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Proposing an Action-Implementation Model for Literacy and Vocational Skills Empowerment of Out-of-School Populations in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

This paper proposed an action-implementation model for literacy and vocational skills empowerment of out-of-school populations which Nigeria should adopt in reducing youth unemployment, social exclusion, and vulnerability to crime extremism. The self-designed model arose due to the persistent challenges of out-of-school children and youth in Nigeria. It also addressed functional literacy deficits, linked literacy with livelihood skills, and provided an operational framework for implementing it through already established structures. Using a qualitative analytical approach, the paper reviewed the key factors exacerbating the high prevalence of out-of-school children and youth in Nigeria and the multiple threats and risks they posed to national development and security to justify the need and urgency of addressing the threats holistically which the model was constructed to achieve. The main features of the model, comprising the philosophy, the guiding principles, the target population, the structural components, the implementation framework, the funding strategy, and the expected outcomes, were clearly discussed. The paper recommended how the model should be practically implemented across government ministries and agencies in Nigeria and concluded that the model is a powerful, integrated solution to the crisis of out-of-school populations in Nigeria and most suitable for adoption in policy development, donor proposals, non-governmental programmes, and theoretical framework in academic research because it aligns with the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional realities of Nigeria.

Keywords: Action-implementation model, literacy, vocational skills empowerment, out-of-school children, adolescents and youth

Introduction

The crisis of out-of-school populations, comprising out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth, in Nigeria has continued to constitute one of most daunting challenges in the education sector which is yet to be adequately addressed. Nigeria has one of the out-of-school populations in the world, with estimates of up to 20 million (UNESCO, 2023; Nwoke, Oyiga, & Cochrane, 2024). Similarly, UNICEF estimates show that one in five of the world's out-of-school children, around 10.5 primary-aged children, is in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2022, 2024). Persistent exclusion of out of school populations undermines Nigeria's human capital development (World Bank, 2023).

The large number out-of-school populations constitutes a significant risk factor for increased crime and insecurity, including insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, social unrest and vulnerability to radicalisation, weak civic participation and governance challenges, psychological and social dislocation, child labour and exploitation, weak social cohesion, reinforcement of intergenerational cycles of poverty, and marginalisation (Emordi, Ikedinma, & Olufemi, 2024).

The out-of-school populations are not the threat themselves, but the threat is Nigeria's inability to integrate them into education, skills development, and productive citizenship. The existing educational policies and interventions in Nigeria have not yet adequately addressed the crisis of out-of-school populations. Even though, there are some policies, programmes, and reforms aimed at reducing out-of-school rates and expanding access; however, significant gaps exist in implementation, reach, and measurable impact (Israel & Napoleon, 2025). For example, national counts of out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth have not meaningfully declined despite the interventions (Nwoke, Oyiga, & Cochrane, 2024). Similarly, funding, infrastructure, teacher capacity, and accountability mechanisms remain weak and the root causes such as poverty, insecurity, and social barriers have not been sufficiently tackled in the interventions and reforms (Usi, Asabe, & Ibi, 2025). In addition, these interventions and reforms have largely focused on different separate interventions for both educational and skills empowerment.

To ensure national development and security, long-term stability, economic growth, and attainment of the sustainable development goal 4 (SDG 4) in Nigeria, there is the urgent need for an integrated, concrete and sustainable action model worthy of implementation to safeguard the future of the affected populations. It is in this context that this paper proposed and designed an integrated action-implementation model for literacy and vocational skills empowerment of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth in Nigeria.

Defining Out-of-School Populations and the Measurement Age Range - Out-of-school populations are defined by international organisations and scholars in the same context and

overview. Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth, often referred to as out-of-school populations, are defined as the number of children and young people in the official age range for a given level of education who are not enrolled in pre-primary, primary, secondary or higher levels of education, or those who have left formal education permanently or temporarily (UNESCO, 2023; UNESCO Institute for Statistics & Global Education Monitoring Report, 2023), or those who are excluded from formal schooling due to barriers like poverty, conflict, disability, displacement, and gender discrimination (UNICEF, 2025). The age range measurement indicators are: [out-of-school children, 5-11 years; extended out of school children, 5-14 years; out-of-school adolescents, 12-17 years; and out-of-school youth, 15-24] (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020; UNESCO, 2023). The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Framework (UNESCO/GEM) traces out-of-school populations as central to tracking progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 which stresses inclusive, equitable, and quality education (Nwoke, 2024; Smith, 2025).

