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EDUCATION IN NIGERIA--THE CORNERSTONE OF A NATION

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the education system in Nigeria, Africa. It analyzes the overall nation-wide learning system and its role in national security and global stability. It explores the related issues and problems facing the Nigerian government in trying to educate its people. Various strategies to tackle the identified deficiencies have been noted. Finally there are recommendations for implementation by the Nigerian government and actions required by the United States.

Lieutenant Colonel Toreaser Steele

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**Lieutenant Colonel
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EDUCATION IN NIGERIA--THE CORNERSTONE OF A NATION

INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. It declares:

"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be made equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."¹

Education is not only a right of every human being, but it is central to the quality of life. It is at the heart of economic strength and security, creativity in the arts and letters, inventions in the sciences, and perpetuation of cultural values. Education is the key to international competitiveness. At the presentation of the National Educational Strategy, then President George Bush stated:

" Education has always meant opportunity. Today, education determines not just which students succeed, but also which nations will thrive in a world united in pursuit of freedom in enterprise."²

The recent changes in the world environment-- the collapse of communism, the end of the Cold War, and the acceleration of the Information Age demand a new way of thinking and a new approach to international competition.

Throughout history, resources have been defined in terms other than people--soil, stones, land, and riches buried beneath the ground. Now it is time to recognize, with more than lip service, that a nation's greatest resource is its people. Nations that understand this and nurture ideas will move forward in years to come. But, nations that stick to stale old notions and ideologies will falter and fail.³ If well educated, people are also indispensable to security and prosperity.⁴

Why "Education In Nigeria"?: This paper takes somewhat of a sector assessment approach to looking at the Nigerian education system. The question I was asked by one of my classmates, when he learned of my research topic, was: "What does education in Nigeria have to do with National Security?" My answer was basically this:

- **Education is Important for International Competitiveness:**

The United States cares about the welfare of all peoples. Developing countries must educate their populations if they are to compete successfully in an era of rapid economic and technological change.

The United States can no longer afford to come to the rescue of nations in financial trouble. Given the recent changes in the world environment, the United States is forced to turn somewhat inward in an effort to solve its own problems of which the economy is among the top priorities.

The United States' economy will not support the kind of

financial assistance made available to developing countries in the past. Therefore, developing countries must become responsible for their own economic growth and social development--education is the key to success in this area!

Economic development is good for the country. It enhances political stability in the region. A better economy increases purchasing power for United States goods.

- **Education Is Important to Stability and Market Access:**
Education increases productivity and can lead to economic prosperity through effective human resource utilization and development. Unemployment and other manifestations of under utilization of human resources are the most critical problems facing developing countries today.⁵

Nigeria is located off the Gulf of Guinea. It is the only state in Africa that can aspire to become a regional power in tropical Africa.

Nigeria's large oil reserves in the 1970s enabled it to play a continent-wide political role.⁶ Nigerian oil resources are significant--about three percent of known world reserves. Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and the ninth largest producer in the world. Only

two percent of Nigeria's natural gas production is being utilized.

- **Education Has a Role in Diplomatic Presence:** There are at least two reasons why the United is interested in maintaining a diplomatic presence in Africa. They are:

-- Africa's voice in the United Nations--they make up one-third of the membership (as of 1990) and have at least one vote in the Security Council.

-- Diplomatic presence. This gives the United States insurance and a playing card for and against crises. Nigeria already has direct ties with the west. Diplomatic presence would enable the United States to conduct its own situational assessment at any given time.⁷

Education is important for building consensus, articulating values, and making individuals more sensitive to the environment and fellow human beings.⁸

What This Paper Is About: The focus of this paper is on primary education. In Nigeria this includes primary, lower secondary and higher secondary schooling.⁹ The same as elementary, middle school/junior high and high school in the United States.

The objectives of primary education are to produce a literate society and lay the groundwork for higher education. In many

countries in the developing world, education systems have not met their objectives. Often, they have been ineffective in teaching students the core skills contained in their national curriculum. Moreover, they have not provided all school-age children, particularly girls, with the opportunity to attend school.¹⁰

Primary education is the foundation for all future learning. It is the cornerstone from which the human capital base is built. As a result of not meeting the objectives, these education systems have seriously jeopardized national efforts to build a human capital base for development.¹¹

According to a Xinhua General News Service article dated July 16, 1992, 8.25 million Nigerian school-age children (i.e. those approximately 6-18 years of age)¹² are deprived of basic education. This figure represents 37% of the country's total school-age population. Only 13.76 million school-age children out of a total of 22.03 million are enrolled in school.¹³

On the surface, this figure seems alarming given United States standards. But without a close look at Nigeria's education system, an accurate assessment is not feasible.

The purpose of this paper is to make that assessment, and in doing so, answer the following question:

"Is Nigeria's education system adequate to meet the needs of the country now and in the future?"

Only academic education below the college/university level will be addressed. Any of several specific aspects of the Nigerian

education system would lend itself to sufficient research. However, this paper is somewhat of a broad view of the academic education system using primarily the sector approach of assessment.

The study is organized in this way: First, background data is presented to give the reader a flavor for the country. Second, a discussion of the origin of the educational system sheds light on some of the disparities within the country. Third, a look at Nigeria's education infrastructure will allow us to view the organization from the top level down. Fourth, an assessment of the quality of school programs will shed light on problem areas, their origin, and possible solutions. Next, there is a review of the issues affecting education, and the problems regarding access to education. Here some familiar cultural biases and management difficulties, associated with an infrastructure of this size, are revealed. Finally, a discussion of current and future strategic plans for improvement will complete the assessment.

VITAL SIGNS

Nigeria is a country roughly twice the size of California. It is divided into 30 states and one territory and has been ruled by a military government since 31 December 1983. For the last twelve and one half years, the Chief of State and Head of Government-- President and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces has been General Ibrahim BABANGIFA. However, an election is scheduled for late summer 1992.

