

#### Citation

Oloba, P. B., & Ramhurry, C. (2024). Juxtaposing the Synopsis of Nigerian Education System Reforms with The Principle of Sustainable System-Wide Change: Implications for The Nigerian Basic Education System. *Journal of Education, Management and Development Studies*, 4(4), 15-25. doi: 10.52631/jemds.v4i4.355

# Juxtaposing the Synopsis of Nigerian Education System Reforms with The Principle of Sustainable System-Wide Change: Implications for The Nigerian Basic Education System

Peter Babajide Oloba \* and Cindy Ramhurry

University of Johannesburg, South Africa

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Abstract

Reform in education is an inevitable, continuous phenomenon that usually takes place because of the problems with the previous curriculum, changes in societal needs, responses to disasters or crises, staying up to date with new national challenges, the need to raise educational standards, expectations for the future, staff innovation, and leadership changes. A change in education that affects every level, classrooms, structures, teaching environment, schools at the district/local, province/state/regional, and federal/national governments, as well as the administrative and governmental procedures that steer the entire educational process, is referred to as system-wide change. This kind of change offers a framework for a comprehensive change model that depends on systemic change that is rooted in stakeholders' continuous engagement and shared ownership of the change effort and is driven locally. Nigeria has seen several changes in its educational system prior to, during, and following colonial rule. This paper juxtaposed the educational reforms that have been carried out in Nigeria before, during, and after her independence with the principle of system-wide change. It was found that Nigerian educational reform has not adhered to the tenets of the system-wide change process. Therefore, the paper suggests that for Nigeria's educational system to successfully undergo change, it must do so in accordance with the principle of system-wide reform procedure, which includes developing systems design, extended stakeholders' ownership, a systems perspective on education, learning organization, and changing stakeholder mindsets about education.

**Keywords:** Educational change, Nigeria, System-wide change, Education, Education stakeholders, Basic education, Reform, Sustainability, Learning Organization, Systems Design, Change process

**DOI:** <http://doi.org/10.52631/jemds.v4i4.355>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian education system operates within a federal structure, with responsibilities shared across local (district), state (province), and federal (national) governments (Ogunnubi, 2022). The federal government plays a key role in policy formulation and quality assurance for primary and secondary education, while it also oversees numerous tertiary institutions. At the heart of Nigeria's educational structure is the 9-3-4 model, which comprises nine years of Universal Basic Education (UBE), three years of senior secondary education, and four years of tertiary education

(Austine et al., 2013). This model replaced the 6-3-3-4 system (primary education-six years, junior secondary education-three years, senior secondary education-three years, and university education-four years), reflecting a paradigm shift aimed at enhancing educational accessibility and quality. The UBE policy mandates compulsory formal education for all children, and its implementation is supported by both federal and state ministries of education, along with local government authorities (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011).

Furthermore, efforts to reform the Nigerian education system, particularly the basic education sector, have been shaped by both domestic and international influences. Reforms have occurred across the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence eras, driven by curriculum deficiencies, changing societal demands, global conventions (e.g., ILO/UNESCO, EFA, MDGs), national development goals, and the need for quality assurance (Ezegwu and Okoye, 2024). One notable initiative within basic education is the school-based management framework introduced in 2005, which emphasises community participation and school accountability (Austine et al., 2013). Additionally, systemic or system-wide change refers to a deliberate, comprehensive transformation that targets the entire structure and operation of a system rather than focusing on fragmented or isolated improvements. Rooted in systems thinking, it emphasizes the interconnectedness of various components within a system and aims to enhance overall performance by reshaping core structures and interdependent relationships (Amisshah et al., 2020). Unlike piecemeal reforms, systemic change involves coordinated shifts in policies, values, resources, routines, and power dynamics to produce deep, sustainable outcomes (Gupta, 2022). It seeks to initiate a paradigm shift that challenges the existing status quo and lays the groundwork for long-term transformation (Voulvoulis et al., 2022). In the educational context, systemic reform involves reimagining and reconstructing the entire system to respond effectively to present and future challenges, rather than merely addressing inefficiencies (Hanna et al., 2024). This process requires a holistic transformation that spans structural, pedagogical, and ideological dimensions at the local, provincial, and national levels (Fullan, 2009).