Key Factors Exacerbating High Prevalence of Out-of-School Populations in Nigeria

The key factors influencing the high prevalence of out-of-school populations in Nigeria include:

- i. **Poverty-related barriers** - Poverty is widely recognised as the most important factors contributing to the high out-of-school populations in Nigeria. Many families don't have the financial capability to bear both the direct and indirect costs of schooling; children, adolescents, and youth from low-income homes are often compelled to work to support family survival, thereby engaging in street hawking, motorbike riding, popularly called *Okada* riders, farming or other menial jobs instead of attending school. Invariably, they join the informal economy early by forgoing school to earn immediate income. Therefore, poverty does not only limit entry to school but also increases dropout rate.
- ii. **The insecurity challenges** - The insecurity challenges prevalent in the Northern region of Nigeria, where out-of-school populations are more dominate, constitute another key contributor to the crisis. For example, banditry, kidnapping, and insurgency have led to disruption of schooling or forced school closures, thereby making children, adolescents, and youth of schooling going-age afraid to attend or go back to school. Similarly, teachers also abandon schools in these high-risk areas. Therefore, insecurity does not only keep children, adolescents, and youth out of classroom physically, but also destroy the entire education systems in conflict prone areas (Alkali, Adamu & Mele, 2024; Ijov, 2025).
- iii. **Limited/unavailable physical and instructional infrastructure** - Sometimes, children, adolescents, and youth are not motivated to go to school due to inadequate physical and instructional facilities. Infrastructural deficits such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of toilets, clean water, and

libraries demotivate them to go to school. Similarly, in many states in Nigeria, especially in the rural areas, there is the prevalence of shortage of qualified teachers. The resultant effects of this are low motivation among children and youth to remain in school and poor learning outcomes (Ijov, 2025).

iv. **Education underfunding** - In 2026, the federal government budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is 6.1% or N3.52 trillion from the proposed budget of N58.18 trillion (FGN, 2026 Appropriation Bill). The 6.1% allocation represents a decline from 7.2% in 2022, 7% in 2023, 7.9% in 2024, and 7.3% in 2025. These fluctuations in the budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria have consistently fallen below the recommended benchmarks of UNESCO. In planning and prioritising education financing, UNESCO, alongside other global partners in the SDG 4/Education 2030 Framework for Action, recommended at least 4-6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure as financial benchmarks for government investment in education, such (UNESCO, 2025) This implies that the federal government of Nigeria has consistently demonstrated poor prioritisation of education relative to other sectors.

v. **Social-cultural beliefs and practices** - In some communities, especially in the north-west and parts of the north-east, Nigeria, western formal education is not accorded equal priority for boys and girls. Early marriage and domestic responsibilities disproportionately push girls out of school or prevent them from going to school (Kukawa, Adamu & Gajiram, 2025).

vi. **Policy adjustment of federal government of Nigeria** - The policy adjustments of federal government of Nigeria from 2023 till date which are aimed at stabilising the economic have yet to turn into tangible welfare gain for many households in Nigeria. For example, it has been projected that no fewer than 141 million Nigerians will live in poverty in 2026 as a result of weak real income growth and high cost of living (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2026). The implication of this is that many low-income households in Nigeria will not be able to send their children to schools or withdraw them from schools.

vii. **Child labour phenomenon** - The need for extra household income especially in low-income households in Nigeria pushes many children, adolescents, and youth out of school to complement family earnings by engaging in street vending, agricultural labour, or informal transport services. This has increased dropout rates of children attending school as families come to rely on income from their children (Amedu & Ossai, 2023).

viii. **Health related challenges and psychological stress** - Health related challenges and psychological stress also play vital role in pushing children, adolescents, and youth out of school. For example, if they have persistent illnesses and poor health or there is inadequate health support in schools, this will increase absenteeism and dropout rates of school children. Similarly, psychological stress suffered by children in conflict and displacement prone areas has further

reduced school participation by children, adolescents, or youth (Oyeyemi, Chukwudum, & Okenwa-Fadele, 2025).

