

A REFLECTION ON THE WORLD BANK EDUCATION PROJECTS IN NIGERIA BETWEEN 1965 AND 2001

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ABSTRACT. By 1997, Nigeria was cited by the World Bank as one of the 38 severely indebted low-income countries in the World. This debt crisis coupled with the “strings attached” to foreign aid have made education loans less attractive to Nigerians. In spite of this, the government still sees World Bank lending as an attractive financial mode to revitalize its financially strained education system. This paper contributes to the debate by considering World Bank projects between 1965 and 2001, from a borrowers’ perspective, to provide needed information for both donors and recipients. Using a level-specific approach, the paper argues that the World Bank primary education book project was an example of foreign aid as an up-front input financing that was made to coincide with the onset of international agitation for democracy in Nigeria. Second level education projects were typical examples of projects where Bank-recipient differences were obvious. The third level education project typified cases where loans were being used to force the Bank’s market-oriented reforms on recipients. Consequently, in 2000, there was a resistance by the academic community to the World Bank’s Nigerian Universities System Innovation Project. One important lesson for the international donors from this appraisal is that those who feel that their interests will be adversely affected may stop reforms, particularly if they are well informed and organized to mobilize confrontation.

RÉFLEXION SUR LES PROJETS D’ENSEIGNEMENT DE LA BANQUE MONDIALE AU NIGERIA ENTRE 1965 ET 2001

RÉSUMÉ. En 1997, la Banque Mondiale a déclaré que le Nigeria était l’un des 38 pays du monde à faible revenu les plus endettés. Cet endettement, associé aux modalités contraignantes qui se rattachent à l’aide étrangère, explique que les prêts d’enseignement soient moins attrayants pour les Nigériens. Malgré cela, le gouvernement considère toujours les prêts de la Banque Mondiale comme un moyen financier attrayant pour raviver son système d’éducation dont la situation financière est extrêmement précaire. Cet article contribue au débat en étudiant les projets réalisés par la Banque Mondiale entre 1965 et 2001, dans l’optique d’un emprunteur, afin de fournir des renseignements nécessaires à la fois aux donateurs et aux bénéficiaires. Selon

une démarche propre à chaque niveau, l'auteur de cet article soutient que le projet de livres d'enseignement primaire de la Banque Mondiale est un exemple d'aide à l'étranger accordée pour coïncider avec le début des pressions internationales exercées sur le Nigeria pour qu'il revienne à la démocratie. Les projets d'enseignement secondaire sont des exemples types de projets qui font clairement ressortir les différences entre les bénéficiaires de la générosité de la Banque. Le troisième projet d'aide à l'enseignement illustre les cas où les prêts servent à imposer aux bénéficiaires les réformes de la Banque axées sur les forces du marché. C'est pourquoi, en 2000, le milieu universitaire a opposé une résistance au Projet d'innovation du réseau des universités nigérianes de la Banque Mondiale. Une importante leçon que les donateurs étrangers doivent tirer de cette évaluation est que ceux qui estiment que leurs intérêts risquent d'être compromis peuvent mettre un terme aux réformes, surtout s'ils sont bien renseignés et organisés pour mobiliser les protestataires.

Introduction

World Bank lending for education has a history of generating controversies. The debate intensified after the external shocks of the 1970s and 1980s in Africa. Because of the debt crises in most countries of Africa, critics questioned the need for education loans while the strings attached to foreign aid have made it less attractive to the recipients. The main controversy surrounds power relations between willful donors and insecure recipients. The power of the World Bank and other donors is in their money and superior analytical skills for identifying and analyzing the developmental problems of the receiving countries. On the other hand, the recipients' power is in their choice of policy action to be undertaken as sovereignties. The exchange of power between donors and recipients is a difficult bargain. This is because it involves the surrender of sovereign power on the side of the borrowers through an adoption of donor-driven educational priorities and compliance with creditor's conditions. In fact, the borrowing governments want to obtain as much finance with as few strings attached as possible. Lenders, on the other hand, use the threat of stopping the easy access to loans to force an implicit contract with the borrowers.