Size: Nigeria is one of the largest countries in Africa in terms of land mass. However, only 31 percent of the land is arable. Nigeria is Africa's most populated country. Figures 1 and 2 show other basic data information and a comparison of various social factors for Nigeria and the United States.

Resources: Nigeria's natural resources are crude oil, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc and natural gas. The economy is dominated by a single product--petroleum. Although Nigeria is Africa's leading oil-producing country, it remains poor with a \$250 per capita Gross Domestic Product.

Language: English is the official language in Nigeria. Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Fulani and several other languages are also widely used.

THE BIRTH OF AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

It has been argued that the education of southern Nigerians was actually the accidental outcome of missionary, protestant and catholic, church rivalry. Education was necessary to win converts, but since British colonial governments restricted Christian missionaries to non-muslim areas, northern Nigeria did not experience this expansion of education. Therefore, education grew in Southern Nigeria unlike elsewhere in the country.¹⁴

Figure 1.

BASIC DATA SHEET

Area (thousand square km.)	924
GNP per capita (1988, US\$)	290
Population (1992, millions)	110
Population density (per square km.)	117
Population growth rate (1990-1995 projected)	3.06%
Urban Population (as a % of total)	35.2%
Access to Safe Water	
Urban Population	50%
Rural Population	15%
Nutrition per Capita	
Daily Calorie Intake	2,146
Daily Protein Intake (grams)	48

Sources: The World Bank Staff Estimates from "The World Bank Staff Appraisal Report, "Federal Republic of Nigeria Primary Education Project, dated 20 November 1990.

The World Factbook 1992 by the Central Intelligence Agency, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.

Figure 2. NIGERIA/UNITED STATES SOCIAL FACTORS COMPARISON

	Nigeria	United States
Birth Rate per 1000	46	14
Death Rate per 1000	16	9
Infant Mortality Rate per 1000	110	10
Life Expectancy: Female/Male	50/48	79/72
Total Fertility Rate (children per woman)	6.5	1.8
Literacy Rate: Females	40%	98%
Males	62%	97%
Overall	51%	98%

Source: The World Factbook by the Central Intelligence Agency, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C.

A Christian Beginning: The Nigerian educational system is a product of development since 1841. Western education was brought to Nigeria by Christian Missionaries.¹⁵ Until the 1970s the establishment of schools and, indeed, Western education itself in many parts of Nigeria was virtually a monopoly of the Christian missions. Particularly, in Southern Nigeria, the missions' interest evolved from the missionaries' perception of schools as important avenues for conversion. According to Bishop Shanahan, one of the pioneer catholic missionaries in eastern Nigeria:

"..... those who hold the school, hold the country, hold the religion, hold the future."

What It Looked Like: Prior to the current system, primary education lasted six to seven years; basic secondary education lasted five years and was followed by two years of preparatory work for admission to universities to pursue a three year baccalaureate degree. Only the best and the brightest entered the universities directly for four years of study leading to baccalaureate degrees.

Opportunity for Higher Learning: Graduates of the five year program entered a variety of tertiary institutions. Some attended teachers' colleges for primary-school teachers. Others entered the colleges of education for secondary-school teachers. Another avenue available at the tertiary level were polytechnics and colleges of technology.¹⁶

THE FRAMEWORK

Nigeria's formal education system now has a six-three-three-

four structure, like that of the United States, which was introduced in 1982. There are six years of primary education followed by three years of lower secondary education. After these three years, students attend three more years of higher secondary education. After successful completion of these three levels, the next step would be four years at the tertiary level or technical schools.¹⁷

Who Controls the Schools?: The federal government exercises control of the school system through the Federal Ministry of Education. Under the ministry are general administrators, professional educators, and supporting staff who assist the Minister of Education in policy making and implementation (see figure 3).