Crucially, system-wide educational change relies on inclusive collaboration among all stakeholders—learners, educators, parents, policymakers, and communities—to improve learning outcomes and ensure that reform efforts are both relevant and enduring (Sengeh and Winthrop, 2022). Despite these efforts, there is limited understanding of whether these reforms reflect the principles of sustainable system-wide change—changes that are scalable, adaptable, inclusive, and context-sensitive, so this paper interrogates the planning, implementation, and impact of education reforms in Nigeria by juxtaposing them with the theoretical lens of sustainable system-wide reform. It critically examines the successes, limitations, and implications of these reforms for Nigeria's basic education system. By doing so, the paper aims to inform future policy directions and promote more effective, enduring education reforms in the country.

## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This paper adopts the system-wide reform process proposed by Reigeluth and Joseph (2010) as the foundation of its conceptual framework.

### 2.1 Broad Stakeholder Ownership

Broad stakeholder ownership forms the cornerstone of the system-wide reform process and underpins the conceptual framework guiding this study. Without meaningful involvement from all stakeholders, the reform effort risks losing its relevance and impact (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010; Valentinov and Chia, 2022). Stakeholders in a state or local community include educators, parents, learners, local leaders, clergy, business executives, government officials, and everyday citizens, each playing a vital role in shaping education outcomes (Mbatha, 2022). Education, as a collective good, demands that every member of society contribute to ensuring learners receive quality education that promotes communal development (Akwataghibe et al., 2022). For systemic change to be ethical and sustainable, Reigeluth and Joseph (2010) argue that design must come from within the community, emphasising that users are the true experts of their own

systems. Imposing change from outside, whether through legislation, consultants, or external models, undermines ownership and may fail in the long term. Selling reform to people rather than co-creating it also proven ineffective and unsustainable (Errida and Lotfi, 2021). Instead, successful reform requires inclusive collaboration that respects diverse perspectives and ensures equal voice in decision-making, especially for historically marginalized groups (Akwataghibe et al., 2022). Stakeholders must be involved from the outset, not merely as implementers but as co-designers, fostering shared commitment and a collective mindset towards change (Kujala et al., 2022).

## 2.2 Creation of a Learning Organization

The concept of a learning organisation is pivotal to the successful implementation of systemic change. A learning organisation is understood as an ideal model at the system level, characterised by adaptability, continuous improvement, and collective learning (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Rezaei et al. (2021) describe it as an organization that continually expands its capacity to create its future. Such organization leverage organisational learning to achieve their goals, fostering cultures of trust, mutual respect, and integrity through open communication, shared learning, and constructive conflict resolution. Transforming into a learning organisation is essential for understanding and sustaining educational reform efforts (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). However, Sengeh and Winthrop (2022) identifies several mental models that hinder the development of learning organization, including individualistic thinking, blaming external factors, reactive mindsets disguised as proactivity, overemphasis on isolated events, failure to notice gradual change, the illusion that personal experience is universally informative, and the myth of consensus within management teams. Addressing these barriers is crucial for cultivating generative learning and long-term transformation. In the context of educational reform, the creation of a learning organisation is not only foundational but also integrative, serving as the central element that aligns and drives all other aspects of the reform framework (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010).

## 2.3 Understanding the Process of System-wide Change

Understanding the process of system-wide change requires that all stakeholders grasp the nature, demands, and collaborative essence of such reform before any transformation can occur (Hanna et al., 2024). According to Chen (2022), meaningful discussion and effective communication are essential to foster mutual understanding and respect among stakeholders with diverse perspectives, values, and beliefs. Hanna et al. (2024) outline four critical components for comprehending this process: ensuring the educational system enables all teachers to support student success; recognising that changing the system requires shifting people's mindsets; utilising small, diverse process teams to drive reform; and prioritising open dialogue throughout. A thorough understanding of the change process, supported by reliable data and grounded in the principles of learning organization, is vital for informed decision-making. System-wide reform aims to establish mechanisms that empower every stakeholder to contribute meaningfully to student achievement. Once these foundational elements are in place, stakeholders are expected to engage collaboratively, exchange ideas, and commit to the shared vision of the reform initiative (Kujala et al., 2022).