The main question is whether or not foreign aid is strictly for the public good. From the lenders' perspective a privileged access to education loans can only be justified by international equity considerations, particularly concerning the future productivity and wellbeing of people in the neglected poor countries. As far as the World Bank is concerned, education loans are not only meant to disburse foreign capital. They are equally meant to exert policy influence on borrowers who lack the financial, technical and organizational capacity to mount education projects. As up-front finance, the Bank is of the opinions that loans can ease the pressure on the public budget

and therefore help recipients to attend to pressing educational needs. The Bank further believes that if education loans are made conditional on and coincident with the onset of desirable reforms, such loans can increase educational development and social welfare.

Criticisms of education loans

Critics of education loans believe that foreign aid is capable of working against the social and economic development which it intended to promote (Kelly, 1985). According to these critics, World Bank projects are like islands of perfection in seas of mediocrity. This occurs because they are insulated against failure by a series of coordinated inputs. In the words of Kelly (1985) insulated projects of this type are doomed to collapse when external supports are withdrawn. This is in spite of the fact that sustenance of a project beyond the time of the donor's involvement is a subject requiring attention with respect to the long-run impacts on recipients' self-reliance (Jones, 1992). Moreover, the relatively easy availability of foreign experts may hinder self-reliance in education, particularly staff development programs and empowerment of local experts. Since the training components of education loans are usually tied to donor countries, progress in the local training sector may be hindered. Considering that education loans should have an element imported from abroad, they can encourage an "import" mentality in education. This, according to Kelly (1985), had led to concern with international standards, which means, in effect, the standards of the former colonial authorities.

In spite of such criticisms, World Bank lending for education has increasingly become a critical financial source around the world. Its contribution to the total foreign aid (such as loans, grants, technical assistant and commodity support) from bilateral and multilateral sources, which was 11 percent in 1975, increased to 25 percent in 1990. Among the multilateral donors, the World Bank has continued to maintain a lead. Its share of the total multilateral support for education increased from 42 percent in 1975 to 62 percent in 1990 (Table 1).

Issues surrounding World Bank lending for education in Nigeria

It has been shown above that in spite of criticism, World Bank loans for education have continued to grow in volume. Some Nigerians and international observers continue to wonder why countries like Nigeria, known to be rich, should perpetually be the candidates of the Bank lending for education. Some even argue that the country could adopt the Bank's policies, if desirable, without necessarily obtaining the Bank loan. Others in Nigeria have started considering the possibility of obtaining the loan without, or with fewer of, the strings attached. The position of this paper is that Nigeria, more than ever before, now needs the financial support of the

TABLE I.

Bilateral (BL) multilateral (ML) and World Bank (WB) support for education in millions of dollars

YEAR	BL	ML	WB	(4) AS % OF (2) + (3)	(4) AS % OF (3)
ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX
1975	1490	528	224	11	42
1980	3595	901	440	10	49
1985	2679	1576	928	22	59
1986	3169	1475	829	18	56
1987	3512	1072	440	10	41
1988	3950	1578	864	16	55
1989	3790	2048	964	17	47
1990	3640	2395	1487	25	62

Source: The World Bank (1995) *Priorities and strategies for education: A World Bank Review*. Washington DC: The World Bank (Table 12.1)

World Bank, considering the country's increasing financial, technical and organizational weaknesses.

From a recent preliminary assessment of debt sustainability for heavily poor countries, Nigeria was one of the 38 severely indebted low-income economies in the World (World Bank, 1997, Table A1.2). The plight of these heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) has gained increasing international attention. In 1996, for instance, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) endorsed the HIPC Debt Initiative to support adjustment and reform efforts in the HIPCs. While Nigeria cannot deny the contribution of internal factors to its present predicaments, particularly in the form of economic mismanagement, the country can no longer pretend to be self-sufficient as far as educational investment is concerned. Considering the deleterious effects of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP)¹ on the country's educational development, Nigeria requires more than its own efforts to revitalize the education system (Babalola, Lungwangwa and Adeyinka, 1999). To my colleagues and myself, borrowing from the World Bank now appears to be a necessary evil. If the country decides to receive Bank loans to prevent the education system from total collapse, the debt burden will increase and the country will be bound to provide a loan-friendly environment to meet borrower's conditions. If, on the other hand, Nigeria decides to ignore the Bank loan and finance its educational investments on its own, this will create undesirable pressures on the scarce available resources and consequently lead to neglect of certain key sectors of the economy. The fact is that the Nigerian economy is in such a deplorable situation that it is no longer strong enough to mount the large-scale revitalization project required by its education system. Unfortunately, the high level of corruption in Nigeria threatens loan effectiveness in education. This paper assumes