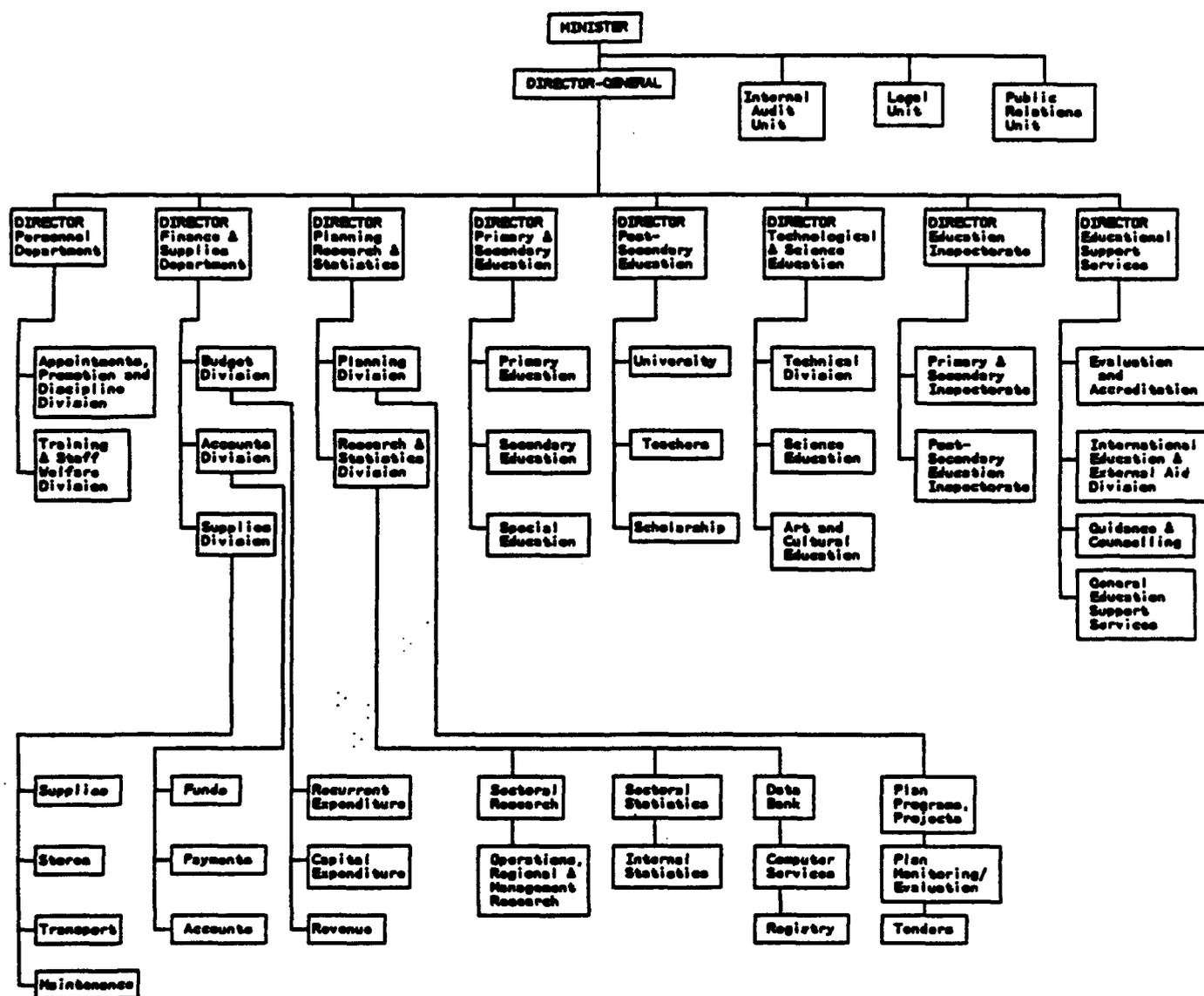
The Federal Ministry of Education administers two important bodies: The National Council on Education (NCE) and The Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCC).

The NCE: The NCE is a council of the Minister and State Commissioners of Education. It meets at the federal and state capitals to consider current issues on education and make recommendations to all the governments of the federation.

The JCE: The JCE is a committee of professional educators of the Federal and State Ministers of Education, representatives of the university faculties or institutes of education, the Nigeria Union of Teachers, and the National Manpower Board. The committee deliberates on the professional aspects of education to

include quality of education; mobility of teachers and pupils; and the education, remuneration and discipline of teachers.

Figure 3.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



Source: The World Bank Staff Appraisal Report: "Federal Republic of Nigeria Primary Education Project, 20 Nov 1990.

The State's Role: Each state operates its own education law. Hence, it is impossible to have absolute uniformity in structure of administrations and control of education in all states. Nevertheless, there is considerable uniformity in the structure of the system when it comes to qualification of teachers; hierarchy of ministry officials; and general objectives of education.

Education at the state level is administered very much like it is at the federal level. There is a Ministry of Education which is headed by a Commissioner of Education.

The Governing Law: The education law of each state and the regulations based on it govern the management of education in the state. The provisions of the law cover a multitude of issues. It outlines delegation of functions by the commissioner. The authority for establishment of advisory and other boards and commissions is defined in the law. The law clarifies local government responsibilities regarding education. There are provisions for the establishment and composition of the education committee of a local government council.

Regarding schools directly, the law covers the curriculum of public schools as well as the powers of the Commissioner in establishment of schools. Management, inspection, financial provisions and ancillary services of public and private educational institutions are all outlined in the law. Other provisions covered are teachers and their appointment, remuneration and discipline.

Who Pays for What?: Prior to 1979, tuition cost of education was shared among government, voluntary agencies and parents. By administrative fiat, the military government abolished tuition fees at all levels of education in 1979. Thereafter, the government paid the salaries and emoluments of administrative, teaching, and supportive staff in all institutions.

Students in secondary and tertiary institutions pay for their board and lodging in all the states except the south-western states where boarding facilities are being phased out in secondary schools. Even in institutions where students pay for board and lodging they pay subsidized rates.¹⁸

More Free Education: In 1990, the government of Nigeria extended free education from primary schools through lower secondary schools. Nigeria's goal is to increase the country's literacy rate to near 100 percent by the year 2000. Statistics show that 40 percent of Nigeria's population is below the age of 18. But only 60 percent of them are enrolled in primary or secondary schools.¹⁹ Between 1983-1992, enrollments dwindled from 16.15 million to 13.76 million. This means that millions of school-age children dropped out mid-way to join the growing number of illiterates and semi-illiterate in the country. The number of illiterate adults is estimated at 45 million out of a population of 110 million.²⁰ See figure 4 for a comparison of adult illiterates in developing countries.

Figure 4.

ILLITERACY TRENDS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

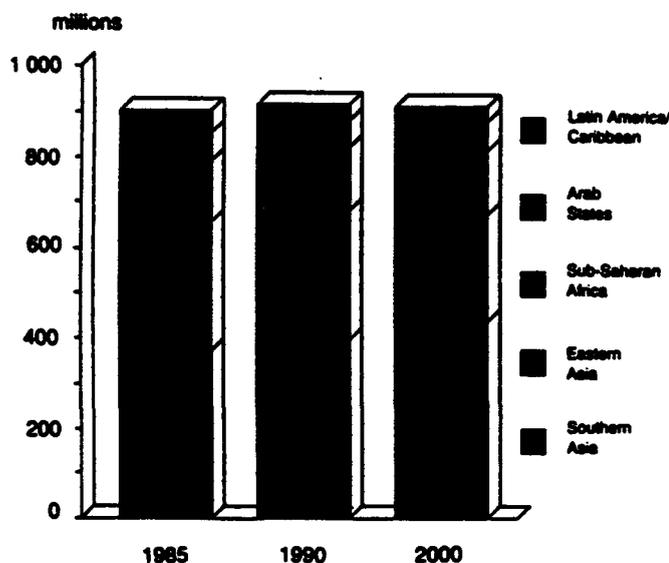
Illiteracy: trends and prospects

Unesco's estimates and projections as assessed in 1989 at the world level lead to the following conclusions:

- There were just under 1,000 million adults who could not read nor write in 1985. This number is only marginally projected to decline in 1990 and in the year 2000.
 - In 1985, 30 out of 100 adults in the world were illiterate and this proportion should decline to 27 out of 100 in 1990 with a further reduction to 22 out of 100 at the end of this century.
 - The overwhelming majority of the illiterate population (921 million in 1990) are and will continue to be found in the developing countries.
 - Invariably females constitute the majority of the illiterate population and will continue to do so.
- Worldwide averages disguise important regional disparities:
- Both in absolute and relative terms, Latin America and the Caribbean will have the best literacy situation—a decline from 18 per cent of its adult population illiterate in 1985 to 15 per cent in 1990 and 11 per cent in 2000. Nevertheless, 41 million adults are projected to be illiterate in this region at the end of the century.

- Eastern Asia should reduce the number of illiterates by about 64 million between 1985 and 2000 leading to reduction in the illiteracy rate—from 29 per cent in 1985 to 24 per cent in 1990 and 17 per cent in 2000. Despite this improvement, more than 230 million adults of the region will still be illiterate.
- For Sub-Saharan Africa, Arab States and Southern Asia, although the number of illiterates is projected to increase between 1985 and the end of this century, in relative terms the proportion of adult illiterates should decrease. At the end of this century almost 440 million adults will be illiterate in Southern Asia, 147 million in Sub-Saharan Africa and 66 million in the Arab States.

Number of adult illiterates in developing countries



Adult illiterates (age 15 and over) and illiteracy rates

	Adult illiterates (in millions)			Illiteracy rates (%)			Decrease 1985-2000 % points
	1985	1990	2000	1985	1990	2000	
World Total	965.1	962.6	942.0	29.9	26.9	22.0	-7.9
Developing countries							
of which:							
Sub-Saharan Africa	133.6	138.8	146.8	59.1	52.7	40.3	-18.8
Arab States	58.6	61.1	65.8	54.5	48.7	38.1	-16.4
Latin America/Caribbean	44.2	43.5	40.9	17.6	15.2	11.3	-6.3
Eastern Asia	297.3	281.0	233.7	28.7	24.0	17.0	-11.7
Southern Asia	374.1	397.3	437.0	57.7	53.8	45.9	-11.8
Developed countries	57.0	42.0	23.5	6.2	4.4	2.3	-3.9

Source: UNESCO Office of Statistics, 1990.

What Is the Cost to the Government?: It is unclear how much Nigeria has spent on education since the 1950s because of the paucity of data. However, it is estimated that the federal government's expenditures on education rose from 20.19 million naira in 1968-69 financial year to 867.36 million naira during 1977-78 financial year--a 43-fold increase in eleven years.

Currently, Nigeria spends about \$166 million a year on primary education.²¹ There are some 39,000 primary schools throughout the country for Nigeria's 14 million school-age children. According to a December 11, 1991 Xinhua General News Service article, Nigeria spent \$3 billion annually for the salaries of 350,000 teachers in primary schools alone.²²

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE SYSTEM--QUALITY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Despite efforts to improve the educational system throughout Nigeria, it is beset with complex problems which include inadequate teaching staffs and shortage of physical equipment.

The Curriculum: Curriculum development is excellent, it is based on modern approaches to curriculum design and is comprehensively presented. However, there are too many subjects at the primary level to be covered adequately. Furthermore, curriculum content is not always relevant. For example teaching electricity in class one social studies in remote rural areas is somewhat irrelevant.

Can We Talk?: The medium of instruction in classes one to three (equivalent to first through third grade) is the local language. In

the last few years the Federal Ministry of Education has standardized primary school curriculum nationally for the English language, science, mathematics, social studies, home economics and three major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba). About 60 percent of the 38-period school week is devoted to English, mathematics, and science.

The Yardstick--Goals and Objectives: Although the curriculum is based on the National Policy on Education and modern approaches to curriculum development are used, relevance of what is being taught is a concern. Any solution must begin at the root of the programs--with a clear definition of the aims, goals and objectives of primary education in practical terms. After this is done, a thorough needs assessment is in order to be used to evaluate the relevance of the curriculum. This review must be conducted in the context of Nigeria's rich and diverse cultures and geographic conditions. Also, it is essential to develop materials and methods appropriate to the current school situation.

Is Anyone Keeping Watch?: The supervision of primary school has been a problem because of cumbersome administrative structure and inadequate financial and physical resources. Primary school inspectors are affiliated with the local government, usually under the control of the local Education Council. Generally one inspector is assigned to 25-30 schools. The inspector is expected to visit a school at least once a term and conduct a full inspection annually. In reality, schools are visited only once a

year at most, full inspections are rare, and inspections that do occur often focus on administrative and organizational problems rather than address professional concerns such as advising teachers.

The number of inspectors are totally inadequate. Also, the responsibilities of the inspectors are many and diffuse. Lack of funding further limits field work. The shortage of funds has led to discontinuation of allowances for: transportation, travel, housing, and motor vehicle loans previously available to inspectors.

Further, the working conditions and career development opportunities for inspectors are worse than for other employees in the education sector. This makes it difficult to attract experienced heads and teachers to the job.