Multiple Threats Posed by Out-of-School Populations to Nigeria's Development

The out-of-school populations pose multiple threats to Nigeria's development and social cohesion. The threats include:

- i. **National security and stability** - Out-of-school populations have become highly vulnerable for recruitment by armed criminal non-state actors to perpetrate terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and communal violence (Constance, 2025). Therefore, if this threat is not urgently addressed, Nigeria's counter terrorism efforts will not produce any desired result and there will be entrenched cycles of insecurity and instability.
- ii. **Political violence and electoral manipulation** - Out-of-school populations usually constitute large number of thugs recruited by politicians to perpetrate political violence and electoral manipulation. Therefore, if this threat is not urgently addressed, electoral fraud, violence, and instability will continue to manifest in Nigeria's political landscape.
- iii. **Loss of human capital and slower economic growth** – High number of out-of-school populations will continue to reduce Nigeria's skilled labour pool, hamper innovative development of ideas, lower productivity levels, and widen the inequality gap. The consequences of this are slower economic productivity and growth. Similarly, they will remain unemployed or underemployed since they possess no form of education or skills. This will lead to an entrenched cycle of poverty in Nigeria.
- iv. **Increased social vices** - With high number of out-of-school populations, there will be an increased rise of social vices in Nigeria. They are easily susceptible to drug abuse, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, street begging, and armed robbery. The consequences of this will be moral decadence, strain on social institutions, and burden on state resources through diversion of resources meant for meaningful development to crisis management.
- v. **Widened social alienation and exclusion** - Out-of-school populations usually experience alienation, marginalisation, and stigmatisation. Consequently, they exhibit weak attachment to personal and national values. The outcome of this is erosion in social cohesion and national unity.
- vi. **Poor health outcomes and rapid population growth** - Out-of-school populations are more likely to experience poor health literacy, early pregnancy, high maternal mortality and reproductive health knowledge and spread of communicable diseases. Poor health outcomes and rapid population growth manifested by the out-of-school populations will lead to increase burden on public health and resources to the Nigerian state.

vii. **Weal civil and political participation** - Out-of-school populations are less likely to understand civic/political rights and responsibilities. They are more likely to display apathy to governance and become easy targets for manipulation and misinformation since they are weak citizens.

Proposed Literacy-Vocational Action-Implementation Model for Out-of-School Populations in Nigeria

Arising from the multiple threats pose by the out-of-school populations to Nigeria’s development, there is the urgent need for government to seriously tackle the problem in a holistic manner. The most effective model that Nigeria can adopt to achieve this task is produced below and it contains the following components: the philosophy and guiding principles, target population, structural components, institutional implementation framework, funding strategy, and expected outcomes. These components are presented in a diagrammatic framework below:

Fig 1: Proposed Literacy-Vocational Action-Implementation Model for Out-of-School Children and Adolescents in Nigeria

Philosophy	Guiding Principles	Target Population	Structure	Institutional Implementation Framework	Funding and Sustainability Strategy	Expected Outcomes
To ensure immediate livelihood relevance, and social reintegration	Inclusivity, flexibility, labour market relevance, and partnership	Out-of-school children (6-14) Adolescents (15-19) Youth (20-24)	Phase 1: Identification, mapping and mobilisation. Phase 2: Building functional literacy linked to everyday life. Phase 3: Integrated vocational skills development. Phase 4: Provision of Psychosocial support and protection. Phase 5: Transition pathways and economic empowerment. Phase 6: Monitoring, Evaluation and Scale-up.	Lead Agencies: i. Federal Ministry of Education ii. UBEC/SUBEB iii. NMEC Supporting Ministries: i. Ministry of Labour & Employment ii. Ministry of Youth Development iii. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs. Relevant Stakeholders i. NGOs, CBOs, FBOs ii. Private sector iii. Traditional & Religious Institutions.	i. Federal & State budget allocations ii. UBEC matching grants iii. Donor funding (UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO) iv. Private sector through CSR v. Community co-financing	Short Term: i. Improved literacy & numeracy ii. Increased programme retention. Medium-Term: i. Employable skills acquisition. ii. Reduction in child & street labour Long-Term: i. Poverty reduction ii. Social cohesion & national security iii. Contribution to SDGs 4, 8, & 10.