that the country has learnt its lessons from its past bitter experiences with respect to financial mismanagement. Assuming an improvement in the way loan monies will be spent, Nigeria and other borrowing countries need a comprehensive and honest appraisal of past World Bank projects from a borrower's perspective. This will help these countries to take informed decisions during future loan negotiations. To provide this much needed but often ignored information this paper appraises all the World Bank Education Projects in Nigeria between 1965 and 1999.²

First level education project

The objectives of the first level of education are to produce a literate and numerate population and to lay the groundwork for further education. To be effective, the second and third levels of education demand a solid foundation, which is a product of the primary education systems. The World Bank began lending for education in 1963 and to primary education in 1970. Since then, the Bank has steadily increased its commitments to primary education. Its global investment in first level education, which averaged 4.5 percent of its total lending for education between 1970 and 1974, increased to 14.1 percent between 1975 and 1979. It peaked at 37.8 percent between 1980 and 1984 and represented 23.1 percent between 1985 and 1990 (Lockheed, Verspoor and Associates, 1991).

The first three decades of World Bank assistance for education witnessed three main policy shifts concerning primary education. In the 1960s, the Bank believed that other sub-sectors of education were more potent in terms of economic development than the primary education sub-sector. It further assumed that it was inappropriate for the Bank to finance school expansion resulting from population growth (Jones, 1992). Characteristically, there is a general preference among donors for capital-intensive and foreign-intensive projects that are limited in number, scope and in geographical spread. Primary education projects do not satisfy these conditions. This is owing to the fact that primary schools are highly dispersed with little or no room for hiring of expatriates and study abroad. The foreign exchange requirement of primary education projects is much lower than that of other higher levels of education. Consequently, there was the prohibition by the World Bank on primary education lending between 1963 and 1970. In the 1970s, however, the Bank accepted primary education as an area eligible for its support, though still skeptical about the capacities of low-income countries to achieve anything near universal primary education (UPE). The Bank did not see the first level of education as a preparatory ground for further education. Rather, it adopted the strategy of education for work as the eligibility criterion for Bank financial support. The 1990s witnessed a drastic shift in the position of the Bank with respect to primary education loans. Based upon rate-of-return data that saw primary education investments as one of the highest

yielding of all development investments, the Bank accepted the UPE as a matter of high priority. Consequently, World Bank lending for primary education projects during fiscal 1992-94 and fiscal 1995-97 exceeded lending for other types of education projects (World Bank 1997b).

Nigeria started enjoying the World Bank loans for primary education in 1991. That is two decades after the lift of the Bank's prohibition on primary education lending. Table 2 shows that the first primary education loan of US \$120 millions was about 25 percent of the total volume of Bank loans for education since 1965. In fact, the amount was more than the cumulative value of the Bank's lending to education in Nigeria prior to 1990. The large volume of this loan should not be misinterpreted to mean a high level of Bank's commitment to primary education. Evidence from Indonesia III (1973-82), that was the first large textbook project,³ revealed that the textbook has helped serve the Bank's need for tangible objects of lending. Logically, the Bank has to devote considerable sums of loan monies to this project since the foreign-exchange components of primary education projects are customarily low, usually confined to capital works, equipment, fellowship and technical assistance (Jones, 1992).

TABLE 2.