Are There Any Signal Lights?: An analysis of the education sector planning and the sector as a whole is almost impossible. There are two primary reasons why this is so. First, there is a lack of reliable current statistics. Second, there is an absence of all but a few quantitative and qualitative educational indicators.

Help Is On The Way: A project by the United Nations Educational and Scientific, Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) is underway to help remedy this situation. Since 1983, UNESCO has been introducing measures to collect and disseminate reliable school statistics. The project is supported by brief familiarization courses on the

need to record and present accurate statistics. The goal is also to depoliticize data gathering in the interests of development.

A major step forward was the introduction in 1987 of an annual primary school census. A further improvement was publication of a primary school teachers' register by the National Teachers' Institute.

Despite these major advances, data collection, storage, analysis and use for informed planning are constrained at both the federal and state levels. The reasons for the constraints are: a shortage of appropriately-deployed trained personnel; lack of transportation for verification purposes; and a dearth of computer hardware and nationally standardized software.

Beyond Today--Research and Development: Research and evaluation are essential to educational development. Research is crucial to planning and evaluation is the key to gauging the effectiveness of programs.

The institutes of education conduct applied research to develop teaching methods and curriculum. Some findings are shared through national professional organizations and research conferences. But, much of the topical research is not coordinated nationally. This results in substantial gaps in knowledge and understanding as well as much duplication of effort.

WEAKENING OF THE FRAMEWORK--MORE SO FOR SOME THAN OTHERS

The deterioration in the quality of learning and physical

equipment in Nigeria is blamed on the rise in total enrollment. The essence of this complaint lies in the government's introduction of free universal primary education in 1976. The problem is that there was no corresponding increase of facilities and teachers. Increased enrollment resulted in a shortfall of 116,000 teachers at primary school level. Further, teacher/pupil ratio soared as high as one to 70 in some areas. This is more than double the nationally accepted ratio of one teacher per 30 pupils.

But What About the Teachers?: The teachers in Nigeria range from the well-trained to the barely trained. However, all are expected to teach a wide range of subjects.

The untrained teachers are those who receive training in basic school subjects without any formal exposure to teacher education. The trained teachers receive training in both the basic school subjects and in the art of teaching.²³

There have been increasing problems with the quality, supply, distribution and motivation of teachers (see figure 5). The number of primary school teachers increased from 177,221 in 1975/76 to 383,989 in 1982/83, and declined to about 303,000 in 1985/86.

The average pupil-teacher ratio was 38.1 in 1982/83 and ranged from 41.1 to 44.1 in 1985/86, with considerable variation from state to state. There is a shortage of teachers with the number of teachers per class declining from 1.24 in 1980/81 to 0.95 in 1983/84. As a result of the government initiatives to guarantee salary payments to teachers, the number of teachers increased to 368,191 at the end of 1989.²⁴

Figure 5. PERCENTAGES OF TEACHERS QUALIFIED

	STATES STUDIED	1982/83	1985/6	1989
NORTH	Bauchi	13	38	34
	Borno	n.a.	20	23
	Kaduna	44	n.a.	46
	Katsina	10	14	4
	Sokoto	n.a.	n.a.	56
MIDDLE	Benue	n.a.	n.a.	14
	Gongola	n.a.	37	35
	Kwara	n.a.	46	41
	Niger	10	28	77
	Plateau	21	17	38
	FCT Abuja	25	28	39
SOUTH	Akawa - Ibom	n.a.	n.a.	98
	Anambra	54	n.a.	75
	Bendel	40	99	73
	Cross River	n.a.	100	93
	Imo	87	100	97
	Lagos	69	85	100
	Ogun	55	92	80
	Ondo	56	99	95
	Oyo	58	n.a.	86
Rivers	n.a.	79	100	
TOTAL		43	63	60

Scources: The World Bank Staff Appraisal Report, "Federal Republic Nigeria Primary Education Project", 20 Nov 1990.

In the traditional classroom, teachers are one of the chief determinants of educational achievement. They are also the most expensive educational input in Nigeria, representing 90 percent of the recurrent costs at the primary level. Teachers in the public primary school system are employed and paid under the Unified Civil Service Regulations. Since the early 1980s financial restrictions have limited promotions and delayed salary payments, which have lowered teacher morale. The low salaries, uncertainty of payment, poor working conditions and possibility of retrenchment are major obstacles to recruitment of qualified teachers.

Deteriorating Physical Resources: The physical environment in a typical Nigerian primary school is not conducive to learning. School buildings are dilapidated, with inadequate toilets, roofs, fences, playgrounds, furniture, and storage facilities. There are too few classrooms, and those that exist usually need repairs and painting.

When there are not enough facilities, up to four "schools" may share the same urban premises. These classrooms are used on a shift basis with some accommodating as many as 100-250 pupils. It is estimated that there is a shortage of at least 65,000 classrooms. About 70,000 classrooms need replacing, perhaps 30 percent in the north and 15-20 percent elsewhere.

What Does Free Mean?: The National Policy on Education declared primary education to be free and universal in 1981. What exactly was to be free and to whom remains the subject of debate.

The original concept was that books and other supplies would be provided out of public funds. The role of parents and communities in providing additional resources was not specified but was presumed to be minor or supplementary.

Subsequent government committees largely agreed that "free" meant only freedom from the obligation to pay fees. Committees and educators have acknowledged that while teachers' salaries should be provided out of public funds, parents and communities have important obligations. The issue is how to distribute the burden equitably. Government policy on this point has varied over time.

Education's Piece of the Pie: Education as a share of the total federal expenditures fell from 21 percent in 1981 to 13 percent in 1988. Within the education sector, there is an imbalance in resource allocation with primary education receiving relatively less than any other subsectors, especially, tertiary. Per capita public recurrent expenditures at federal universities was over 50 times that at the primary level in 1985. Only 20 percent of federal expenditures on education in the Fifth National Plan (1988-92) are destined for primary for education.