A self-constructed model by the authors.

A detailed explanation and discussion of this model is presented thus:

Step 1: Clear Statement on Core Philosophy - The model begins with clear statement on the core philosophy which is: *To equip out-of-school populations with literacy and vocational skills empowerment for livelihood relevance, retentive learning, and social reintegration.*

Step 2: The Guiding Principles - The principles of the model’s implementation should be based on the following: *inclusivity* (all out-of-school populations are involved irrespective of gender, disability, region, religion, or location); *flexibility* (Learning mode is highly flexible, taking into consideration age, learning pace, and mobility of the out-of-school population category); *community ownership and cultural sensitivity* (the model is structured on community ownership and takes into due consideration the cultural sensitivity of each community); labour market relevance (the model is designed to ensure that skills and knowledge acquired are relevant to the labour market demands); *sustainability and partnership* (multidimensional partnership of all relevant stakeholders, i.e. government, traditional community leadership, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, and private sector will help the sustainability of the model); and protection and safeguarding (the model is designed to protect and safeguard the needs, interests, desires, and love for out-of-school populations in Nigeria).

Step 3: The target population - The model provides a clear identification of the overall age range (5-17 years) of out-of-school populations in Nigeria denoted below:

Category	Age Range	School Levels
Out-of-school children	5-11 years	Primary school
Out of school adolescents	12-14 years	Lower secondary school
Out-of-school youth	15-17 years	Senior secondary school

The out-of-school populations in Nigeria are mostly found in four areas. They are:

- *The North-West and North-East geopolitical zones* (dues to poverty and household economic hardship, armed conflict and insurgency, the Almajiri system, early marriage and gender inequality affecting girls).
- *Remote rural settlements particularly in North-Central zone* where schools are far from communities and few trained teachers.
- *Urban slums and informal settlements* particularly in South-West, South-East, and South-South Nigeria, and
- *Internally displaced persons (IDP) camps* in conflict-affected areas in North-East, Nigeria.

Step 4: Action-Implementation Phases - The model presents and discusses six interconnected action and implementation phases, the activities to be engaged, and the key implementation actors of the activities. The phases are:

Phase 1: This phase entails the identification, mapping, and mobilisation of out-of-school populations in Nigeria as discussed above and this can be achieved through community census

(ward-level mapping) to be undertaken by traditional rulers, religious leaders, civil society organisations (CSOs). The local government education authorities (LGEA) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) should coordinate this phase.

Phase 2: Provision of Literacy and Numeracy Skills – This phase entails the provision of literacy and numeracy skills linked to everyday life and work to the out-of-school populations such as reading and writing in English and mother tongue, functional numeracy, digital literacy in basic device use, civic education, and life skills. The delivery approach should include flexible schedules [evenings/weekends], mobile learning centres, radio-assisted instructions, peer-supported group learning, and new-literate supported assistants.

Phase 3: Provision of Vocational Skills – This phase entails equipping the out-of-school identified populations with employable and market-driven skills alongside literacy skills. Literacy and vocational skills must be provided concurrently, not sequentially. The skills clusters should include, among others, information and communication technology (ICT), tailoring, phone repair, and catering, agribusiness, animal husbandry, agro-processing, crafts, renewable energy skills. The literacy lessons e.g. reading manuals, writing invoices, measuring materials, and calculations should be embedded into vocational skills acquisitions.

Phase 4: Provision of Psychosocial Support and Protection – This phase involves the provision of services that can reduce trauma, vulnerability, and social exclusion for the out-of-school populations. The components should include counselling, child protection, and health/nutrition issues while the key actors should be Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, and community social workers.