## 2.4 Evolving Mindsets About Education

For system-wide reform to be effective, a fundamental shift in stakeholders' mindsets about education is essential (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Mindset change, often referred to as a shift in the mental model, influences how individuals understand and respond to challenges. Because nearly everyone has attended school, they often hold deeply ingrained beliefs about what education should look like and how schools should function. These entrenched perceptions, described by Fullan (2009) as deeply held beliefs, generalisations, and mental images, can become barriers to transformative reform. A genuine paradigm shift in education cannot occur unless these outdated or rigid views are critically examined and restructured. As Duffy (2007) notes,

successful reform requires stakeholders to challenge long-standing assumptions and be willing to adapt their attitudes and beliefs. While changing mindsets is difficult, it is a necessary step toward system-wide change (Gouédard et al., 2020). Fullan (2009) emphasises that stakeholders must move from a possessive view of education, seeing schools as “mine” or “yours,” toward a collective understanding that schools belong to and serve everyone.

## 2.5 A Systems View of Education

A systems view of education emphasises the need for stakeholders to adopt a holistic understanding of educational dynamics to effectively implement system-wide reforms (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Education is not a linear or isolated process but a complex, open, and evolving human activity system that continuously interacts with and adapts to its broader societal environment (Griffiths and Tabery, 2013). To develop this systems approach, stakeholders must study how different systems operate, internalise foundational systems concepts, and apply them to real-world educational contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Various models have been developed to aid this understanding: the systems-environment model explores school-community interactions over time, the process model examines system behaviour through time, and the function/structure model analyses the current state of the education system (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Additionally, metaphors and systems thinking tools can foster creativity and shared understanding among educational stakeholders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Recognising education as a dynamic and interdependent framework is crucial, as no part of the system functions in isolation. Without this awareness, reform efforts risk producing unintended consequences due to overlooked systemic relationships (Alshumaimeri, 2022). Adopting a systems perspective can transform how individuals think about, engage with, and lead change in education (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010).

## 2.6 Systems Design

Systems design serves as a foundational element in any system-wide change initiative, as it facilitates the deliberate construction of future-orientated educational systems (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Designing systems is not merely about reforming the present but about envisioning and building the future through collective participation. This process involves discarding outdated educational models and imagining new systems that align with desired goals (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Key steps in systems design include envisioning the ideal future state, developing prototypes, and planning for implementation. However, before undertaking the design process, stakeholders must first prepare by building capacity, fostering community support, and engaging in thoughtful inquiry (Edlmann and Grobbelaar, 2021). Crucially, Reigeluth and Joseph (2010) emphasise the need for stakeholder-led design processes, arguing that such involvement enhances the legitimacy, feasibility, and long-term success of the reform. Rather than relying on externally imposed expert solutions, systems design empowers stakeholders to collaboratively transition from obsolete models to improved, contextually relevant systems (Reigeluth and Joseph, 2010). Ultimately, the system’s design approach provides a conceptual framework through which stakeholders can plan, implement, and evaluate transformative changes in education (Edlmann and Grobbelaar, 2021).

# 3 SYNOPSIS OF NIGERIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER COLONIAL ERA

## 3.1 Education system from 1500 to 1800

From 1500 to 1800, the education system in pre-colonial Nigeria varied across regions. The northern and western regions were influenced by empires and kingdoms, with Islam playing a central role in the education of the northern population, where Qur’anic education was prevalent (Imam, 2012). In contrast, the southern regions were home to diverse ethnic groups, each with its own traditional education system focused on community, physical and intellectual development,

vocational training, and ethical values. These systems, while informal, shared the common goal of instilling a sense of belonging and discipline (Imam, 2012).

### **3.2 1842 Missionary Education Programme**

The formal education system in Nigeria began in 1842, driven by European Christian missionaries who combined evangelism with education to spread the Christian faith and promote literacy (Asadu, 2021). Early mission schools were founded by organization such as the Methodist Church of Scotland Mission, the Church Missionary Society, and the Roman Catholics. The missionaries emphasised literacy in English, knowledge of agriculture, and training local educators and clergy while addressing the educational needs of formerly enslaved individuals. Although their primary aim was religious propagation, their lasting legacy was the advancement of indigenous languages through written forms (Imam, 2012).