World Bank lending to education by level and geographical coverage in Nigeria between 1965 and 1999

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TYPE OF EDUCATION	FISCAL YEAR (fy)	AMOUNT (US\$ MILL.)	% OF TOTAL	PLACE COVERED
First	Primary	1991-97	120.00	25.28	National
Second	General (1)	1965-77	20.10	4.23	North
	General (2)	1972-79	17.30	3.64	East
	Tr: Training (3)	1973-82	54.00	11.38	North
	Technical (4)	1988-93	23.30	4.91	National
	Junior Sec (5)	1995-99	120.00	25.28	National
	Subtotal	1965-99	234.70	49.44	-
Third	University	1990-96	120.00	25.28	National
All	All	1965-99	474.70	100.00	All

Sources: (1) Ajayi, A.O. (1998) for junior secondary
 (2) Babalola, J.B., Sikwibele, A.L. & Adeyemi A. S. (1999)
 (3) I.D.A. (1990, Annex 10) for technical education

The volume of the primary education loan is important, but of more importance is the kind of assistance given. Table 3 reveals that the main elements of the project included procurement of textbooks of pupil (64.50%), library books (10.25%), training (3.67%), vehicles (19.33%), consulting and technical assistance (1.33%) and research and development (0.92%). These elements clearly reveal the Bank's perspective on the project. As earlier said a Bank project may be meant either to regulate the flow of foreign exchange to borrowers or to push the Bank's policies of strengthening borrower

capacities in key sectors. The mainstream position may however, be taken; in this position the merits of each extreme are grasped. As far as the primary education project in Nigeria is concerned, it was meant to disburse foreign capital to the country. There are two main reasons for this. First, the Bank did not give any financial support for the monitoring aspect of the project. This is an indication that the Bank has little or no qualitative or ameliorative concern for the project. If the project was meant to influence a particular policy, the Bank could have ensured that the project was on track, not minding the delays in disbursement which monitoring and formative evaluation could have caused the Bank. This argument is further strengthened by the Bank's attitudes toward delays in loan disbursement. Realizing that in spite of the fact that the closing date was June 30, 1997, only 10.45 percent of the project funds were disbursed as of October 21, 1996, the Bank pleaded with the government to disburse the remaining 89.15 percent of the loan within the remaining ten months. The issue of impact of a project was evidently not important to the World Bank at this time. To the Bank, the level of loan disbursement was the main indicator of project effectiveness. To the borrowers, the determinant of project effectiveness is the impact of the book project on the quality of instruction and enrolment.

TABLE 3.

Kind of World Bank assistance for Nigerian Primary and University Education in the 1990s

PROJECT ELEMENTS	AMOUNTS (US\$ MILLIONS)	
	PRIMARY SECTOR	UNIVERSITY SECTOR
Books	77.40	—
(a) Pupils textbook	(64.50)	
(b) Library books/journals	12.30	37.10
	(30.92)	(30.92)
Staff development/training	4.40	18.70
	(15.58)	(15.58)
Equipment/vehicles	23.20	29.50
	(19.33)	(24.58)
Research and development	1.10	1.20
	(0.92)	(1.00)
Maintenance/spare parts	—	4.30
		(3.58)
Expatriation payments	—	8.60
		(0.07)
TOTAL	120.00	120.00
	(100.00)	(100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages of totals

Sources: (1) Ajayi, O.A. (1998) for the primary figures

(2) IDA (1990) for the university figures

From the above discussion, it is not surprising that enrolment during the project life (1990-96) seemed to be declining (Ajayi, 1998). There were 276,854 classrooms, most of which were dilapidated, serving 15.5 million pupils, implying about 56 pupils per classroom instead of the acceptable norm of 40 pupils per class (Babalola, Sikwibele and Suleiman, 1999). Books were critical in achieving the objectives of the projects: to improve the quality of instruction and increase enrolment. Yet, even though a large proportion of the loans (74.75%) had gone to the procurement of books, the textbooks for primaries two to six were not available for pupil use. The primary one books which were available were not utilized in most schools as of 1998 since parents refused to pay the prescribed twenty Naira per book (Ajayi, 1998:7). Yet the World Bank was interested neither in financing the distribution aspect of the book project nor in its formative evaluation, which could have helped in identifying areas where corrective actions could have been needed.

