



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A THREE-DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP ON IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA



PREAMBLE

Human Development Initiatives (HDI) in collaboration with implementing Cluster Members, namely: Grassroots Health Organization of Nigeria (GHON), Youth Child Support Initiative (YCSI), Patriotic Citizen Initiatives (PCI), The WellBeing Foundation Africa (WBFA) and Out-of-School Children Empowerment Foundation (OSCEF) with the support of USAID Nigeria's Strengthening Advocacy and Civic Engagement (SACE) Project organized a Three-Day Training Workshop which focused on Improving Governance and Accountability in Primary and Junior Secondary Education in Nigeria at Grand Ibro Hotel Annex, Abuja from Tuesday, May 19 to Thursday, May 21, 2015. It was attended by 70 participants drawn from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Parent-Teachers Associations, community members, State Universal Basic Education Board and media institutions from four geo-political zones in the country.

The workshop was aimed at improving and enhancing governance and accountability for quality and accessible primary and junior secondary education at the Local Government level in Nigeria. Participants were enlightened and informed on child education under the Child Rights Act (CRA) 2003, the roles of local governance on education, the roles of relevant stakeholders viz: community members, Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA), the media, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Non-Governmental Organizations, the Private Sector and general public, towards the actualization of the Universal Basic Education project.

The opening session of the meeting was chaired by Dr. MacJohn Nwaobiala, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and the Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Gladys Makoju, Former Director, Policy Planning Management and Research, Federal Ministry of Education. Other notable speakers were Prof. Yemisi Obashoro-John, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos; Dr. Theresa Stephen Gyang, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Jos; Mr. Okafor Too-chukwu, National Moderator, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA); Mr. Tayo Alofun, Media Officer HDI; Mr. Theophilus Abbah, Sunday Editor, Daily Trust Newspaper and Mr. Amara Nwankpa of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation. Participants were divided into groups during the breakout session to deliberate on issues germane to Universal Basic Education. Group sessions focused on: Improving CSO Capacity in Monitoring the Educational Sector, Giving Communities a Voice in Education Service Delivery; and Protection and Participation of Excluded Groups in Education (Girl child, disabled, Almajiris, IDPs). After robust discussions on issues relating to accountability and governance surrounding basic education, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATIONS

The participants observed that:

1. Lack of political will and poor leadership on the part of government is a major problem in education. Ineffective leadership has resulted in poor implementation of policies, mismanagement of resources and failure to exercise responsibility and apply sanctions.
2. Inadequate effective institutionalized structures and feedback system that monitors and evaluate educational progress at the community level.

3. Inconducive learning environment affects students' willingness to go to school. Dilapidated structures, poor or lack of toilet facilities, poor ventilation and lighting, absence of instructional materials demoralise students and teachers.
4. Artificial financial constraints resulting from State governments not utilizing available funds meant for education. For instance, some states in Nigeria have refused to claim counterpart funds made available by the Federal government provided for education.
5. Inadequate data bank on government schools, number of students, teachers' details, student details and other information leading to data deficiencies, inaccurate, assumed and falsified data.
6. Use of persons in disciplines outside their areas of competence; insufficient competent and committed teachers and poor condition of service for teachers leading to low quality education.
7. Nonchalant attitude of Parents/guardians towards their children/wards' education negatively affect the attitude of children toward school.
8. Negligence and ignorance of parents/guardians on child's rights.
9. Inadequate community ownership and contribution to education has hindered the progress in education.
10. Limited number of active CSOs working in the education sector hinders active participation in monitoring and evaluation.
11. Excess bureaucratic bottlenecks in the education commissions.
12. Inadequate research capacity and poor public relations of CSOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Participants at the workshop recommended the following:

1. Citizens should have a culture of reporting deficiencies, failures and anomalies in the education system through the media and other communication channels to act as a push factor for proper implementation of education policies.
2. CSOs should partner and encourage communities to demand accountability from relevant authorities.
3. Government should harmonize the role of Quality Assurance and inspecting agencies for effective and consistent monitoring and evaluation of educational activities in the communities.
4. Existing committees like the Village Development Committees, School Based Management Committees (SBMC), Ward Development Committees, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) etc., should be strengthened and co-opted into advocacy to improve basic education.
5. Government should provide appropriate, physical and emotional climate for students to learn. Such as modern classrooms, chairs, toilet facilities, etc.
6. NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, PTAs, FBOs etc., should come together to appeal to the state government to access the UBE fund.
7. Stakeholders (Parents, teachers, community leaders, religious leaders, and others) should be encouraged to mainstream Community Accountability and Transparency Initiatives (CATI) into their programmes and processes.
8. Data on government schools, number of students, teachers' details, student details and other information should be improved and readily made available on e-portals; CSOs should also build their capacity using such data for advocacy.
9. Teachers' Registration Council (TRC) and other education regulatory bodies should be overhauled for proper monitoring of the system. In particular teacher education should be drastically improved and performance monitored.

10. Education faculties in tertiary institutions should not be considered dumping ground for unqualified and incompetent students who could not gain admission into other faculties.
11. Recruitment of qualified teachers should not be politicized and promotion of teachers should be strictly based on merit
12. Stakeholders in education should embrace continuous advocacy, targeted campaigns and use of IEC instruments to sensitize the parents/guardians on policy and framework of Universal Basic Education.
13. Continuous sensitization using NGOs, Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations to creatively contextualize and make education acceptable within the communities.
14. Public officials should be mandated to send their wards to public schools.

Endorsed by:

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Implementing Partners



Youth Child Support Initiative (YCSI)