### **3.3 1887 Education Ordinance**

The 1887 Education Ordinance marked a significant step in the establishment of Nigerian education legislation after the Lagos colony separated from the Gold Coast in 1886 (Fabunmi, 2005). It established an Education Board, set grant allocation conditions, defined teacher certification standards, and authorised post-primary education scholarships (Fabunmi, 2005). The Ordinance is seen as the foundational effort in advancing education in Nigeria, forming the basis for modern educational policies. Additionally, it created a Board of Education, composed of legislators, school inspectors, and governors, responsible for implementing government decisions and overseeing schools (Bolaji, 2014).

### **3.4 1920 Phelps-Stokes Education Commission**

The Phelps-Stokes Education Commission, established in 1920 with the assistance of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, aimed to advance African education by analysing the continent's educational needs and resources (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). It sought to professionalise Nigerian education by instituting teacher registration and emphasised government responsibility in funding and managing education (Tsafe, 2013). The commission's findings, according to Bolaji (2014), highlighted deficiencies in both government and missionary educational programs, which failed to meet the needs of the African population. Additionally, education funding was critically low, with the Nigerian government allocating only 1% of its income to education in 1918 (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.5 Elliot Education Commission of 1943**

The Elliot Education Commission, established in 1943, focused on the development of higher education institutions in British West Africa, recommending the creation of a university in Nigeria. In its 1945 report, the commission highlighted the shortage of educated Africans and proposed a university college, leading to the founding of the University of Ibadan in 1948, connected to the University of London. Furthermore, the commission's report on polytechnics, submitted in 1949, advocated for the expansion of technical education, which resulted in the establishment of institutions like the Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology in the early 1950s (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.6 1946 Arthur Richards' Constitution and Education Policy**

The Richards Education Policy, issued by the British Parliament in 1946, granted the Governor-General and his Executive Council ultimate power but expanded the legislative council to allow deliberation on matters such as education in Nigeria. The policy established regional Houses of Assembly, each tasked with advising lieutenant governors on local issues, including education. Reflecting Nigeria's diversity, the education policy was influenced by a federal principle system,

allowing regions to exercise deliberative powers. This constitution reinforced regionalism as a strategy for political unification, considering the country's developmental stage (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.7 1951 Macpherson Education Policy**

The 1951 Macpherson Education Policy marked a pivotal moment in Nigeria's transition to independence, with significant changes in governance and education (Imam, 2012). The policy allowed both federal and local governments to influence educational legislation, with the Western region implementing a free education program in 1955, which lasted until 1966 (Fabunmi, 2005). However, the introduction of universal primary education in the South exacerbated regional educational disparities, particularly between the northern and southern parts of Nigeria (Imam, 2012). This shift occurred during a period of constitutional changes aimed at greater self-governance and autonomy (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.8 1959 Ashby Commission**

The 1959 Ashby Commission, established by the Nigerian Federal Government and chaired by Sir Eric Ashby, marked a turning point in Nigeria's higher education planning. Its primary aim was to assess the country's post-secondary and higher education needs in preparation for independence, promoting greater Nigerian involvement in educational policy (Imam, 2012). The commission recommended expanding access through the creation of new universities and increasing graduate output to meet national labour demands (Fabunmi, 2005; Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). It also led to the establishment of the National Universities Commission as a regulatory body. However, despite these forward-looking reforms, ethnic and regional disparities persisted, continuing to shape educational policy outcomes (Imam, 2012; Tsafe, 2013).

### **3.9 1961 Oldsman Commission**

The Oldsman Commission was established to address the educational disparity between Nigeria's southern and northern regions (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). At independence, educational policy focused on producing labour for economic growth and Africanising the civil service. The Commission was tasked with examining administrative and budgetary barriers to universal primary education and clarifying the roles of government levels in funding and managing education. It ultimately recommended the establishment of grassroots education committees and increased involvement of Local Government Education Authorities in managing primary schools, laying the groundwork for a more decentralized and community-driven education system (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.10 1969 Curriculum Conference**

The 1969 Curriculum Conference in Nigeria, organised by the Nigerian Educational Research Council, aimed to reform the educational system and align it with national goals (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The conference focused on decolonising education, fostering national consciousness, and promoting self-reliance while addressing the needs of youth and society (Imam, 2012). It also emphasised the importance of teaching relevant skills, promoting moral principles, and ensuring gender equality in education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The conference's findings highlighted the need for an educational system that prepares students for productive lives and involves universities in community service, teaching, research, and policy contributions (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **3.11 1976 UPE Policy**

The 1976 Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy marked a turning point in Nigeria's educational history, introduced in the context of national restructuring into 19 states (Fabunmi, 2005).