The next section continues the discussion with a critical analysis of the second level education projects in Nigeria.

Second level education projects

In Nigeria, the second level education is mainly meant to provide a foundation for tertiary education. As an alternative, it is also meant to equip young men and women with vocational/technical skills in an environment of low public employment opportunities. As far as the World Bank is concerned, the secondary school system should prepare students for a job. The World Bank therefore, provides funds in abundance for rapidly expanding secondary school systems, but emphatically those with practical, work oriented curricula. Bank thinking for the second level education differs from those of government's, parents' and students' opinion in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Bank plays a dominant role in determining the final line of action. This is in spite of the fact that Bank projects are never solely Bank projects but enterprises undertaken in partnership with others.

Nigerian second level education projects were typical examples of projects where Bank-Borrower differences are fundamentally obvious. The first secondary education project supported financially by the World Bank in Nigeria was the US \$20.1 million credit agreement spanning the period March 1, 1965 to December 31, 1997. It was meant to increase secondary school enrolments, particularly, in Northern Nigeria (Table 2). It was meant to diversify secondary school curriculum contrary to the aspirations of parents and students. It was also meant to train craftsmen and technicians instead of the high-level manpower which the Ashby⁴ commissions of 1960 recommended for the economic growth of the country. In fact, at the time of Nigerian independence in 1960, there was a critical shortage of trained

manpower to fill the vacancies created by the exit of the Europeans. Hence, the country's need for foreign assistance at independence was for highly educated personnel at the key sectors of the economy. This was ignored by the World Bank second level loan to the new country.

The second World Bank Secondary Education Project (US \$17.3 million) was between 1972 and 1979. The loan was to assist Nigeria in her effort to rehabilitate the war-battered secondary schools in Eastern Nigeria, as well as to train teachers of technical subjects and to develop new and innovative curriculums for the secondary schools. The project ignored basic education as well as the training of high level manpower required for socioeconomic development of the war-torn region. Moreover, the amount of money offered was relatively small, considering the enormity of the problem.

The third World Bank Secondary Education Project (US \$54.0 million) was between 1973 and 1982. This project was aimed at assisting the Northern States of Nigeria to expand primary teacher training facilities and increase secondary school enrolments. Although the project was made to coincide with the universal primary education program at the national level, one expects that such a teacher-training project should cover the three regions in the country. It is important to note that projects one and three were aimed at developing the education sector in the northern part of Nigeria. Out of the cumulative total loan of US \$91.40 million signed in the country between 1965 and 1973, US \$74.1 or 91.4 percent went to the North while no attention was made to assist the UPE in the West. In fact, no effort was made by the Bank to keep politics out of its education lending in Nigeria. Instead of providing all regions in Nigeria with the resources and allowing local policy makers to determine what models of education they wanted, the World Bank brought along its own educational models. Evidence from the initial World Bank assistance for education in Nigeria reveals that the Breton Woods Institution did not welcome the strengthening of the Western Region's capacity to enforce its own UPE scheme and to argue powerfully for counter priorities to those proposed by the World Bank. Fortunately, time has proved that the Western Region's UPE was a much more effective approach to the training of its manpower than the programs that the World Bank had suggested. In fact, since the initial effort, many countries around the globe have adopted the Western Region's UPE. Today, UPE is a priority for many countries around the world. Moreover, the Western part of Nigeria is one of Africa's most educationally and socially advanced regions.

The fourth World Bank second-level education initiative was the Technical Education Project (US \$23.3 million), which became operational in 1988. It was meant to assist the national government in improving the quality and efficiency of middle-level technical manpower as well as the planning,

management and coordination of technical and vocational education. This project is an example of imposing curriculum on a reluctant borrower. The irony surrounding this Technical Education Project is that the Bank had been very much against the expansion of general academic secondary education, yet unknown to the Bank, the technical secondary schools were identical to the general schools. In fact, most of the technical equipment supplied under the project ended up in general secondary schools where there was lack of vocational and technical teachers. Today, it is doubtful if it is possible to have a trace of the impact of the US \$23.3 million technical education project in Nigeria. The project, in less than a decade, lost its research-based position. This is due to the fact that technical evidence, ironically from the World Bank research reports, favored a shift away from vocational education, because of the argument that vocational education could be more efficiently and effectively provided and financed by the private sector.

