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## **Challenges of Universal Basic Education Programme: The Role of Counsellors**

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### **Abstract**

*University Basic Education is the most important solution in the chain of efforts to make every Nigerian citizen literate. The main purpose of the study was to identify the roles of the Counsellors for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education. Three research questions were answered. There was no sample due to few numbers of Counsellors so the entire population of 72 Counsellors found during the CASSON meeting (Anambra Chapter) were used. The questionnaire for the study was designed by the researchers and dully validated by four experts from Guidance and Counselling Department*

*in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Data were analyzed using Rank Order and Mean Rating for the three Research questions. The findings of the study revealed that the factors that must be approached and the Counsellors roles for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education. Recommendations and Conclusion were made.*

## **Introduction**

Nigerian Educational Policies are characterized by a high level of uncertainties (Aluede, 2006). The Education System has witnessed a catalogue of changes in policies and programmes. This beclouds meaningful planning in Nigeria Educational System. Some of these changes have appeared to a number of people as desirable while to others undesirable. He further stresses that this can be very dangerous particularly, as the future of Nigeria and Nigerians will be determined by the level of education their nationals have acquired.

Basic Education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning. It provides reading, writing and innumeracy skills. It comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners to acquire functional literacy. In the Nigerian context, basic education includes primary, junior Secondary and Nomadic Education as well as Adult Literacy.

The Universal Basic Education encompasses the following levels of education in hierarchical order: Early Childhood Care Development or Pre-School/Nursery/kindergarten, Primary Education, Junior Secondary Education and the non-Formal Education. This shows that Universal Basic Education is concerned with not only the young children but also Adolescent and Adults who did not have the ample opportunity of formal education.

The main tenet of Universal Basic Education is to make sure that the many school age children in the country today who are involved in hawking and other vices go to school. It is expected to be mandatory for all pupils within the target group in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The desire for Basic Education in Nigeria stressed Universality. Lenhart (1999)

opined that Universal Basic Education means different things for different countries. In Tanzania, it implies conveying appropriate knowledge and skills to both young people and adults within the context of African sexualism.

Ihebereme and Maduwesi, (2007) conceived universal basic education as the most important solution in the chain of efforts to make every Nigerian citizen literate. It also enhances the status and quality of life for all Nigerians. Presently, there is paucity of Teachers and Counsellors when compared with large class size. This makes teaching and learning burdensome. The Federal Government has trained about forty thousand teachers with many Counsellors in preparation for the scheme.

Although the Nigerian philosophy of Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004) clearly spelt out the Objectives of Primary and Junior Secondary Education but the implementation has not meet the stated Objectives as far as Guidance and Counselling is concerned. For instances the Blue Print as Guidance and Counselling for Educational Institution in Nigeria. Aluede, (2006) observed that the primary school child is in the process of transaction from home to school and is faced with adjustment problems and therefore needs to be follow up such a child with adequate Guidance and Counselling. The educators and executors of Universal Basic Education whose children attend the private schools may not make the programme really work.

The Universal Basic Education as envisaged will commence with a period for nine (9) years of compulsory schooling. This is because primary Education alone cannot adequately prepare the child to survive in the world of prevalent fast technological development. It seems plausible that many states are yet to recognize and appreciate the centrality of professional development of Counsellors in the Universal Basic Education reform programme. Alongside, majority of states keep funds meant for Counsellors training unutilized, despite repeated reminders by the commission. Implementation realities have

shown that there were still some missing gaps that needed to be filled. The researchers therefore want the factors to be addressed for Effective Implementation of UBE and the Role Counsellors could play for Effective Implementation of this Programme.

### **Purpose of the study**

The major purpose of the study is to find out the Counsellors Roles in meeting challenges of Universal Basic Education. Specially, the study sought out to find out.

- Factors that must be approached for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education.
- The Roles of Counsellors in Effective Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Programme.

### **Research questions**

Three research questions guided the study

- What are the factors that must be approached for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education?
- What are the roles of Counsellors in the Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education?