Supported by oil revenue, the federal government sought to promote national unity, reduce educational disparities, and tackle the high illiteracy rate of 62% (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The UPE centralized educational control and funding, replacing the colonial cost-sharing model, and restructured the system to enhance access and quality (Imam, 2012). Although ambitious in scope, the policy faced major implementation challenges, including inadequate planning, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers—many of whom were hastily trained (Imam, 2012). Nonetheless, the UPE laid a federal foundation for universal access to primary education and spurred the establishment of teacher training institutions and system-wide reforms aimed at sustainable educational change.

### 3.12 1977 National Policy on Education

The 1977 National Policy on Education (NPE), emerging from the 1969 National Curriculum Conference and led by Professor Babatunde Fafunwa, introduced the 6-3-3-4 system to foster self-reliance and balance academic with technical education (Ikechukwu, 2015). It aimed to shift Nigerian education from colonial British idealism to American-style pragmatism, promoting inclusivity and national development (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004; Ikechukwu, 2015). Despite its progressive vision, the NPE faced significant implementation challenges, including inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of trained teachers. These issues, intensified by the 1980s oil crisis, led to the eventual collapse of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme by 1981 (Ibia, 2014). The policy's shortcomings underscored the need for a more context-sensitive and sustainable approach, paving the way for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) reform introduced in 1999 under President Obasanjo (Omotayo, 2011).

### 3.13 1999 UBE Policy on Education

Launched in 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy aimed to replace the ineffective Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1977 and align Nigeria's education system with global goals such as those from the Jomtien Conference and the Millennium Development Goals (Ibia, 2014). The program sought to promote functional literacy, reduce dropout rates, and improve access to education by mandating nine years of free and compulsory basic education (Omotayo, 2011). Reinforced by the Free UBE Act of 2004 and rooted in Section 18(3) of the 1999 Constitution, the reform emphasized national educational standards while delegating implementation to sub-national governments (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). Despite these intentions, sustainable change remains limited due to funding challenges, weak implementation, and low public awareness (Ibia, 2014). Nonetheless, the UBE policy reflects an adaptable model that supports inclusive education through alternative pathways like adult learning and distance education, reinforcing its relevance in Nigeria's diverse context (Imam, 2012).

## 4 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PLANNING IN EDUCATION

The implications for policy and planning in Nigeria's education system are profound, particularly given the recurring failure to implement systemic, inclusive, and sustainable reforms. Nigeria's educational policy history, rooted in colonial legacies and later shaped by the MDGs and EFA framework, has been inconsistent and marked by confusion (Enyiazu, 2022). Scholars like Babajide and Smith (2022) and Veit (2022) argue that the formulation of policies has often lacked national consensus, contextual relevance, and continuity. As a result, policies frequently fail to address the complex realities of Nigerian society. Several modifications to the 9-3-4 system have produced overlapping and conflicting structures, leading to fragmented implementations (Ogunode et al., 2023), with some communities simultaneously using multiple systems like 6-3-3-4 and 2-9-3-4. This policy incoherence undermines planning and creates a chaotic operational environment for educators and learners alike. The failure to adopt a system-wide change model has had serious implications for equitable access and quality. Despite the UBE initiative's promise of free and compulsory education, dropout rates remain high, and out-of-school children increased to 40% by 2020, with nearly 20 million currently out of school (Alabi, 2022).