The fifth World Bank Secondary Education Project (US \$120 million) concentrated on the junior secondary schools. It spanned the period 1995 to 1999. It was meant to support the national government in upgrading the quality of junior secondary education in its attempts to move toward the Universal Basic Education (UBE). The project elements included strengthening quality control, facilitating planning and research, improving an existing curriculum, upgrading support services to schools, improving school administration/management and project management. This project is still too young for a critical analysis. However, it should be noted that the project has come at a time when the 6-3-3-4 (a 6-year primary, a 3-year junior secondary, a 3-year senior secondary and a 4-year university) education structure has been at its teething stage.

Table 2 reveals the misplaced sense of priority of the World Bank with respect to education between 1965 and 1995 in Nigeria. During these thirty years of World Bank assistance to education in the country, almost half of the loan monies went into supporting the second level education. Moreover, only the second level education enjoyed the Bank's support during the first twenty-five years of World Bank lending to education in Nigeria. The junior secondary education project aside, priority was given to training of primary school teachers while general and technical education was accorded equal but second priority. Worse still, there was an obvious geographical inequality in favor of the northern part of Nigeria between 1965 and 1995.

The political economy of primary and secondary education, as aided by the World Bank in Nigeria, have now been explored. The next section dwells on the third level of education.

Third level education project

The third level education is basically meant to produce the needed skilled manpower in the economy. Loans and grants from external aid and lending agencies, though marginal to the overall cost of higher education in Nigeria, have been assisting the Universities to gain access to the resources and expertise of the industrialized world. Although the World Bank's support for higher education started in 1963, the first Bank's assistance to Nigerian higher education occurred only in 1990. Before this time, the total foreign assistance to the universities in Nigeria was of the order of US \$8 million per year, the large proportion of which was devoted to research projects and twinning arrangements between foreign and Nigerian universities (IDA, 1990, Annex 7-7). In 1988, for instance, Nigerian universities received CAN \$958,435 and US \$2,000,000 for several research projects from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the Ford Foundations respectively. Between 1988 and 1991, European currency 9,150, 000 and UK £3,000,000 were received for various research projects from the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Official Development Assistant (ODA)/British Council respectively. In addition, US \$250,000 came in through UNESCO coupon donations from Embassies and book publishers as library grants by 1988. As a result of these and other unrecorded foreign aid to higher education in Nigeria, the World Bank was of the opinion that Nigeria has been Africa's leading borrower for higher education since 1986 (World Bank, 1994: 81.) This, however, is not the main reason for the late entrance of the World Bank into higher education lending for Nigeria.

Initially, World Bank lending for higher education was mainly directed toward institutions that train professionals and technicians for the economy or toward teachers to facilitate expansion of lower levels of education. As said earlier in this article, the World Bank neglected the training of skilled manpower when Nigeria actually needed such manpower to develop the young economy. Even now that the World Bank has started providing support to Nigerian institutions of higher learning, the focus has been on the universities that are responsible for advanced scientific training and research, reflecting the Bank's bias for knowledge-based economic growth strategies. Consequently, the Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other non-university institutions of higher learning have been neglected.

In line with the World Bank policies for adjustment, revitalization and expansion in African education systems (World Bank, 1988a), the first World Bank University Education Project (US \$120 million) was signed in 1990. This project was to assist the national government in its efforts to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of teaching and research in the

Federal universities. The elements included library books and journals (30.92%), staff development (15.58%), equipment (24.58%), consulting services (0.67%) research and development (1.00%), maintenance and spare parts (3.58%) and expatriation payments (0.07%). The only World Bank support for university education in Nigeria came at a time of increasing global skepticism about the extent of governmental support for higher education. The World Bank therefore viewed the development potential of higher education with restrictions on public supports. Consequently, the project was meant to encourage universities to reduce the recurrent cost per student borne by the government, to increase internally generated income, and to reduce over staffing and other areas of wastage. From these conditions, it has become clear that this Bank's university project was mainly to push the global objective of market operation in education. Unfortunately, the experiment suffers from unrealistic over-generalizations. Several of the strings attached to the Bank loans were made ineffective by social, political and economic realities within which the Bank project was executed. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the original assessment done by the Bank failed to take into consideration input from important domestic stakeholders. Had Nigerians been adequately consulted and allowed to participate effectively in the design of these programs, many of the problems that emerged later could have been anticipated and dealt with at the planning stage.

