding of teacher professional development on an annual basis, institutionalization of quality assurance in basic education, review of the basic education curriculum for relevance, inclusiveness, gender sensitivity and a focus on foundation skills, second chance accelerated learning programmes for the displaced and other disadvantaged children, deployment of technology to complement classroom teaching and strengthening learning assessments to measure progress towards achieving national and global education goals.



Sources: National Bureau of Statistics/UNICEF (2022)

Fig 4: Percentage of Qualified Teachers in Basic Education, 2018 - 2022

A cursory look at the current distribution of qualified teachers in public and private schools in the country (Figure 4), gives a false impression that there are enough qualified teachers in the basic education sector. The figure shows that the percentages of qualified teachers at ECCDE is 62% while that of both the primary and JSS levels have exceeded 70% respectively. Moreover, when public schools are looked at alone, the percentages of teachers for ECCDE are 82%, Primary 82% while that for JSS is 84%, which means there are more qualified teachers in the public schools than in the private ones. However, these high shares of qualified teachers across the three levels of basic education, though impressive, are deceptive on two counts: first, while they indicate considerable progress, they are not suggestive of low LQTRs. It is common knowledge that despite an acceptable national learner–teacher ratio of 35:1 at the primary school level, there are still disparities and ratios as high as 100:1, particularly in the big cities, where some teachers have double stream classes.

Secondly, the impressive statistics for qualified teachers does not necessarily suggest improved learning outcomes within the sub-sector. Qualification is not synonymous with competence. A recent World Bank research opines that Nigeria is going through learning crisis, with 70% of its primary school pupils not able to understand a simple sentence or perform basic numeracy tasks, while 69% of primary school teachers are unqualified to be in the classroom. The NALABE (2017) Report further confirmed that many primary school children had not acquired even the most basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Discussion of Findings

1. On the nature of funding Universal Basic Education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, 158 (50.3%) and 123 (39.1%) strongly agree and agree that funding Universal Basic Education programme and educational development in the Federal Capital Territory is from Federal Government block grants of not less than 2% of its consolidated revenue fund, 11 (3.5%) and 19 (6.0%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 3 (0.9%) were undecided..
2. The study also revealed that greater percentage of the total respondents' responses strongly agreed that impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are less effective. This was confirmed by 145 respondents accounting for (46.2%) and 115 (36.6%) who indicated strongly agree and agree that impact of funding Universal Basic Education programme on educational development in the Federal Capital Territory are less effective, 29 (9.2%) and 22 (7.0%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 3 (0.9%) were undecided.

Conclusion

The situational analysis of basic education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, reveals that Nigeria requires a more deliberate and proactive approach to delivering Universal Basic Education (UBE) to guarantee all school-age children the right to free and equitable access to quality education. The analysis also emphasizes the need for immediate and

substantive reforms to establish clear strategies for improving the educational experiences and outcomes of all children. Achieving these improvements must involve collaboration among all basic education stakeholders.

The proper utilization of available resources for basic education is a shared responsibility. Stakeholders across all states, particularly those involved in the education sector and the basic education sub-sector, must ensure that UBE funds accessed by their states are used effectively. This can be done by asking relevant questions and obtaining access to their state's action plans, which outline unit costs, project descriptions, locations, and timelines for implementation. These details enable easier monitoring of projects. It is crucial for all parties to participate in overseeing project implementation, ensuring that contractors use quality materials, and promoting transparency and accountability in the use of basic education funds. This collective effort ensures that the goal of "Education for All" is realized. The issue of school-aged children lacking access to education must be urgently addressed before it escalates into a critical crisis.

Recommendations

1. There is need for an upward review of the Federal Government UBE Intervention Fund from its current 2% to 4% of the CRF because since the enactment in 2004, it has not been reviewed. This increase being requested will enable the Commission to discharge its responsibilities more effectively.
2. Evidence from the situational analysis of how the funding of Universal Basic Education programme has improved educational development in the Federal Capital Territory suggests that the task of achieving education for all should not be left to the government alone. Government efforts need to be complemented by appropriate private sector support. There is the need to ensure proper alignment of planned activities with budgets and expenditure frameworks to avoid wastages and misdirection of funds, as well as, ensure accountability. The allocated resources must, therefore, be closely tied to the targets set and the agreed turnaround strategies. Furthermore, efforts should be directed at mobilizing additional resources through partnerships to complement government funding.

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