NIGERIAN EDUCATION IN FOCUS

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THE ECONOMIES OF AFRICA

RECENT HAPPENING

UBEC earmarks N110m for Islamic schools

The Universal Basic Education Commission has set aside N110m from the 2019 executive budget proposal of the commission as grants for 22 Islamic schools nationwide. According to the commission, the grant, which will give N5m to each Islamic school, was for the provision of infrastructures, including classrooms, toilets and boreholes. Read more

13,390 Ekiti pupils set for free SSCE

About 13,390 pupils in Ekiti State are set to sit for the West African Examinations Council's April/May 2019 Senior School Certificate Examination, following the state government's approved payment of over N24m to school principals for the candidates. Read more

NOUN matriculates 17,000 students, to graduate 18,000 others

The National Open University is set to graduate 18,000 students across its study centers in the nation at a convocation ceremony billed for March 22 to 23 in Abuja. The institution also matriculated 17,000 students for the 2018/2019 academic session. This is in pursuant of its mandate of enrolling one million students by 2023 as provided in the 2019-2023 Revitalisation Agenda for the Nigerian University System. Read more

FG BEGINS ICT EDUCATION FOR DISABLED GIRLS, WOMEN

The Federal Government, through the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), has commenced education programmes on Information and Communication Technology for physically-challenged girls and women at the center. To ensure that no one is left out, the center trains girls and women with disabilities on the use of ICT with a special center dedicated to the visually impaired. Read more

DATA SPEAKS

Quality of education in Nigeria is widely noted to be bad. But how bad is it? Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive, national and well-disaggregated learning assessment to make accurate judgment in the context of primary or basic education which is the focus of global and national attentions. None of the comparable international learning assessments such as Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) or Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) has been conducted in Nigeria. The existing education data in Nigeria are Millennium Development Goal (MDG) centric with focus on enrolment, transition and completion statistics, with no statistics on the extent learning taking place in schools. However, with the new global agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on quality education, huge data gap ex its in Nigeria to track progress and this should be the immediate task ahead of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Federal Ministry of Education, which is saddled with ensuring uniform education standard in Nigeria.

But for few of us who adhere to the mantra that "we are all dead in the long run", we suggest possible data to at least start thinking on learning crisis in Nigeria. First is the World Economic Forum (WEF) which provides annual score on quality of education globally. Countries are ranked on a 7-point scale (with 7 the maximum and best possible outcome and 1 for the worst performance). It is based on the survey of local business leaders, with regards to their perception of the state of primary education in their country. In using it, it is more meaningful to compare scores across countries, as we did in Figure 1.

Another useful dataset is the Nigerian Education Data Survey (NEDS) produced by the Nigerian Population Commission. The survey is carried out every five year. This is the closet one can get to having a disaggregated data on learning outcomes in Nigeria. The assessment is focused on pupils between 5-16years and assesses them on literacy, comprehension, numeracy and advance numeracy. The survey sets a low bar in doing this. For example, literacy for a child is determined by the ability to read at least one of three sentences shown to him/her. Comprehension is then assessed if the child can thereafter answer of one of the sentences in form of question. For numeracy, this is determined by ability to correctly add two single digit numbers. Advance numeracy is when the child can a dd two double digit numbers. Obviously, measuring quality of education must do more than that. It is for this reason that the analysis in Figure 2 only report for achievement rate up to Primary 3, which seems to match school curriculum in Nigeria on numeracy and literacy assessments. The advantage of the second approach is that it allows for disaggregation of results. However, the caveat still remains that none of these options serves as a substitute to a comprehensive learning assessment which is currently lacking in Nigeria.

The results of the two approaches presented below illustrate the depth of learning crisis in Nigeria. At Primary 3, less 50% of the students cannot perform in advanced numeracy or comprehension. Also, Nigeria score just 2.8 (out of 7) on WEF assessment, ranking her 124th among the 148 countries. This puts the country below comparable countries within the region (Ghana, Cameroon) or countries with similar economic structure (Indonesia, Algeria) and development aspirations(Malaysia, South Africa). So back to where we begin on how bad is quality of education in Nigeria. From all indications, we can say **very bad**.
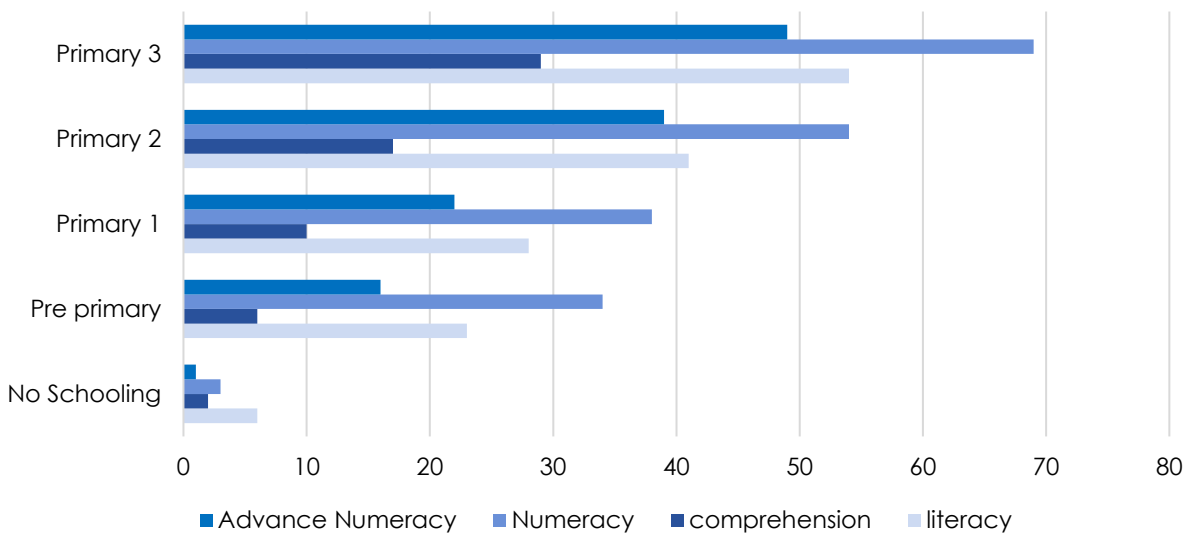
Figure 1: Nigeria's quality of primary education vis-à-vis leading and peer countries; 2016.
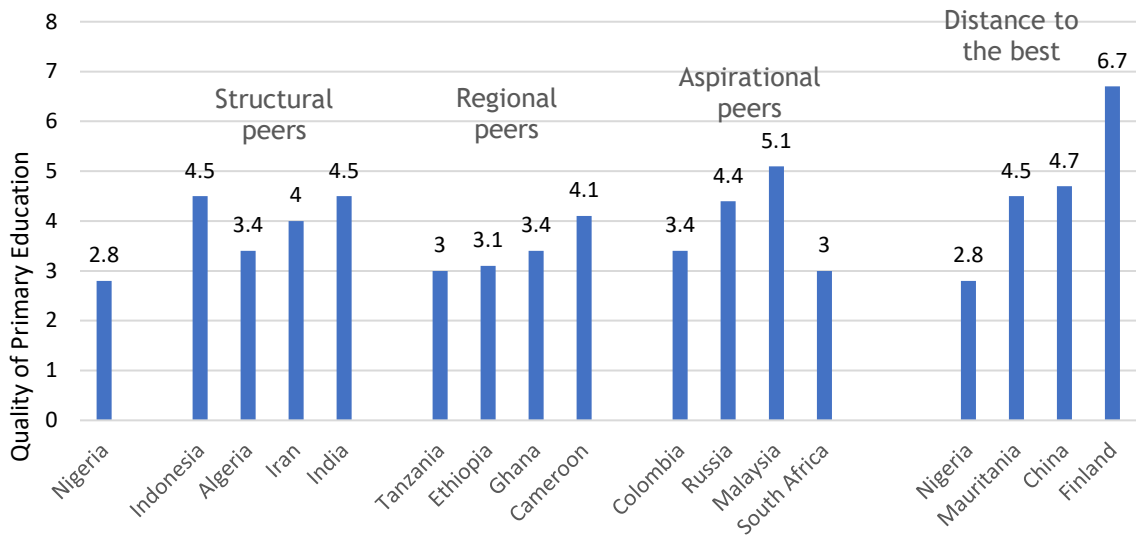
Figure 2: Learning Outcomes

- Challenges exist in effectively managing primary school teachers, which can hamper teachers' ability and willingness to carry out their responsibilities to learners. In a qualitative study conducted in Kaduna and Katsina states, Kantagora et al. (2018) found that these challenges cut across the key areas of teacher management: *recruitment and deployment; pay and renumeration; training and support; and aspirations and expectations*. The authors propose a framework of policy options for addressing the challenges they identified and discussed in the study. Find out more about specific strategies for enhancing the management of primary school teachers in Nigeria and other countries in the Global South here.

- Violent conflicts are notorious for disrupting education, especially conflicts that lead to displacement of people. ENDOREN (2018) examined the state of teaching in distress; assessing the impact of protracted violence on primary school teachers in Borno state, the worst affected state from the Boko Haram insurgency. Results show that although some teachers and schools have had to move, conflict has not caused a decline in the absolute number of teachers per child or the quality of teachers in the state. This signals some level of administrative stability in the sector despite the conflict. However, conflict has taken a significant toll on the physical, psychological, and economic wellbeing of teachers. For more insightful findings about the conditions and aspirations of teachers in distress, read the report here.

- The recent impact evaluation of UNICEF Nigeria Girls' Education Project Phase 3 Cash Transfer Programme (GEP3-CTP) **–** a two-year unconditional cash transfer programme with the primary objective of increasing girls' enrolment, retention and completion of basic education in selected schools in Niger and Sokoto states **–** generated interesting insights for policymaking and programming of future interventions. On *Impact and Effectiveness*, the programme had a positive impact on not just the targeted education outcomes of girls but also on household consumption and welfare in both states. However, the evaluation observed negative impacts of the programme on some parents' attitude on boys' enrolment and attendance, as well as the attitude of some boys themselves who felt excluded. Additionally, the physical and human infrastructure in schools could not cope with the increased enrolment, which dampened programme effectiveness. Other useful insights could be accessed in this report across four other impact criteria of the project: *Process, Efficiency, Relevance, and Sustainability*.