The Federal Government Opts Out: In 1981, the federal government withdrew funding for primary education, with the exception of small special grants. In principle, federal withdrawal was to be compensated by the increased revenues given to state and local governments, which became responsible for primary education under the new construction. In practice, the new financing scheme proved

unworkable.

Funding for primary education was often neglected amidst competing claims on limited resources of state and local governments. The brunt of the financial burden fell on state and local governments which were already weak and did not always receive their statutory 10 percent share of federal and state revenues in periods of falling oil prices.

In many areas, governments had been under political pressure to give up traditional sources of revenue such as the cattle and community taxes. Contributions from state governments were inadequate. Allocations for education were directed largely toward secondary, technical and higher levels. Many state governments resorted to such ad hoc fund-raising measures as fees, levies and semi-mandatory contributions by parents. These levies were either reduced or abolished in 1986 when the revenues increased after depreciation of the naira.²⁵

Lack of Dollars Slows Progress: Inadequate financing of primary education has slowed down the Universal Primary Education campaign. School buildings have been inadequately maintained and, in some areas, are insufficient to accommodate the number of pupils. There is a severe shortage of textbooks, teaching and learning aids, and other instructional materials. From 1982, teachers' salaries began falling into arrears. Teacher morale is low because of poor conditions of service, and irregular salary payments.

Parents Take Adverse Action: Parents started to withdraw their

children from school--sometimes so they could work and sometimes because of fees the state and local governments were charging to cover the costs of education. Sometimes parents withdrew their children because they perceived the education system as offering less and less. These children were put to work in the local economy to help supplement family income. This was particularly true for boys. Girls were oftentimes required to help out at home with the care of the family.

In the mid-1980s, primary school enrollment fell in absolute terms and as a percentage of the estimated primary school age population. See figure 6 for enrollment statistics.

Running To Catch Up: There is virtually no evidence of education technology in the primary schools. In many schools even the most rudimentary essential teaching aids, like chalk and a smooth surfaced chalkboard, are absent.

The National Educational Technology Center produces radio and television programs. These programs are offered to state broadcasting stations, but even its facilities have become run down and grossly underutilized.

Some states have resource centers which offer in-service courses for teachers. They also provide consulting and library services, produce and supply instructional materials, and maintain a teachers' workroom for producing cheap teaching aids. Most of these centers, however, are now constrained by inadequate financing, shortage of qualified staff, and constant changes in leadership.

Figure 6. PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FIGURE--NIGERIA

YEAR	NUMBER ENROLLED (Millions)	RATIO OF PRIMARY SCHOOL-AGE ELIGIBLES
1982	14.5	92%
1983	16.15	Not Available
1985/86	12.9	75%
1990	13	62%
1992	13.76	Not Available

Sources: Xinhua General News Service article, "Nigeria: 8 Million School-Age Children Get No Education", 16 Jul 92.

The World Bank Staff Appraisal Report, "Federal Republic of Nigeria Primary Education Project, dated 20 Nov 1990".

Who Does What?: There is a definite need for a clear delineation of responsibilities for primary education at the different levels of government.

Over the past decades the distinctions between federal, state and local responsibilities have become increasingly blurred. This has led to duplication of functions, administrative inefficiency, and diversion of educational funds to administrative costs.

The problems were especially acute at the level of local governments, which were given the bulk of responsibilities for implementing primary education programs. However, local government did not have the control over their own funds or lacked the institutional capacity to effectively carry out their functions.

A Matter of Gender: The national average conceals continuing differences in enrollment ratios by state and between sexes. The disparity in enrollment ratios between sexes persists. See figure 7 for Nigeria's 1989 primary school statistics and figure 8 for a global comparison of "women and education". Enrollment ratios were 84 percent (of eligible school-age males) for males and 67 percent (of eligible school-age females) for females in 1985/86.

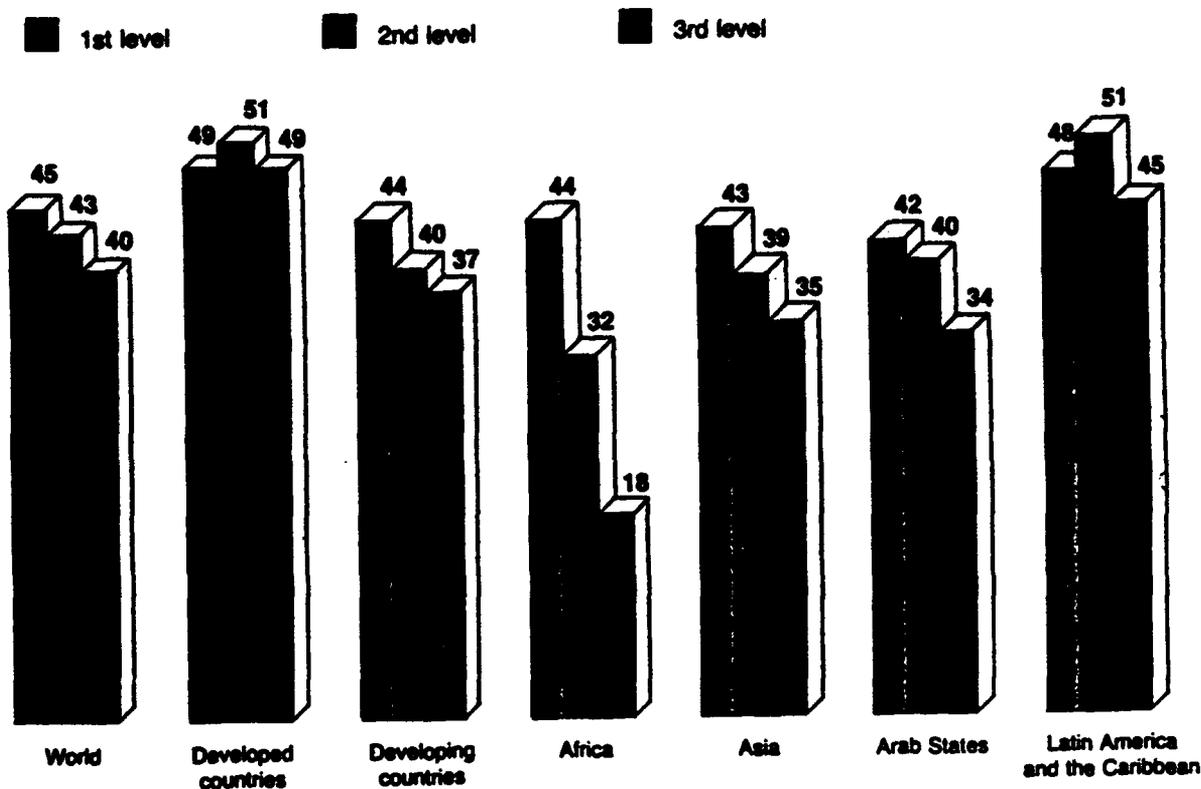
Figure 7.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

