

Effect of United Nations Development Programmes on Quality of Primary Education in Abuja

Onwukwe Maureen Kelechi & Ossai Onyeka Peter

Department of Public Administration

Nasarawa State University, Keffi

Corresponding author: onwukwe-maureen@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study is to examine the effect of United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) on Education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (measured by financial resources, policy implementation and government commitment). Education plays a pivotal role in shaping societies and fostering sustainable development. Grounded in the context of improving access to quality, and equity in education, this research investigates the extent to which UNDP initiatives have contributed to educational advancements in the FCT. The study employs a survey research design to analyse the relationship between UNDP and access to quality education as well as the challenges and successes of the programme. A total of 278 respondents were selected randomly for the study. The data for the study was collected through a close-ended questionnaire and subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentage technique. Findings revealed that UNDP programmes have not significantly impacted on the quality of education in the FCT, Abuja. Again, the challenge faced majorly is that of infrastructural deficits and evidence from the research revealed that the greatest success achieved with the UNDP initiative in education is the synergy among stakeholders. In conclusion, this study contributes to understanding how UNDP initiatives shape education in the FCT, highlighting successes and challenges. The study recommends improve funding to ensure the sustainability of intervention and the actives participation of community. The findings offer insights for policymakers, educators, and development practitioners aiming to enhance education within the region.

Keywords: financing, Functional, education, access, equity, capacity building, community engagement.

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental driver for sustainable development and societal progress. It serves as a catalyst for economic growth, social mobility, and poverty reduction. In this context, international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), play a crucial role in supporting and advancing educational initiatives worldwide. The UNDP, established with the mission to address global development challenges and eradicate poverty, has been actively involved in various projects and programs aimed at enhancing education systems in different regions, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria (Smith & Brown, 2019).

The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, as

the administrative and political center of Nigeria, presents a unique landscape for educational development. With its diverse population, economic disparities, and urban-rural dynamics, the FCT's education sector faces multifaceted challenges that require strategic interventions. Recognizing these challenges, the UNDP has collaborated with national and local stakeholders to design and implement initiatives focused on improving educational access, quality, and relevance (Johnson & Williams, 2018).

Education stands as a cornerstone of progress and development, and its transformative potential is widely acknowledged across the globe. In pursuit of this goal, international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been pivotal in

advancing educational agendas in various regions. Within the context of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, the UNDP's role in education is of particular significance, given its status as the nation's political and administrative hub.

Education in the FCT faces a unique set of challenges arising from urban-rural disparities, socio-economic variations, and the need for inclusive policies. This diverse landscape provides the backdrop against which the UNDP's education initiatives unfold. The UNDP, guided by its mandate to foster sustainable development and alleviate poverty, has collaboratively undertaken initiatives designed to enhance educational access, quality, and relevance in the FCT (Johnson & Williams, 2018).

In practice, the UNDP's involvement in education entails multifaceted interventions. These interventions can encompass capacity building for educators, curriculum enrichment, infrastructure development, community engagement, and policy formulation. These endeavors, while grounded in local needs and circumstances, are inherently aligned with global education frameworks, notably Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) that seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

The UNDP's involvement in education-related projects can encompass a wide range of areas, such as teacher training, curriculum development, infrastructure enhancement, community engagement, and policy formulation. These initiatives are often tailored to address the specific needs of the local context while aligning with global education agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) that emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

The effectiveness of UNDP's interventions in the FCT's education sector warrants empirical investigation. Evaluating the impact of UNDP programmes on education can provide insights into the outcomes, challenges, and potential areas of improvement. Such

research can contribute to evidence-based policy recommendations and inform future collaborations between international organizations, national governments, and local communities.

As the FCT continues to evolve and develop, understanding the role of UNDP programmes in shaping the education landscape becomes crucial. This study seeks to explore the extent to which UNDP initiatives have influenced educational outcomes, access, and equity in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. By examining the specific programmes implemented, their methodologies, and their impact on various educational indicators, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between international development efforts and local educational contexts.

The provision of quality education is a paramount goal for any society aspiring to thrive in the modern global landscape. In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria, education is not only a means of individual empowerment but also a cornerstone of national development. However, despite concerted efforts by various stakeholders, challenges persist within the education system that hinder the realization of equitable and high-quality educational opportunities for all.

The key issue at hand revolves around the effectiveness of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiatives in addressing the educational challenges within the FCT. While the UNDP's involvement in education is well-intentioned and guided by global frameworks, the extent to which these interventions have translated into tangible improvements within the FCT's education landscape remains a subject of inquiry.