### **Method**

This study was a descriptive survey research. This design is ideal for the use in this study because the study involved collecting and describing data obtained from a population in order to determine the factors to be approached and Counsellors Roles for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was carried out in Anambra State using 72 counsellors found at St. John of God Secondary School, Awka, during their CASSON meeting, Anambra chapter on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2011. The total population for the study comprised 72 respondents. The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a questionnaire titled Counsellors Role for Effective Implementation of Universal

Basic Education (CREIUBE). The questionnaire consisted of three sections, section 'A' dealt with items on the objectives of the Universal Basic Education. It consisted of 6 items on the objectives of the Universal Basic Education. Section 'B' consisted of 9 items on the factors that must be approached for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education while section 'C' consisted of Counsellors Roles of Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education. The responses to the questionnaire items were designed on a 4-point scale of measurements. Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. Mean ratings above 2.50 were taken to mean agreement that is, accepted while mean rating below 2.50 were taken to mean Disagreement.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The researchers submitted the initial drafts of the questionnaire to four experts in Guidance and Counseling Department in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The experts were asked to review the Content Coverage and Appropriateness of the Language structure and Expressions. These experts made very useful suggestions. Corrections were reflected in the final modification of the items of the questionnaire. In testing for reliability, copies of the questionnaire were administered on a sample of ten (10) Counsellors in Enugu State who were not part of this study. When the responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha, Reliability Coefficient Value of 0.88 was obtained indicating that the items in the instrument were homogenous. The researchers distributed and retrieved filled copies of the questionnaire within the same day. The responses for the three research questions were answered using Rank order and mean ratings.

## Results

Table 1: Respondents Rank Order and Rating of factors that must be approached for Effectives Implementation of Universal Basic Education

S/N	Items	Means	Rank order
1	Date collection and analysis.	3.90	1st
2	Planning, monitoring, evaluation.	3.85	2nd
3	Teacher, their recruitment, training and retraining and motivation.	3.80	3rd
4	Enriched curricular.	3.78	4th
5	Textbooks and instructional materials.	3.78	5th
6	Improved funding.	3.77	6th
7	Public enlightenment and social mobilization for full community involvement.	3.76	7th
8	Infrastructural facilities, especially in rural areas.	3.75	8th
9	Management of the entire process.	3.74	9th

In table 2, all the items were rated above 2.50, this means in the respondents opinion, that all the factors listed are accepted as the factors that must be approached for Effective Implementation of Universal Basic Education.

Table 2: Respondents Rank Order and Mean Ratings of the Counselling Roles for Effectives Implementation of Universal Basic Education Rank Order.

S/N	Items	Means	Rank order
1	Counsellors assume a preventive role by introducing the children to Whole Some Study Habits, Effectives reading habits and establishing goals for going to schools.	4.00	1st
2	Counsellors orient children in their educational environment providing them with the basic education and developmental experiences essential, for their future development.	3.99	2nd
3	Counsellors are closely knit to the current educational policy to reflect the various phase of Educational development.	3.95	3rd
4	Counsellors are responsible for children's guidance, attitudes, values, interests, aspirations and behaviours.	3.94	4th
5	Counsellors facilitate educational counselling activities, which should include appraisal services using test and non-test instruments to help students analyzed their potentials in relation to academic task ahead.	3.93	5th
6	Counsellors arrange counselling sessions for group and individual children.	3.92	6th
7	Counsellors recommend continuous programming designing, implementing evaluating and enhancement.	3.90	7th

In table 3, all the items were rated above 2.50. This means in the respondents opinion that all the Counselling Roles listed are acceptable to the Counsellors for the Effectives Basic Education.

### **Discussion**

The study revealed that there are many factors that must be approached for effective implementation of universal basic education. These factors to be considered are listed out in table two. This finding is not surprising, for Aluede, (2006) observed that Nigerian Educational Policies are characterized by a high level of uncertainties. The education system has witnessed a catchegue of changes in policies and programmes. And so, this beclouds meaningful planning in Nigeria educational system.

The study recorded a universal acceptance of the Counsellors Roles as listed in table 3 as being relevant for implementation of Universal Basic Education. It is in view of the relevance of these Counsellors Roles that Aluede, (2006) observed that the primary school child is in the process of transition from home to school and is faced with adjustment problem and therefore need to be follow up such a child with adequate Guidance and Counselling.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the findings, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. There is need for Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling that will entail integration of Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum into the educational mission of school, collaboration of the entire staff.
2. There is need to make guidance and counselling proactive rather than remedial.
3. There is need for Teacher Education Institutions to provide technical support in carrying out needs, assignment of Counsellors and Teachers Profession development,

Monitoring, Supervision and Inspiration for the Implementation of the programme.

## **Conclusion**

Guidance and counselling is an integrated part of the education and so, there is need to make effort to train counsellors who will be able to provide guidance and counselling services to enable universal basic education become an effective programme.

## **Note:**

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