The percentage of female students only cracks the 50 per cent mark in two cases-- in secondary education in the developed countries and in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. The figures for these two areas show a near parity between female students, and reflect the differences between male and female populations. Tertiary education in Latin America and the Caribbean is the only area where this parity drops off.

However, everywhere else girls and women are clearly worse off, and the higher the level of education the greater the disparity. The situation for females in the Arab States and Asia is comparable, with only one student in three being a woman. The gap is most marked in Africa where less than one primary or secondary student in three, and less than one tertiary student in five, is female.

Percentage of females in total enrolment



Source: UNESCO Office of Statistics.

Figure 8.

1989 PRIMARY SCHOOL STATISTICS BY STATE

States	Number of Schools	Number of Classes	Number of Female Pupils	Total Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers	Teachers with NCE	Teachers with TC II
1 Akwa-Ibom	1,061	10,624	243,517	743,526	11,682	1	11,394
2 Anambra	2,096	25,279	410,671	1,003,228	30,903	935	22,323
3 Bauchi	1,427	14,399	124,981	323,594	11,357	200	3,605
4 Bendel	1,857	21,083	552,201	1,063,432	21,137	440	14,880
5 Benue	2,392	17,217	230,980	1,144,800	28,500	1,367	9,642
6 Borno	1,433	11,113	181,241	464,478	10,902	88	2,415
7 Cross River	623	8,382	113,251	403,703	6,564	22	6,100
8 Gongola	1,464	11,116	132,610	354,495	18,913	329	6,254
9 Imo	2,036	25,076	430,788	927,138	20,993	103	20,223
10 Kaduna	1,358	14,345	237,903	559,929	15,187	2,180	4,731
11 Kano	3,276	20,649	406,453	1,163,815	30,000	129	939
12 Katsina	1,939	18,682	210,897	775,482	10,793	132	5,958
13 Kwara	1,466	13,390	176,645	525,801	16,259	1,027	5,688
14 Lagos	894	21,654	338,086	866,128	16,623	5,174	13,247
15 Niger	614	5,417	117,691	311,426	8,172	220	6,100
16 Ogun	1,301	13,079	194,851	422,823	12,107	120	9,511
17 Ondo	1,664	18,229	215,461	524,638	15,345	3,805	10,749
18 Oyo	2,599	38,686	536,209	1,083,474	32,740	1,159	26,966
19 Plateau	1,722	14,786	225,710	558,370	16,823	1,893	7,711
20 Rivers	1,112	12,168	218,226	429,954	10,694	489	10,645
21 Sokoto	2,458	18,018	227,601	723,124	25,694	552	3,120
22 FCT-Abuja	212	1,442	119,831	67,708	1,714	13	661
TOTAL	35,004	354,834	5,645,804	14,441,066	373,102	20,378	202,862

Source: Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, National Primary Education Commission, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

/a Raw data to be verified.

Note: NCE- National Certificate of Education for Teachers
TTC- No NCE Certificate, Teachers Training College Only

Source: The World Bank Staff Appraisal Report, "Federal Republic of Nigeria Primary Education Project, 20 Nov 1990.

Government has identified conditions responsible for the low participation of girls in education. In order to combat these conditions, efforts have been made through the Federal Ministry of Education's Women Education Unit to:

- Provide more educational opportunities for girls.
- Create public and parental awareness of the need for female education.
- Reorient female attitudes towards education.
- Promote positive self-images for females.
- Promote the education of girls in science, mathematics and technology.

These efforts appear to have increased female participation, especially in the northern states where it was the lowest. The enrollment ratios historically are higher in the middle states than in the north and highest in the southern states. However, the drive for Universal Primary Education has improved enrollment throughout the country.

Where To Go For Books: Supplementary materials are essential to sustain interest and enhance learning, but these are hardly available in primary schools in Nigeria. Books are very few, most of the titles are unsuitable and there are very limited controls for issuing and returning books. Government education policy requires class/school library resources be provided, but there is scant evidence of serious planning as to: how this is to be implemented; what the cost would be; or what it would mean in terms of training and teaching.²⁶

LOOK BOTH WAYS--CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANS

In an effort to cut back on education expenditures, the Nigerian government shifted responsibility last year for payment of teachers' salaries to local government. The Nigerian government intends to slash budgetary allocation to education from 15.5 percent to 9.3 percent of its total annual expenditures.