One of the core challenges is the prevalence of educational disparities across various segments of the FCT's population. These disparities manifest in terms of access to education, quality of educational resources, and educational outcomes. Furthermore, the diverse socio-economic, cultural, and geographic factors within the FCT contribute to intricate layers of

educational inequality that must be carefully addressed.

Infrastructure deficits, inadequate teaching resources, and the mismatch between curricula and the evolving needs of the job market are pressing concerns within the FCT's education system. Additionally, the urban-rural divide and disparities between public and private educational institutions underscore the complexity of the problem. These issues call for a rigorous examination of the UNDP's efforts in reshaping the educational landscape within the FCT.

The UNDP's initiatives, while well-intentioned, must be assessed for their alignment with local needs, effectiveness in addressing core challenges, and sustainability in creating lasting change. Furthermore, the capacity of local institutions, coordination among various stakeholders, and the overall policy environment play a crucial role in determining the success of these initiatives. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is required to understand the impact, limitations, and potential areas of improvement in the UNDP's approach to enhancing education within the FCT.

Therefore the main objective of this study is to examine the effect of United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) on the quality primary education in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. To achieve this objective, the study is guided by the following specific objective.

1. Ascertain the effect of financial resources on the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja
2. Examine the impact of policy implementation on the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja
3. To determine the extent to which Government commitment affects the quality of primary education in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja

Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory:

Social Capital Theory, propounded by

Pierre Bourdieu (1986), is a sociological framework that examines the relationships and networks within a community and how these connections contribute to individual and collective outcomes. At its core, the theory posits that social networks, trust, and cooperation within a community create resources that individuals can leverage to achieve shared goals. These resources encompass not only tangible assets but also information, norms, and social support.

Social Capital Theory is particularly relevant to understanding the influence of UNDP education programmes on access, quality, and equity in education within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The theory emphasizes the importance of social networks and connections in shaping individuals' access to resources and opportunities. In the context of the FCT's education sector, UNDP programmes can be seen as fostering social networks and collaborations among stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, educational institutions, and NGOs. These networks facilitate the dissemination of educational resources, best practices, and innovative teaching methods.

UNDP initiatives can leverage social capital to enhance access by forging partnerships with community leaders and local organizations to identify and address barriers that hinder marginalized groups from accessing quality education. Additionally, UNDP programmes can promote the sharing of knowledge and expertise among teachers and educators, leading to improved teaching methods and enhanced educational quality.

Moreover, Social Capital Theory emphasizes trust and cooperation as critical components of social networks. UNDP's efforts to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders can build trust and cooperation, which in turn contribute to greater equity in education. By involving communities in decision-making processes and fostering a sense of ownership, UNDP programmes can promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, especially among vulnerable and

marginalized populations.

Social Capital Theory offers insights into the challenges and successes associated with the implementation of UNDP initiatives in the FCT's education sector. The theory highlights the significance of effective collaboration and communication within social networks. Challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles and limited community engagement may be attributed to weak social networks and lack of trust among stakeholders. UNDP's success in overcoming these challenges could be attributed to its ability to foster strong social connections and facilitate open lines of communication among diverse stakeholders.

Success stories in the implementation of UNDP initiatives can be attributed to the theory's emphasis on social networks as sources of valuable information and support. The integration of local NGOs, community leaders, and government agencies in programme design and implementation aligns with Social Capital Theory's premise that diverse networks can generate innovative solutions and resources.

Social Capital Theory, proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, serves as a pertinent theoretical framework for this study. It aligns with the study's focus on UNDP education programmes, their impact on access, quality, and equity, and the challenges and successes encountered in their implementation. The theory's emphasis on social networks, trust, and cooperation elucidates the dynamics underlying UNDP's initiatives in the FCT's education sector and provides a lens

through which to analyze the study's research objectives.

Methodology

The present study employs a documentary research design to investigate the effect of United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) on education in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This design facilitates the comprehensive exploration of existing written and recorded sources to gain insights into the historical context, policy frameworks, interventions, challenges, and successes associated with UNDP's initiatives within the education sector of the FCT.

Primary data for this study was obtained from a randomly selected 278 respondents comprising of staff of UNDP, UBE, teachers, pupils and students of public schools mostly the remote areas of FCT, Abuja. However, data collected were subjected to analysis using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentage to answer the study research questions and draw conclusion.

The primary data sources for this research were sourced through a well-structured questionnaire administered to respondents while the secondary data comprise official UNDP reports, policy documents, project evaluations, academic literature, government publications, and media sources. These sources provide a rich repository of information to analyse the progression and impact of UNDP education programmes over time. The use of diverse sources ensures triangulation and enhances the credibility of finding.