Phase 5: Provision of Transition Pathways and Economic Empowerment – This phase entails the provision of sustainable post-training pathways and economic empowerment. Such pathways should include formal education (reintegration into schools), apprenticeship (placement with certified artisans), employment (through linkage with industries), and entrepreneurship (through the provision of start-up support mechanisms such as starter kits/tools, micro-grants/soft loans, cooperative formation, and business linkage).

Phase 6: Development of Monitoring, Evaluation and Scale-Up Mechanisms – This phase entails constant monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the model to ensure quality, accountability, and sustainability. The key indicators should contain literacy attainment levels, vocational competency certification, employment/self-employment rates, retention and completion rates, and gender parity index while digital learners tracking system, community scorecards, and periodic impact assessments should serve as the tools.

Step 5: Implementation Framework of the Model – There are many already established institutions/structures in Nigeria that can greatly assist in the implementation of the model. Therefore, the operational and empowerment capacities of these institutions/structures in the implementation of the model can be reinvigorated and strengthened. The proposed lead agencies are Federal Ministry of Education (FME), National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) State Universal Basic Education Commission (SUBEB).

For example, the Federal Ministry of Education should provide policy direction, institutional coordination, and quality assurance for the implementation of the model while NMEC can help, among others, in advocacy and public awareness, operational planning, implementation strategies, curriculum development and learning materials, training and capacity building for facilitators. UBEC can help, among others, to establish alternative learning centres for out-of-school population, extend basic education to marginalised communities, provide funding and resource support for construction or renovation of community centres, teaching materials, and vocational equipment, coordinate the implementation of the model at state and local levels, collaborate with NMEC and FME to integrate the model in basic education curriculum. SUBEC can help, among others, to develop state-specific implementation strategies of the model and integrate it into existing basic education initiatives.

Supporting ministries can play complementary and enabling roles in implementing the model through employment support, youth engagement, poverty alleviation, agricultural training, financial planning, inter-governmental coordination, and health services necessary for result-oriented success of the model. For example, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment can support the model by linking literacy training with labour market opportunities through job placement services for trained beneficiaries. The Federal Ministry of Youth Development can support youth entrepreneurship grants and other start-up initiatives. The Ministry of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Affairs can support policy coordination across ministries while the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation can provide social protection and conditional support for the out-of-school populations and linking beneficiaries to poverty alleviation and empowerment schemes.

Similarly other supporting ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security provide training in modern agricultural practices and support youth participation in agricultural value chains. The Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning can help allocate more budgetary resources for the implementation of the model to ensure financial sustainability and integration of the model into national development plans. Lastly, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare can help deliver basic

health services for beneficiaries, promote mental health and psychosocial support for the out-of-school populations, and support nutrition and wellness initiatives in learning centres. In essence, supporting ministries can play multidimensional roles in the implementation of the model in Nigeria. Furthermore, non-state actors and community institutions including traditional leadership, civic society organisations, non-governmental organisations community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, and the private sector can provide community legitimacy resources, training opportunities, and social mobilisation to complement the efforts of the lead agencies and support ministries discussed above. For example, traditional leadership can encourage families to enrol out-of-school populations in empowerment programmes, provide community spaces for literacy and vocational training, and can also engage in community mobilisation and sensitization. Civil society organisations conduct research, policy dialogue, and community awareness campaigns, non-governmental organisations can help establish literacy and vocational training centres, mobilise donor funding and local support, and facilitate capacity-building for facilitators and instructors. Furthermore, community-based organisations can help to organise community learning groups and study-circles as well as support local monitoring and model supervision; faith-based religious organisations can help in providing venues for literacy classes and vocational, support community outreach, and social welfare services, and offer scholarships or financial support for vulnerable learners. Lastly, private sector organisations can help support the implementation of the model through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, supply modern technology and training equipment, and provide vocational training facilities and apprenticeship opportunities.