The poor performance of educational reforms is attributed to improper implementation, lack of stakeholder engagement, and weak policy translation mechanisms (Enyiazu, 2022). Reform efforts often focus on structural redesign without addressing implementation logistics or local contexts. Ineffective governance, resource scarcity, and uncoordinated bureaucracies have worsened the gap between policy intent and outcome (Hubbart, 2023). Consequently, while the intentions behind reforms may be noble, their success is hindered by a disconnect between the "what" and "how" of change. Mounting calls for a state of emergency in education underscore the urgent need for a shift in educational policy and planning. Stakeholders ranging from government officials to civil society and international advocates like Malala Yousafzai have consistently demanded a comprehensive overhaul of the sector (Oluwagbemi, 2017). Persistent underperformance in graduate readiness, geographical disparities, and low completion rates reflect systemic inefficiencies (Ezegwu and Okoye, 2024). The widespread acknowledgement of a national education crisis led to the formation of a committee to evaluate emergency responses, and was further echoed in campaign promises by presidential candidates in 2023 (Okeke, 2022). These collective responses signify a turning point, highlighting the need for an inclusive, well-resourced, context-sensitive, and sustainably planned education policy framework that genuinely aligns with national development goals. Without this systemic transformation, Nigeria's basic education system will remain trapped in cycles of reform failure and underdevelopment.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The historical inconsistencies, fragmented policy initiatives, and systemic inefficiencies within Nigeria's education system highlight the urgent need for a paradigm shift in reform strategy. Past reforms have often been reactive, top-down, and misaligned with the realities of diverse communities, resulting in limited impact and unsustainable outcomes. To achieve meaningful and lasting transformation, Nigeria must embrace a sustainable system-wide change model—one that prioritises inclusivity, contextual relevance, and stakeholder ownership. This model emphasises the integration of national educational goals with local realities, underpinned by a shared vision that reflects Nigeria's socio-cultural diversity. Systemic change cannot occur in isolation. It requires coherence across all levels of governance, collaboration among stakeholders, and the restructuring of institutional frameworks. Key to this is the harmonisation of Nigeria's education system—currently marked by overlapping structures such as the 6-3-3-4, 9-3-4, and 2-9-3-4 systems—which has created confusion and inefficiencies. Reform must be undergirded by clear transition stages, standardised content, and consistent evaluation methods. Moreover, reform efforts should shift from an overreliance on theoretical instruction to a functional, skills-based curriculum that prepares learners for active participation in the economy and innovation ecosystems. A sustainable education system must be one that is adaptable, inclusive, and able to evolve in response to societal needs.

To achieve sustainable and system-wide reform in Nigeria's basic education system, several strategic actions could be undertaken. First, it is essential for the Federal Ministry of Education to develop a unified and coherent education framework that harmonises the various existing structures, such as the 6-3-3-4, 9-3-4, and 2-9-3-4 models, into a single system with clearly defined transition stages, standardised curriculum content, and consistent assessment methods. This will address systemic confusion and enhance policy coherence and educational outcomes. In addition, education reforms should be contextualised through inclusive policy design that actively engages stakeholders at all levels, including teachers, parents, learners, traditional leaders, and regional representatives.

Such inclusivity will ensure that reforms reflect Nigeria's diverse socio-cultural landscape and foster local ownership. Furthermore, a decisive shift towards a skills-oriented curriculum is critical. Education must prioritise functional, entrepreneurial, and vocational learning that prepares students for real-world challenges and economic participation. Given the country's repeated failure to meet both national and international education benchmarks such as the MDGs, EFA, and SDGs, a formal declaration of a state of emergency in the education sector is warranted. This declaration should be followed by targeted interventions, including increased funding, comprehensive policy audits, retraining of educational personnel, and infrastructural investment. Equally important

is the establishment of robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure transparency, accountability, and progress tracking. Additionally, reform efforts should be coordinated through the creation of change teams and reform coalitions comprising stakeholders from diverse sectors and regions. These teams should work collaboratively under a central design and support unit to manage different facets of the reform process. At the heart of the reform should be a shared national vision for education transformation—one grounded in Nigeria’s unique context and development goals. Finally, reforms should be implemented gradually and flexibly, allowing for continuous feedback, learning, and adaptation. Anchoring these efforts in a systems thinking model that emphasizes stakeholder engagement, long-term capacity building, and sustained collaboration will be essential to create a resilient and effective basic education system in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