Data Analysis and Discussion**Table 1**

Impact of UNDP Educational Programmes on Quality of Education Within the FCT, Abuja Landscape

Statement	S/A	A	N	D	S/D	Total
1. UNDP education programs have significantly improved access to quality education in the FCT, Abuja.	12 4.3%	22 7.9%	17 6.1%	167 60.1%	60 21.6	278
2. The impact of UNDP education programs on the overall quality of education in the FCT, Abuja, has been positive.	15 5.4%	34 12.2%	26 9.4%	179 64.4%	24 8.6%	278
3. The introduction of UNDP education programs has contributed to greater equity and inclusivity within the educational landscape of the FCT, Abuja.	21 7.6%	39 14.3%	28 10.1%	164 59%	26 9.4%	278
4. UNDP's collaboration with local educational institutions and stakeholders in achieving their education goals in the FCT, Abuja, has been effective.	24 8.6%	64 23.3%	22 7.9%	137 49.3%	31 11.2%	278
5. There is a significant relationship between the UNDP programs in education programs and the quality of education in the FCT, Abuja.	23 8.3%	38 13.7%	37 13.3%	155 55.8%	25 9%	278

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The results presented in the table show the responses of respondents to a survey questionnaire with five statements related to the impact of UNDP educational programs in the FCT, Abuja. The responses are categorized into five levels: Strongly Agree (S/A), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (S/D).

i. Access to Quality Education

A significant proportion 167 (60.1%) of respondents strongly agreed that UNDP educational programs have not significantly improved access to quality education in the FCT, Abuja. This suggests that there may be challenges or limitations in the reach and effectiveness of these programs. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring that educational opportunities are more accessible and equitable.

ii. Impact on Overall Educational Quality

The survey results reveal a high level of skepticism regarding the impact of UNDP educational programs on the overall quality

of education. The majority 179 (64.4%) of respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating doubts about the effectiveness of these programs in improving educational quality. This is a critical concern as it suggests that program outcomes may not align with the desired goals or that there may be a lack of awareness about positive changes resulting from these programs. It is essential for UNDP to assess the effectiveness of interventions and communicate their impact more effectively.

iii. Equity and Inclusivity

Respondents also expressed skepticism 164 (59%) regarding the contribution of UNDP educational programs to greater equity and inclusivity within the educational landscape. This underscores the need for a closer examination of barriers to equity and inclusivity and the development of strategies to ensure that UNDP programs benefit all segments of the population.

iv. Collaboration with Local Institutions and Stakeholders

The survey results suggest mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of UNDP's collaboration with local educational institutions and stakeholders. While some respondents 137 (49.3%) agreed with the effectiveness of collaboration, a significant number (49.3%) disagreed. This indicates that there may be room for improvement in how UNDP engages with local partners. Effective collaboration is essential for achieving program goals and should be continually evaluated and improved.

v. Relationship Between Programs and Educational Quality

A majority of respondents 155 (55.8%) disagreed with the statement suggesting a significant relationship between UNDP

programs and the quality of education. This perception of a limited relationship underscores the importance of conducting rigorous impact assessments and sharing the findings widely to demonstrate the positive changes resulting from UNDP interventions.

In summary, the survey results reveal a complex landscape of perceptions and attitudes regarding UNDP educational programs in the FCT, Abuja. Addressing the skepticism and concerns expressed by respondents will be essential for UNDP to enhance the effectiveness of its educational initiatives and better meet the educational needs of the community. Conducting impact assessments, improving communication, and addressing specific challenges are key steps in achieving these goals.

**Challenges Faced in The Implementation of UNDP on Education in The FCT, Abuja
Descriptive Statistics**

Table 2

	Frequency	Percent
Infrastructural deficit	103	37.1
Inadequate teaching resources	65	23.4
Mismatched Curricula and evolving need of job market	62	22.3
Cultural or contextual factors	48	17.3
Total	278	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The survey results offer insights into the perceived challenges associated with the implementation of UNDP's educational initiatives, as reported by respondents. Four specific challenges are examined, and the findings can be summarized and discussed as follows:

i. Infrastructural Deficit (103 responses, 37.1%): This factor is the most frequently mentioned issue among the respondents. It suggests that a significant portion of the individuals or entities surveyed believe that the lack of proper infrastructure (such as school

buildings, technology, transportation, etc.) is a major challenge in addressing the broader issue at hand.

ii. Inadequate Teaching Resources (65 responses, 23.4%): The second most common factor mentioned is the inadequacy of teaching resources. This could include a shortage of qualified teachers, lack of teaching materials, or insufficient funding for educational programs. It is significant but less prevalent than the infrastructural deficit.