In short, considering the facts on the ground, it was not reasonable to reduce the recurrent expenditure per student, which became obviously too low both in absolute and in real terms. By the 1991/1992 fiscal year, Nigeria was spending US \$671.62 on each university student, an amount which was judged to be very low, compared to those of universities in the developed countries (IDA, 1990, Babalola, 1997, World Bank, 1988b and Babalola, 1999). Yet, the World Bank made the release of the loan conditional on evidence of further reductions in the unit expenditure per student in Nigerian Federal Universities.

The World Bank further made it mandatory for Nigeria's federal universities to remove from payroll excess academic staff in order to receive the third *tranche* of the IDA loan. The Bank's criterion for determining what constitutes excess academic staff was defective. In fact, the records show that most of the country's university teachers were over-stressed with high workloads at the same time that the World Bank's measures were indicating staff under-utilization. This situation has been aggravated by the rate at which university teachers have been departing the system for more economically rewarding opportunities overseas.

Non-formal education project

More important than the relatively late entry of the World Bank into the primary and university education sectors is its total neglect of the non-

formal education. This is in spite of the Bank's belief in the dual education strategy in which the goal of universal primary education was considered financially unrealistic in the developing world. The assumption was that the non-formal education sector would capture the excess enrolment resulting from supply problems and population growth. Owing to data collection problems, it is not easy to probe further into the World Bank lending for the non-formal sector in Nigeria.

Female education project

Female education has recently been receiving increased global attention. This is due to the fact that such education has been found to have a significant positive impact on social and economic development. In the 1990s lending for female education was justified on the ground of international equity for the sexually disadvantaged groups in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa where there are significant gender gaps in educational development. Nigeria has increasingly suffered a declining trend in female enrolment (gross ratios) at its first and second levels of education following SAP [See note 3] in 1986 (Babalola, Lungwangwa and Adeyinka, 1999), yet the World Bank has not considered it necessary to push relevant reforms, through its loan monies, to the country.

Developments between 1999 and 2001

Nigeria experienced unbroken military rules between December 31 1983 and May 29, 1999. During this period, four prominent dictators (Mohammed Buhari, 1983-1985; Ibrahim Babangida, 1985-1993; Sunny Abacha, 1993-1998; and Abdul-Salam Abubakar, 1998-1999) ruled the country in such a way that there was an increasing strained relationship between Nigeria and the international community. In spite of this, the World Bank, as explained above, still managed to support education in the country to some extent. However, on the 29th of May 1999, Nigeria joined the club of democratic countries of the world and therefore, gained a global acceptability. The World Bank showed a renewed interest in financing the country's education systems. The Olusegun Obasanjo civilian government quickly invited the World Bank and other donor organizations to assist in the funding of the collapsing systems of education. Therefore, the World Bank, working in conjunction with the Federal Government, came up with some initiatives, one of which was titled "Nigerian Universities System Innovation Project." The project was meant to reform the university system in line with the demands of globalization and the open market economy.