- Akwataghibe, N. N., Ogunsola, E. A., Broerse, J. E. W., Agbo, A. I., and Dieleman, M. A. (2022). Inclusion strategies in multi-stakeholder dialogues: The case of a community-based participatory research on immunization in nigeria. *PLoS One*, 17(3), e0264304. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0264304>
- Alabi, M. (2022, September). *UPDATED: Nigeria now has 20 million out-of-school children - UNESCO*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/551804-breaking-nigeria-now-has-20-million-out-of-school-children-unesco.html>. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/551804-breaking-nigeria-now-has-20-million-out-of-school-children-unesco.html> (Accessed: 2025-6-19)
- Alshumaimeri, Y. (2022). Educational context: The factor for a successful change. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED621782.pdf>
- Amissah, M., Gannon, T., and Monat, J. (2020). What is systems thinking? expert perspectives from the WPI systems thinking colloquium of 2 october 2019. *Systems*, 8(1), 6. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems8010006>
- Asadu, G. (2021). Christianity and national development: The nigeria experience. *HTS Teol. Stud. / Theol. Stud.*, 77(1), 9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i1.6307>
- Austine, A., Ngozi, P., and Audu, C. (2013). An appraisal of the universal basic education in nigeria. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 13. [https://globaljournals.org/GJMBR\\_Volume13/1-An-Appraisal-of-the-Universal-basic.pdf](https://globaljournals.org/GJMBR_Volume13/1-An-Appraisal-of-the-Universal-basic.pdf)
- Babajide, O. P., and Smith, C. (2022). Teachers’ challenges in the introduction and implementation of systemic change in the nigerian primary school system. *SAGE Open*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221093033>
- Bolaji, S. (2014). Intent to action: Overcoming barriers to universal basic education policy implementation in nigeria. <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/1424>
- Chen, G.-M. (2022). Building a global community: An intercultural communication perspective. *China Media Res.*, 18(4). [https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/com\\_facpubs/80](https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/com_facpubs/80)
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., and Osher, D. (2020). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Appl. Dev. Sci.*, 24(2), 97–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>
- Duffy, V. G. (2007). Modified virtual build methodology for computer-aided ergonomics and safety. *Hum. Factors Ergon. Manuf.*, 17(5), 413–422. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hfm.20082>
- Edlmann, F. R. P., and Grobbelaar, S. (2021). A framework of engagement practices for stakeholders collaborating around complex social challenges. *Sustainability*, 13(19), 10828. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910828>
- Enyiazu, F. A. (2022). The problems of educational policy implementation and its influence on the welfare of teacher labor market in nigeria. *OALib*, 09(08), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1108868>

- Errida, A., and Lotfi, B. (2021). The determinants of organizational change management success: Literature review and case study. *Int. J. Eng. Bus. Manag.*, 13, 184797902110162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18479790211016273>
- Ezegwu, C., and Okoye, D. (2024). Political bargaining, religion, and educational development: The Nigerian experience from the takeover of schools from Christian missions. *Int. J. Educ. Dev.*, 106(103000), 103000. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2024.103000>
- Fabunmi, M. (2005). Historical analysis of educational policy formulation in Nigeria: Implications for educational planning and policy. *International Journal of African & African American Studies*, 4. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277066757\\_Historical\\_Analysis\\_Of\\_Educational\\_Policy\\_Formulation\\_In\\_Nigeria\\_Implications\\_For\\_Educational\\_Planning\\_And\\_Policy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277066757_Historical_Analysis_Of_Educational_Policy_Formulation_In_Nigeria_Implications_For_Educational_Planning_And_Policy)
- Federal Ministry of Education. (2004). *National policy on education (4th ed.)*. Abuja: Government Printer. <https://education.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NATIONAL-POLICY-ON-EDUCATION.pdf>
- Federal Ministry of Education. (2011). *Nigeria digest of education statistics 2006-2010* (Tech. Rep.). <https://education.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/digest.pdf>
- Fullan, M. (2009). Large-scale reform comes of age. *J. Educ. Chang.*, 10(2-3), 101–113. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-009-9108-z>
- Gouëdard, P., Pont, B., Hyttinen, S., and Huang, P. (2020). *Curriculum reform: A literature review to support effective implementation* (Tech. Rep.). <https://doi.org/10.1787/efe8a48c-en>
- Griffiths, P. E., and Tabery, J. (2013). Developmental systems theory: what does it explain, and how does it explain it? *Adv. Child Dev. Behav.*, 44, 65–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-397947-6.00003-9>
- Gupta, D. (2022, September). *6 types of organizational change, explained*. <https://whatfix.com/blog/types-of-organizational-change/>. Whatfix. <https://whatfix.com/blog/types-of-organizational-change/> (Accessed: 2025-6-23)
- Hanna, K. T., Lawton, G., and Pratt, M. K. (2024, April). *What is change management?* <https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/change-management>. TechTarget. <https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/definition/change-management> (Accessed: 2025-6-23)
- Hubbart, J. A. (2023). Organizational change: The challenge of change aversion. *Adm. Sci.*, 13(7), 162. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13070162>
- Ibia, I. E. (2014). Application of the principles of social demand approach (SDA) in the implementation of universal basic education (UBE) in Nigeria: A sociological analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2, 156–160. <https://oaji.net/articles/2014/1543-1418695227.pdf>
- Ikechukwu, E. C. (2015). Towards a pragmatic system of education: A comparative study of Nigeria 6-3-3-4 and Chinese 9-3-4 system. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 3. <https://www.ijern.com/journal/2015/May-2015/07.pdf>
- Imam, H. (2012). Educational policy in Nigeria from the colonial era to the post-independence period. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 4. [https://ijse.padovauniversitypress.it/system/files/papers/2012\\_1\\_8\\_0.pdf](https://ijse.padovauniversitypress.it/system/files/papers/2012_1_8_0.pdf)
- Kujala, J., Sachs, S., Leinonen, H., Heikkinen, A., and Laude, D. (2022). Stakeholder engagement: Past, present, and future. *Bus. Soc.*, 61(5), 1136–1196. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00076503211066595>
- Mbatha, B. J. (2022). *Role of stakeholders regarding policymaking in the localised sphere of government in KwaZulu-Natal*.
- Ogunnubi, O. O. (2022). Decentralisation and local governance in Nigeria: issues, challenges and prospects. *Commonw. J. Local Gov.*, 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.5130/cjlg.vi27.7935>