Step 6: Funding and Sustainability Strategy of the Model - The model makes provision for the funding and sustainability strategy of the model's implementation in Nigeria. The proposed funding and sustainability strategy includes (i) federal and state budgetary allocations, (ii) UBEC matching grants, (iii) donor funding from international development partners such as UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO, among others, (iv) private sector's corporate social responsibility, and (v) community co-financing

Step 7: Perceived Expected Outcomes - The short-term, medium-term, and long-term perceived expected outcomes of the model if effectively implemented in Nigeria are:

Perceived Short-Term Expected Outcomes – In the short term, the effective implementation of the model is expected to help to (i) improve literacy and numeracy skills of out-of-school population in Nigeria, (ii) help enhance programme retention because learners will be more engaged in learning as a result of the economic relevance of the model, (iii) literacy will be taught through vocational content and not through abstract textbooks, (iv) flexible delivery of the model will fit learners' real

lives experiences, (v) provision of psychosocial support will strengthen learners commitment and drives higher enrolment and lowers drop-out rates.

Perceived Medium-Term Expected Outcomes - In the medium term, the effective implementation of the model is expected to (i) help ensure that the out-of-school populations acquire employable skills, (ii) help in the reduction in child labour and street life such as hawking, scavenging, and begging since this model directly links learning with income-generating skills, (iii) help in the absorption of street children, adolescents, and youth into transitional learning pathways, (iv) help in the replacement of hazardous and exploitative labour with safe skills acquisition, and (v) help in the removal of children, adolescents, and youth from the streets.

Perceived Long-Term Expected Outcomes - In the long term, the effective implementation of the model is expected to help ensure poverty reduction, social cohesion and national security.

Suitability of the Model to the Nigerian Context

The model is most suitable to the Nigerian context for many reasons:

1. **Suitable in addressing functional literacy deficits** – Majority of the out-of-school population lack functional literacy which limits their participation in economic, civic, and social life. This model allows literacy to be delivered through context-specific community-based interventions.
2. **Suitable for linking literacy with livelihood skills** – Traditional literacy programmes don't often produce the desired results because they are significantly detached from economic realities. Therefore, integrating literacy with vocational skills such as tailoring, agriculture, digital skills, carpentry, or mechanics, among others, helps increase motivation for enrolment and sustainability of the model.
3. **Alignment with national education goals and three SDG goals** – This model aligns with the objectives and education goals of the Federal Ministry of Education as contained in the National Policy on Education. It also align with the global framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – especially SDG 4, 8, and 10. For SDG 4, the model will help provide learning and vocational skills acquisition to the out-of-school populations, for SDG 8, it will help provide market-relevant vocational skills to the out-of-school populations, thereby reducing youth unemployment and underemployment, and for SDG 10, it will help improve social mobility, social inclusion, and civic participation of out-of-school populations in governance.

4. **Suitable for enhancing social stability and security** – Empowerment of out-of-school populations through this model can help reduce youth unemployment, social exclusion, and vulnerability to crime or extremism, thereby contributing to community stability and security.
5. **Suitable for easy implementation through existing institutions/structures** – Nigeria already has institutions/structures like NMEC, UBEC, SUBEB and supporting ministries that can provide a policy and operational framework for implementing the model.
6. **Suitable as a community-based delivery mechanism** – The use of community learning centres, NGOs, community-based organisations, and faith-based organisations which help to serve as local vocational hubs will make the implementation of the model practical even in rural and marginalised areas.
7. **Suitable for integration into informal apprenticeship systems** – Nigeria already has a strong informal apprenticeship culture. Therefore, this model can help build on this system by incorporating structured literacy training into vocational apprenticeships.

Conclusion

The paper has designed an action and implementation literacy and vocational empowerment model which government can adopt to tackle the crisis of out-of-school populations in Nigeria. The model is a powerful, integrated solution to the challenges of out-of-school populations in Nigeria and most suitable for adoption in policy development, for donor proposals, for non-governmental programmes, and for theoretical framework in academic research because it aligns with the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional realities of Nigeria. The paper recommended some set of strategies that Nigeria can adopt to maintain the long-term impact, scalability, and local ownership of the model and concluded that if the recommendations are strongly adhered to, the crisis of out-of-school populations in Nigeria would have been effectively tackled. Lastly, the suitability of the model to the Nigerian context was also discussed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward to ensure the institutionalisation and practical implementation of the model across ministries and agencies in Nigeria:

1. **Adaptability of the model to cultural, economic and geographical factors** – It is important to state that cultural factors (gender norms and roles, language barriers, religious beliefs, and community support), economic factors (poverty and household income, cost of participation, employment or income-generating opportunities, and funding sustainability), and geographical

factors (rural and urban locations, conflict-affected zones, transport and infrastructure, as well as climate and seasonal factors) can either facilitate or hinder participation of out-of-school populations in literacy and vocational programmes and the effective implementation of the model. Therefore, to make this model succeed, it must be made adaptable to cultural norms, mitigate economic and geographical challenges using these strategies: (i) community engagement with traditional and religious leaders, (ii) provision of financial incentives or support to low-income households, (iii) multilingual curricula to accommodate local languages, and (iv) linking vocational skills to local economic opportunities.

2. Roles of the Federal Ministry of Education and State Ministries of Education - The roles of the Federal Ministry of Education and State Ministries of Education are clearly stated thus: It should develop policy oversight and integrate the model into national education framework, align the curriculum with national education standards, and coordinate the stakeholders' activities and funding framework. Furthermore, vocational and entrepreneurial skills such as tailoring, agribusiness, digital skills, among others, should be embedded into the curricula to enable trained out-of-school children, adolescents, and youth to generate income while Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) should provide funding support for curriculum development, research, and funding support for the impact evaluation of the model. Similarly, State Ministries of Education should contextualise and sustain the model at state level, adapt the model to state education priorities, and provide oversight for monitoring, evaluation, and data collection.

3. Roles of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development - The Ministry should promote the adoption of the model as part of youth empowerment strategies, anchor youth-oriented skills acquisition, and facilitate partnerships with state youth agencies.

4. Roles of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and SUBEBs - The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) should serve as the main implementer of the model at the basic education level, deploy the model's programmes in out-of-school learning centres; and train facilitators in literacy and vocational components while the State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should ensure state-level implementation and resource allocation, oversee the implementation of the model in local centres, provide funding and infrastructure, and monitor delivery outcomes.

5. Roles of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) - NBTE should certify and accredit vocational modules of the model, ensure competencies meet national TVET standards, and develop competency-based assessment framework.

6. Roles of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) - NERDC should be mandated to develop multilingual literacy curricula that start with children mother tongues

and progressively move to English Language to enhance comprehension and retention. Similarly, life skills such as financial literacy, health education, conflict resolution, and civic engagement should be integrated into the curricula to enable children, adolescents and youth to participate meaningfully in their communities.

7. Roles of the Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) and NYSC - TRCN should register and certify the facilitators who will implement the model; set professional development standards, promote continuing professional learning, and ensure quality instruction and professionalism. Furthermore, facilitators should be trained and empowered to use short message service (SMS), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), e.g., *894#, radio programmes, and offline mobile apps to enhance the delivery of literacy contents and support learners' practice. Similarly, shared digital learning hubs, with tablets, where children can access content and receive tutoring should be set-up. Furthermore, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should integrate the model into the primary assignment segment of the corps scheme, develop young graduates as the model's facilitators, and facilitate community mobilisation.

8. Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships - Government-civil society alliance should be established to coordinate NGOs, CBOs, and other relevant stakeholders for shared data, standards, and resource mobilisation. Similarly, private sector business enterprises should be encouraged to invest in literacy programmes as part of their corporate social responsibility and talent development channels. Furthermore, vulnerable group support such as child protection, psychosocial support, and disability-inclusive education should be provided to ensure all children, adolescents, and youth benefit equitably.

9. Adoption of Blended Financing Plan and Performance-based Incentives - The federal government of Nigeria is advised to adopt blended financing plan to ensure diversified and sustainable financing of the implementation of the model by combining government budgetary allocation with donor funds, private sector contributions, and social impact bonds. Similarly, government is also advised to adopt performance-based incentives by allocating funds based on results and quality indicators in order to encourage efficient and effective delivery of the model.

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