- iii. **Mismatched Curricula and Evolving Needs of the Job Market (62 responses, 22.3%):** This factor indicates that a considerable portion of respondents believe that the curricula being used do not align well with the changing demands of the job market. This suggests that educational institutions may need to update their programs to better prepare students for current and future employment opportunities.
 - iv. **Cultural or Contextual Factors (48 responses, 17.3%):** Cultural or contextual factors are mentioned by a smaller but still notable portion of respondents. These factors could include cultural barriers to education or contextual issues that affect how education is delivered or received.
- In summary, the data highlights several key factors that are perceived to be contributing to a specific problem, likely in the realm of education or workforce development. Infrastructural deficits, inadequate teaching resources, and curriculum mismatches with the job market's evolving needs appear to be the most prominent concerns, with cultural or contextual factors being a somewhat lesser concern. This breakdown of factors can provide valuable insights for policymakers or stakeholders who wish to address and prioritize these issues effectively.

Successes Recorded With The Implementation of UNDP on Education in The FCT, Abiuja
Descriptive Statistics

Table 3

	Frequency	Percent
Mobilization of resources to support education	76	27.3
Synergy amongst stakeholders (government agencies, Civil Society Groups and international partners)	110	39.6
Access to Quality Education	43	15.5
Promote equity and inclusivity	49	17.6
Total	278	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The survey results provide insights into the perceived successes of UNDP's educational initiatives, as reported by respondents. Four specific aspects of success are examined, and the findings can be summarized and discussed as follows:

1. Mobilization of Resources to Support Education (76 responses, 27.3%): This strategy involves the allocation and utilization of resources to support and improve education, only 5% of UNDP budget was allocated to primary education within the FCT, Abuja It suggests that a significant portion of respondents believe that increasing financial and material resources for education is a crucial approach to addressing the issue at hand.

These resources can include funding, educational materials, infrastructure, and more.

2. Synergy Amongst Stakeholders (Government Agencies, Civil Society Groups, and International Partners) (110 responses, 39.6%): This is the most frequently mentioned strategy and implies that many respondents emphasize the importance of collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders to tackle the issue. These stakeholders typically include government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners. Effective collaboration can lead to more comprehensive and impactful solutions.

3. Access to Quality Education (43 responses, 15.5%): Access to quality education is another important strategy, albeit less frequently mentioned. This suggests that some respondents believe that improving access to education and ensuring that it meets certain quality standards is a key aspect of addressing the issue. It may involve efforts to increase enrollment, reduce dropout rates, and enhance the overall quality of education.

4. Promote Equity and Inclusivity (49 responses, 17.6%): Promoting equity and inclusivity is also a significant strategy, indicating that a notable portion of respondents believes in the importance of making education accessible and fair for all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. This strategy may involve policies and initiatives aimed at reducing disparities in educational opportunities.

In summary, the data presents various strategies or approaches that can be employed to address a specific issue, likely related to education or social development. Synergy among stakeholders, involving government agencies, civil society groups, and international partners, is the most prominent strategy mentioned. Mobilization of resources to support education, ensuring access to quality education, and promoting equity and inclusivity are also considered important but to varying degrees.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the UNDP's education programmes have not made a notable stride in improving the access to quality education within the FCT's education landscape. While successes are evident in the aspect of synergy amongst stakeholders (Government agencies, civil society groups and international partners), challenges related to infrastructural deficits, inadequate resource materials amongst others are still prevailing and requires attention in order to experience a greater impact of the programme. Hence, by building on the successes and addressing the challenges, UNDP and its partners can

contribute to a more equitable and thriving education sector in the FCT, ultimately fostering the region's socio-economic development and human capital growth.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

Integrated Development Framework:

Building upon the findings related to road infrastructure and healthcare interventions, it is recommended that UNDP and other stakeholders adopt an integrated development framework. This approach should prioritize collaboration between sectors such as education, livelihood enhancement, and social services. By addressing multiple dimensions of development simultaneously, a synergistic effect can be achieved, leading to more comprehensive poverty reduction and equitable growth.

Localized Capacity Building and Empowerment:

To ensure the sustainability of interventions and the active participation of communities, UNDP should focus on localized capacity building and empowerment initiatives. This entails equipping local leaders and communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively engage in development projects. By fostering a sense of ownership and agency, communities can contribute meaningfully to the planning, implementation, and maintenance of initiatives, leading to more lasting impact.

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