According to Nigeria's education minister, Babatunde Fafunwa, the decision will provide an opportunity for more private investment in education since funding is becoming a herculean task for government.²⁷

A Helping Hand: Nigeria recently secured a World Bank loan of \$120 million to address specific problem areas in the sector. The government will use the loan to train 400,000 educational personnel of all cadres and to buy textbooks for key subjects.²⁸

The expected benefits to be gained from this loan include an upgrade in the quality of instruction in over 35,000 primary schools. Other benefits expected are: an increase in enrollments; improvement in resource allocation on non-salaried items; a strengthening of the capacity of institutions providing primary education; and the establishment of better development plans. This is to be accomplished through an upgraded sectoral information base and augmented planning capacity.

Insurance: To ensure the benefits of the loan are realized, strategies were formulated for each improvement effort.

Upgrade the quality of education. Books and supplementary materials will be provided. Funds will be used to improve curriculum delivery. Procedures will be set up to improve the care and use of books and supplementary materials.

Improve Resource Allocation. Regulations and controls will be established to ensure that the share of the federation account budgeted to the National Primary Education Fund is maintained at a satisfactory level. Cost sharing and community participation will be reinforced. Budget reallocation will be in non-salaried items.

Support the National Primary Education Commission's media campaign to increase enrollment. National and local government education organizations will be strengthened. Further, educational practitioners and administrative, finance and planning personnel will be properly trained. Also, the government will supply equipment and vehicles for the Commission's use.

Facilitate future planning. A management information system will be installed. Statistics and planning staff will be trained to use the system. Support will be generated for phased action-type research. A scheme to monitor and evaluate progress toward quantitative and qualitative objectives will be applied.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, there is an observed quantitative and qualitative decline in Nigeria's primary education system that

threatens the nation's future. Some believe that education standards have been falling since the end of the Colonial days, according to one Nigerian Embassy official.²⁹

However, the Government has recognized the problems and places high priority on improving primary education. Education, unlike other sectors, is not a self contained system. It has multiple intersections with almost every facet of national development. For this reason, efforts must be concentrated on the education system as a whole in addition to primary education.

In Sector Planning for Development of Nation-Wide Learning Systems, Harbison outlines several key elements or strategic points of departure for the design of a comprehensive strategy for development of nation-wide learning systems. Although, Nigeria has efforts underway to correct identified deficiencies, a comprehensive strategy is needed. If the country is going to be able to fully develop its human resources, and thus ensure stability and security in the country, enhance economic development, and compete globally, education must be approached in terms of national needs.

The key elements outlined by Harbison are:

- Conduct an assessment of the education system.
- Identify goals and establish priorities.
- Appraise learning opportunities provided by employment institutions as well those provided by the education system. Look for a correlation between employment opportunities and learning

opportunities.

- Evaluate the role of formal education and nonformal education and training in the learning system.

The key elements Harbison outlines are crucial to Nigeria if they are going to have an education system that is responsive to the needs of the country.

Conduct An Assessment: There have been numerous assessments already conducted regarding the education system in Nigeria. I do not believe another assessment is needed. What is needed is that action be taken on the recommendations and findings of previous assessments. For example, two such assessments were conducted by The World Bank in 1987 and again in 1989. Many of the same discrepancies that are outlined in this paper were identified in both assessments. Identification is not enough. The success of any project or strategy is dependent on the receptivity, understanding, involvement and support of the prime leaders in the country.³⁰

Identify Goals and Priorities: What seems to be going on right now in Nigeria is much like what the United States is experiencing-- nobody is to blame or everybody is blaming everybody else for the discrepancies in the education system. Establishment of clear goals, specific to Nigeria's needs, with long-term emphasis on global competitiveness will give the country a steady focus. Without a clearly stated ideology, it is difficult to identify a

consensus. This step establishes the road map to ensure Nigeria gets to where it needs to be in the education arena.

Appraise Learning Opportunities: This has to be done in regards to employment institutions as well as the formal education system. The concept of continuous learning throughout one's life must be understood and implemented. This will ensure attention is directed to understanding the processes of learning and their interrelationships.

The formal education system alone will not be responsive to Nigeria's needs. Nor will the concept of educating only the children suffice to move the country forward toward global competitiveness.

Nigeria must take serious action to ensure equal access to education is provided to all regardless of gender. There is a saying in Nigeria that: "You educate a man and you educate an individual. You educate a woman and you educate a community".

Evaluate the Role of Formal and Nonformal Education: It is now widely recognized that a simple review of a country's formal schooling system provides only a partial analysis of its system of human resource development.

Nonformal education can be a means of extending skills and knowledge gained in formal education. In some countries they may offer the only available learning opportunity for large proportions of the population.

Unfortunately, in the United States, nonformal education is

looked upon in a less than positive manner. I believe this a critical component of the nation-wide learning system of developing countries in particular.

If Nigeria is going to educate its people, every aspect of the nation-wide learning system must be embraced. Economic prosperity is thus the consequence of effective human resource utilization and development. As the United States is learning the hard way, it is important that countries ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that every human being is a productive member of society. The country's security and survivability depends on it.

The answer to the question posed in the beginning is **YES**. **Nigeria's education system will be adequate to meet the needs of the country in the future, if:**

Nigeria follows through on current efforts and implements the key elements discussed above, and if the United States:

- Increases its development aid, since we are among the lowest donors in terms of our GNP.³¹
- Offers/shares educational technology.
- Maintains diplomatic relations with Nigeria and remains supportive of development efforts.
- Takes advantage of import opportunities that may become available.

It is my recommendation that the United take the above actions and maintain minimum involvement in Nigeria. Although the Cold War is over, it does not mean we have seen the end of war. As the

end of war. As the mini-war in the Falklands demonstrated in 1982 and as currently demonstrated by Operation Provide Comfort in Somalia, size and intrinsic importance do not necessarily determine where the spotlight will move next in the restructured world of the late twentieth century.³²

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