- Ogunode, N. J., Akinyode, F., and Ayoko, V. O. (2023). Education policy instability in nigeria and implications for educational development in nigeria. *Web of Synergy:International Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, 2(1), 1–11. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366865372\\_Education\\_Policy\\_Instability\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_and\\_Implications\\_for\\_Educational\\_Development\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366865372_Education_Policy_Instability_in_Nigeria_and_Implications_for_Educational_Development_in_Nigeria)
- Okeke, C. C. (2022, December). *Presidential hopefuls' promises on out-of-school kids*. <https://dailytrust.com/presidential-hopefuls-promises-on-out-of-school-kids/>. <https://dailytrust.com/presidential-hopefuls-promises-on-out-of-school-kids/> (Accessed: 2025-6-23)
- Oluwagbemi, A. (2017, July). *Malala calls for state of emergency for education in nigeria*. <https://punchng.com/malala-calls-for-state-of-emergency-for-education-in-nigeria/>. Punch Newspaper. <https://punchng.com/malala-calls-for-state-of-emergency-for-education-in-nigeria/> (Accessed: 2025-6-23)
- Omotayo, T. O. (2011). Challenges of implementing universal basic education (UBE) in nigeria, especially as it affects teachers' preparation. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development*, 17(1), 1–11.
- Reigeluth, C. M., and Joseph, R. (2010). The systemic change process in education: A conceptual framework. *Contemp. Educ. Technol.*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/5968>
- Rezaei, F., Khalilzadeh, M., and Soleimani, P. (2021). Factors affecting knowledge management and its effect on organizational performance: Mediating the role of human capital. *Adv. Hum.-Comput. Interact.*, 2021, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/8857572>
- Sengeh, D., and Winthrop, R. (2022). Transforming education systems: Why, what, and how. policy brief. centre for universal education at the brookings institution. , 1–33. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/transforming-education-systems-why-what-and-how/>
- Tsafe, A. K. (2013). A critical analysis of universal basic education on its implementation so far. *Scientific Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences*, 2(1), 23–34.
- Valentinov, V., and Chia, R. (2022). Stakeholder theory: A process-ontological perspective. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 31(3), 762–776.
- Veit, A. (2022). Class-based communities: The postcolonial reform of school education in south africa. In *International impacts on social policy: Short histories in global perspective* (pp. 131–144). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Voulvoulis, N., Giakoumis, T., Hunt, C., Kioupi, V., Petrou, N., Souliotis, I., and Vaghela, C. J. G. E. C. (2022). Systems thinking as a paradigm shift for sustainability transformation. *Global Environmental Change*, 75, 1–7.