

# **UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION COMMISSION**

## **ALMAJIRI EDUCATION PROGRAMME UNIT**

### **UPDATE ON ALMAJIRI EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

#### **1. Implementation of Almajiri Education Programme by the Federal Government**

The Almajiri (Itinerant Qur'anic School Pupils) constitute the largest group of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Numbering over 9 Million (sources 2010 Ministerial Committee on Madrasah); this segment of Nigerian population poses tremendous challenges to attainment of Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) as well as other notable international conventions and protocols. To neglect this group does not only deny them of their Fundamental Rights but also their innate potentials would remain largely untapped and this may eventually jeopardize the country's pursuit of her home-grown technological development and economic transformation.

Thus, in order to reduce inequality and provide access, the Federal government set up a Committee on Implementation of Almajiri Education Programme and charged it with the responsibility of ensuring that this more than 9 million Almajirai are integrated into the UBE Programme. This is without prejudice to their acquiring a sound mastery of Qur'anic Knowledge. Indeed, the programme will equip the Almajiri pupils with knowledge and vocational skills that will enable them integrate into the Nigerian society and ensure realization of their potentials.

## **2. Objectives of the Programme**

The objective of the programme is to:

- Provide access and equity to Basic Education for all Almajiri School age children;
- Discourage and gradually eliminate itinerancy and begging of Almajirai in the country; and
- Support the emergence of an enabling environment that could facilitate the effective integration of Islamic discipline into basic education programme.

## **3. Strategic Framework**

In an effort to effectively implement this programme, the following strategic plan of actions was designed:

- Establishment of Integrated *Almajiri* Model Schools to transform into Model *Almajiri* Schools;
- Support for community owned *Tsangaya/Islamiyyah* and *Tahfeez* Primary Schools;
- Introduction of Basic Education into *Makarantun Allo*, *Tsangaya* Schools and *Ile-kewu*.

## **4. Achievements**

Since the commencement of the programme, the following have been accomplished:

- Development and Production of National Framework for the development and Integration of Almajiri Education and other

manuals that specified the intervention strategies and role of all stakeholders.

- Development, Harmonization, production and distribution of curricula for Almajiri Education Programme to all Almajiri Schools.
- Development, production and distribution of Textbooks and Teachers' Guides to all Almajiri Model Schools.
- Construction of **117** Model Almajiri Schools in **26** States of the federation and the FCT(Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Edo, Ekiti, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara). With North-West having **50** schools; North-East:**27**; North-Central:**22**; South-West:**16**; and South-South with **2** schools.
- **36** Model Tsangaya Schools were constructed by defunct Education Trust Fund (ETF) now Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).
- Provision of Furniture items and science equipment's in all the schools.
- Completed schools have commenced Academic activities.
- In an attempt to strengthen the existing Islamiyyah and Ma'ahad schools, **138** schools in **30** states and the FCT (Abia, Adamawa, Anambra, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Borno, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara States) were identified and provided with funds to expand their infrastructural facilities through Model III form of intervention.
- Advocacy meetings were held with major stakeholders.

- A Presidential Review Meeting on Almajiri Education Programme was convened by the then Vice President, Arc. Muhammadu Namadi Sambo GCON on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 at the Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa. At the meeting, the stakeholders (Governors, Secretaries to State Governments, Commissioners for Education, SUBEB Chairmen and Traditional Rulers) signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to support the efforts of the Federal Government and replicate the Almajiri Education Programme in their respective States.
- The Commission had trained **58** UBEC Quality Assurance Officers and State Almajiri Education Desk Officers on Quality control in Almajiri Schools.
- **270** Almajiri Model School Proprietors and headteachers who commenced Academic activities were trained on curriculum implementation and use of textbooks in teaching and learning.
- **174** number of SUBEB Desk officers, Local Governments Education Secretaries and Chairmen of SBMCs were trained on establishment of School Based Management Committees in Almajiri Schools.

## **5. Constraints**

In the process of implementing the Programme and interaction with the major stakeholders, major challenges were identified. These challenges relate to the following:

- i. Lack of political will on the part of some state Governors to adopt and replicate the programme, as stipulated in the signed MoU.
- ii. The use of Model Almajiri schools for purposes other than the Almajiri education by some State Governments.

- iii. Non-recruitment/deployment of Basic Education teachers into Almajiri schools by some states.
- iv. Non-integration of Alarammas/Mallams/Proprietors into the programme. This is of great concern to the success of the programme.
- v. Recruitment/deployment of non-Muslim teachers to teach in Almajiri Schools. This act, at the initial stage, can endanger the programme.
- vi. