



**Public Private Participation in Education:  
A Panacea for Provision of Facilities  
In technical Colleges**

**Umar, I.Y.; Audu, R. And Idris, A.M.  
Industrial and Technology Education Department  
Federal University of Technology, Minna.**

**Abstract**

This paper admits that sole financing of Technical Education by government have failed to provide needed facilities in Technical Colleges for effective learning to take place. A brief overview of technical education in Nigeria and constraint to it growth discussed. The challenges of facilities in technical colleges is also discussed. Public private partnership – The experience from other countries was reviewed. Benefits of public private partnership were outlined and it was therefore, suggested that there should be an increase contribution by organized private sectors (OPS) to the Education Tax Fund (ETF) in order to support provision of facilities in technical colleges. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) and Community Based Organisations (CBO's) should be made to play a vibrant roles as partners in moving technical education forward.

**Introduction**

Technical colleges are regarded as the principal vocational institutions in Nigeria. They give full vocational training intended to prepare students for entry into various occupation (Okoro, 1993). The products of this institutions are employed as operative, artisans and craftsmen in industries and allied organisations.

Abdullahi (2003) maintained that training facilities, for vocational programmes encompass the basic hand tools, equipment and structural facilities, which includes classes, and workshops, library e.t.c. Every training schools faces the problem of providing and maintaining suitable workshop and appropriate facilities for technical and vocational training programme. For a nation to grow, there must be a sound technological know-how, this of course has to be achieved

if the learners are equipped with needed facilities/tools to work and to practice. Studies conducted by (Ibe, 1994; Aina, 2005) revealed lack of needed facilities in technical colleges. Ibe (1994), emphasised that the students of such institutions lacking workshop tools are greatly handicapped because of lack of workshop equipment without which skill acquisition would be very slow if not impossible. Government has been the sole financier of technical education right from colonial era, but today it is extremely difficult for the government alone to bear the burden, that is why authors like (Uthman, 2000; Ohize, 2003 and Umar, 2005) saw the need for alternative sources for funding technical education in order to provide the needed facilities. Osuji (2004), maintained that other sources of funding education as mentioned in the objectives of their reforms is to develop appropriate partnership with organised private sector and mobilise local communities in the funding of education.

Public private partnership (PPP) allow the public sector to access private finance to build much needed infrastructures while enabling them to transfer risks better managed by the private sector. According to Adirieje (2006), the terms of a partnership is delicate balancing act where both sides manage their respective risks. For government, the delivery of essential infrastructure projects is often both sensitive and political where tax payers and labour emotions must be considered. For private companies, the uncertainty that arises from billion dollar long term initiatives means hedging bets against complications and a huge cash outlay.

Since the objective of 'PPP' include, mobilization of private investment for infrastructure development, socio-economic growth, poverty elimination, provision of needed services and accomplishing adequate standard of living within the country, 'PPP' may be the better alternative for provision of needed facilities in technical colleges.

### **Overview of Technology Education in Nigeria**

According to Ohize (2004), the first serious attention given to formal technology education in the country is the Phellp-Stoke Commission on Education



in Africa. The report of the commission highlighted the need for a survey of needs for industrial training, skilled and unskilled manpower for construction, maintenance and operation of commercial and industrial projects like railways, roads, telegraphs, telephones, motor services and boats. In its recommendation, it called for closely defined objectives of the acquisition of agricultural and industrial skills.

Consequent upon the Phelps-Stokes report, the 1925 memorandum on education policy in British Tropical Africa was developed. The memorandum encouraged vocational and technical training. It is important to note that prior to this development there had been some form of indigenous vocational and technical training. The Development and Welfare Act of the colonial masters in 1940 led to the establishment of Handicrafts, and trade centre for training craftsmen, and technical institutes to train technicians.

In 1960, another commissioned report, the Ashby report recommended the production of needed high level manpower and the upgrading, by further education of employed Nigerian workers. This led to a boost in technology education by way of the Federal Government's priority for establishment and facility provisions for technical and trade schools in her subsequent national development plans. Monotechnics, polytechnics, universities and industries mounted programmes to meet the identified technological needs, during the third national development plan period of 1975 – 1980. And in the fourth national plan period (1981 – 1985), the new national policy on education was birthed. The policy provided for early exposure to technology at junior secondary level, and preparation for upward movement to tertiary level (FRN, 1981).

The eighties and nineties have witnessed increase in numbers of polytechnics and universities of technology. But just how well have we done in advancing our technological course inspite of these measures has been a question that lacks satisfactory answers. The government in whose hands the bulk of the Nigerian economy has been and who has been responsible for policy formulation

and implementation has been incapacitated in prospering our technological course. This constraint is largely traceable to inadequate funding and politicization.

### **Constraints to Technology Education in Nigeria**

Several reasons have been advanced for Nigerian backwardness in technology education which in turn has translated into non-industrialization. Ohize (2004), maintained that such reasons include late commencement of technology education vis-à-vis literary education in Nigeria, preference for white collar jobs and poor funding among others. According to Osuala (1997), these constraints besets technology education with several problems such as inability to achieve the status and prestige it needs to perform its proper and vital role in a technical society and that of establishing a relationship between students programmes and the world of work. Whereas these reasons are not disputed, this paper takes a look at our constraints from perspective of funding and politics.

FRN (1986), stated that financing is a major factor in achieving any measure of success in science and technology development. It also admitted the very low and uncertain funding for science and technology activities and showed that the funding has been witnessing a decline. Babayi (1998), in examining the funding of technical education in Niger State also reported that there has been inadequate and declining funding over the years. This situation holds true for all the states in Nigeria. Inadequate funding has led to poor facilities, lack of materials and ultimately poor quality of technology education.

Politics has promoted the proliferation of technological institutions many of which are not viable. Political leaders who themselves have no appreciation and understanding for the demands of technology education programmes, establish technological institutions and programmes only for political expediency. Establishment of technology institutions and programmes should be informed by industrial and economic needs of the people.

Ohize (2004), emphasised that in the pursuit of federal character some of these institutions have been established only for the purpose of balance. In this



vain, where one or two of sort could have been the viable number to establish, the number has had to be increase to allow for fair share on geo-political basis. By this, our situation has been such as biting more than we can chew.

### **Challenges of Facilities in Technical Colleges**

Equipping of vocational technical education institutions with workshop tools and facilities has remained problematic, because it is capital intensive. Federal government of Nigeria in realizing this, states in the National Policy on Education (2004, p. 35) that in recognition of the fundamental importance and cost-intensive nature of technical and vocational education, government shall provide adequate funds for vocational/technical education, but due to several aspect of education, government needed to attend to, technical colleges still suffer shortage of needed facilities to operate in the right footing. Olaitan (1986), is of the opinion that updating of obsolete equipment and spare-parts is equally necessary.

Technical and vocational training that requires the acquisition of skills must be taught with good facilities. Building and well equipped workshops are of paramount importance in technical colleges because of the practical oriented nature of the programme. Anyakoha (1992), noted that the development of useful skills can be reinforced by the appropriate selection and use of learning facilities and resources. These facilitates comprises of workshop structures, working materials, teaching materials workshop tools and equipment.

School training facilities must be comparable to those used by industries. The large number of learners or trainees in the school training workshop and repetitive type of training experiences cause school workshop facilities to become worn or damaged much faster than the same facilities would be in the hand of competent tradesmen. In line with the above Ezeji (1995), emphasised that industrial arts education requires laboratory/workshop setting with adequate training facilities as a unique learning situation in which the learner may experiment, test, construct, assemble, disassemble, repair, design, fabricate, create, imagine, and study. Like wise Abdullahi (1994), stressed further the need

for adequate training facilities for vocational and technical colleges for effective acquisition of necessary skills. Abdullahi also maintained that most of the vocational centres and technical colleges have always been forced to perform below standard due to non availability of the required facilities for effective training. This was also corroborated by the study conducted by Yakubu and Mumah (2001), that only 5 out of the 98 technical colleges offering the electrical installation programme have fairly adequate supply. The remaining 93 technical colleges have varying degree of inadequacies in the supply of tools and equipment which in all cases cannot sustain the programmes effectively.

Osuji (2004), however maintained that the challenges our young people face cannot be totally divorced from the effect of our over stretched educational facilities. There is a need to commit more resources towards educating the youth through formal, alternative and non-formal education approaches. Osuji emphasised that in a rapidly expanding global economy, more opportunities should be made available for youth from various regions to exchange experiences towards building partnerships for the mutual survival of humanity. It is clear from the foregoing that immediate action needed to be taken to return the situation to the right footing.

### **Public Private Partnership: The Experience From Other Countries**

Public private partnership in nations of the world usually takes different dimension based on the peculiar needs of the people. Ossom (2006), averred that in South Africa, companies working in partnership with government to undertake targeted sectoral job creation and capacity building programme while an NGO working among schools to bring together business to invest in improving quality of school outputs is obtainable in Brazil. On the other hand an equipment manufacturer or marketer providing resources for advocacy and funding to raise the profile of girl's education is practice in USA. In some other countries like Canada PPPs can be obtained in the form of donation of equipment to schools, vocational link between the school and work place, facilities to train students and

offer employee skills enhancement for specific local industries at the pre-exit stage of basic education programmes. All of these are successful as Medessou (2003), also extols the virtues of privatizing vocational technical education, pointing to the United States and Canada for examples of success in this direction.

According to Olesen (1997), partnerships and strategic alliances between interested parties in Denmark have become the key strategy to improve the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of training policies, systems and programmes. Training is increasingly conceived and promoted as cooperative effort in which the various relevant institutions in the public and private sectors must participate and share responsibilities. Moreover, the partners concerned are being called upon to contribute to the overall training effort and to articulate their respective strengths and comparative advantages.

### **Benefits of Public Private Partnership**

Several commentators, hold a strong view that public and private sectors are complementary and that effective 'PPP' is only possible through mutually designed, analysed, and accepted instruments of cooperation and collaboration. Adirieje (2006), maintained that such instruments are effective in all sectors of human endeavours, including health, profit and non-profit, education, housing, micro-finance, community-based development projects. For Nigeria in particular, achieving the 'PPP' paradigm would mean deliberate and sincere effort to understand the nature of prevailing efforts in this regard within the country, identify the key challenges and opportunities, and seek to know how they contribute to stronger national and family level health, economic and social systems.

Specifically arguing the case for the privatization of vocational and technical education and training, the World Bank (1991), in its policy paper states that 'if allowed to compete freely, profit making schools and centers and non governmental voluntary agencies can meet an important share of skills needs



without public financing. Medessou (2003), enumerates some of the strong points of privatization as:-

1. It has ability to eliminate losses in government owned business;
2. The elimination of tendencies towards corrupt practices;
3. Lower prices for higher quality goods and services;
4. Reduction in the level of poverty among the masses;
5. Generation of higher tax revenues for government;
6. Higher rates of employment; and
7. The workers being forced to compete for jobs in a more competitive market place and therefore requiring better training to bring out the best in them.

Ossom (2006), writing on the expected outcome of the UBE public private partnership maintained that the envisioned PPPs are expected to:-

- Develop communication channels leading to a proper understanding and integration of industry needs in the curriculum.
- Provide industry with a voice to potential employees
- Provide a skill base from which local industries can tap from, at the exit point of the educational programme.
- Provide opportunity for the fulfillment of corporate social responsibility.
- Ensure the acquisition of the relevant skills knowledge and experiences that are relevant not only to the growth of the private sector.

The above listed expectations of PPPs at UBE level could be adopted for vocational technical education in order to provide the needed facilities in technical colleges since the global practices in public private partnership called for instituting partnerships that enable schools to generate additional income. In Nigeria and other developing countries, sustainable access to health care, education and other socio-economic services and products can be accomplished through 'PPP' where the government delivers the minimum standard of services, product and/or care, the private sector bring skills and core competencies, while donors and business bring funding and other resources. Adirieje (2006),



emphasised that such collaborations will be productive in promoting poverty alleviation through micro-finance, enhancing health through partnership as been the case with polio eradication and other child immunization efforts.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion we are of the view that public private partnership (PPP) model should be adopted to provide much needed facilities in technical colleges, since several attempt by government has failed to yield needed result – may be as a result of government sole financing, economic recession, or societal attitude towards government owned enterprises. The success of PPPs in countries like USA, Canada and Brazil and in some specific sectors like health in Nigeria is a pointer to the fact that if other partners are involved, competition set-in and the result is win-win-win.

The acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society, hinges on the provision of needed facilities for learning. It is therefore suggested that there should be an increase contribution by the organized private sector (OPS) to the Education Tax Fund (ETF) in order to support provision of facilities in technical colleges. Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) Community Based Organisation (CBO's) and Parent Teachers Association (PTA) should be made to play a vibrant national role as partners in moving technical education forward.

### **References**

- Abdullahi, S.M. (1994). Strategies for improving female participation in technical education in Kano State. *Unpublished M.Ed Thesis*. Department of Vocational Teachers Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Abdullahi, S.M. (2003). Evaluation of Vocational – Technical Training Programmes in Northern Nigeria Prisons, *Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation*. Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

- Adirieje, U.A. (2006). The relevance of public private partnership in Nigeria's Economy Retrieved on September, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 from <http://www.nges/partners.htm>
- Aina, O. (2005). Osun State Board of Technical and Vocational Education – Report of working visit to nine Technical Colleges, Oshogbo.
- Anyakoha, E.U. (1992). Development and utilization of facilities for home economic education programme in Nigerian schools and colleges for manpower development, *Nigerian Vocational Journal* 2(1) 16 – 24.
- Babayi, A.U. (1998). Funding of Technical Education in Niger State. A paper presented at the first Annual Conference of Nigerian Association of Teachers of Technology, Niger State Chapter held at Education Resource Centre, Minna from 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1998.
- Ezeji, S.C.O.A. (1995). Facilities planning for industrial arts education. Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1986). *National Policy on Science and Technology*. Ibadan: Nihort press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Ibe, C.N. (1994). Position of Workshop for Training in Vocational – Technical Education Institutions. In E.U. Anyakoha and E.C. Osuala (eds) *Vocational/Technical Education and Technological Growth*. U.N.N: NVA Publications.
- Medessou, B. (2003). An appraisal of the impact of budget 2003 in the privatization and commercialization programme. *The Nigerian Accountant*, July/September 2003 p. 29 – 36.
- Ohize, E.J. (2003). Repositioning technology education for Nigeria's industrial growth through effective funding. In N.G. Nneji, M.A.A. Ogunyemi; F.O.N, Onyeukwu; M. Ukponson; S.O. Agbato (Eds) *Technology Education in a Democratic Nigeria*. 16<sup>TH</sup> NATT – conference held at Oyo State College of Education, Oyo from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October.