Nevertheless, there was tough resistance from the academic community to the involvement of the World Bank in financing education in Nigeria. According to *The Newsline*, (a bulletin of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, Volume 3, Issue 1, March, 2001), ASUU, for in-

stance, believes that the Obasanjo's government was making an attempt to foster the World Bank's neo-colonial agenda on education in Nigeria in general and Universal Basic Education (UBE) in particular. This 'intellectual colonization' was not acceptable to ASUU, because foreign donors that dictate and control the content of research fund a major proportion of academic research in Nigeria, and what have emerged are funders' research programs, not research set by Nigeria's national goals. ASUU further argued that most Nigerian researchers spent a lot of time making international linkages and networking to legitimize them as deserving recipients-agents of the donors. In fact, ASUU saw the involvement of the World Bank in Nigerian education, through projects such as the "Nigerian Universities System Innovation Project," as a violation of autonomy rights and political-intellectual sovereignty. In one of its memoranda (dated November 14, 2000) to the Minister of Education in Nigeria, ASUU alleged that the Minister was being a sales agent to the World Bank to take over the control of Nigeria's knowledge-capital just as the World Bank and the IMF have taken over the economy through the Structural Adjustment Programme. Consequently, the World Bank has been forced to hold back its initial zeal to finance innovations in Nigerian education, at least for now.

There is a lesson for the international donors from the recent resistance from the academic community to the World Bank's initiative in Nigeria. Those who feel that their interests will be adversely affected may stop reforms, particularly if these critics are well informed and organized to mobilize confrontation.

Conclusion

From the above discussions, the over thirty-year World Bank lending for education in Nigeria has yielded a minimal outcome. Sub-sector and geographical inequities as well as borrower-lender differences in educational priorities and curricula have characterized the projects. Moreover, there have been evidences of insincerity in the Bank's commitment to project effectiveness and sustenance, particularly with respect to those education investments that were meant to disburse foreign capital to Nigeria. In a similar vein, the Bank has been unrealistic in its knowledge-base strategy of development in the sense that most of the technical foundations of the Bank's projects in Nigeria were based on Washington's views rather than on domestic stakeholders' inputs. This has led to many project failures, especially in contract enforcement, which in most cases, were immediately hidden from the World Bank.

As suggested by Babalola, Sikwibele and Suleiman (1999), if Nigeria must use World Bank funds, efforts must be made to ensure equity, efficiency and effectiveness in loan management. There is need to improve local analytical

capacity, so that individual communities can set and defend their own educational priorities and manage the funds efficiently, effectively and equitably. Nigeria, however, has a pro-active role to play by providing a loan-friendly environment, introducing loan-attracting reforms in education, improving its knowledge-based negotiation strategies and by becoming more transparent and result-oriented in its project management. All these should be done with the country's interests and values in mind.

NOTES

1. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was initiated by the IMF/World Bank to correct the structural defects of most of the developing economies that applied for the IMF loans. Conditions for obtaining a loan from the IMF include reducing public expenditure and also devaluing currencies. These measures, when applied in Nigeria, have had a negative impact on every government institution, including education. The implementation of the SAP had devastating effects on public expenditure on education, the purchasing power of teachers, quality of education, access to education and the gender gap in the provision of education at all levels. Between 1984 and 1988 for instance, Nigeria experienced about an 8 % reduction in the share of education in the national budget and public spending per student fell by 32.96%. Consequently, there were, in most years, downward trends in the gross enrolment ratio, female participation in education, completion rate and performance in international examinations
2. Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa that was colonized by the Europeans and fought in the first and Second World Wars. The Second World War had a profound effect on Africa as a whole and on Nigeria in particular. Many of those who fought in the second war brought back nationalist and anti-racist ideas with them and fought for independence from colonial authorities. Unlike most countries in the Americas and Asia, Nigeria and most African Countries attained independence with no bloodshed. Yet Africans are very careful not to permit neo-colonialism under any guise, even in education loans.
3. Indonesia III was the first World Bank Project to support book production for the use of primary school pupils in Indonesia. The cost structure of the Nigerian Primary Education Project closely reflected that of the Indonesia Project. The World Bank started granting loans to primary education in 1970 and started the Indonesian project in 1973. Because it was a successful experiment, the World Bank adopted the project as a model after which other subsequent projects would be based. Since 1973, the World Bank has gradually shifted from civil works such as construction of schools, colleges and administrative buildings to input financing designed to improve the quality and the administration of education in general and primary education specifically. The tilt is now towards aid for textbooks, teacher training, and laboratory equipment, learning assessments, examination systems, educational administration, technical assistance and research.
4. After Sir Eric Ashby.

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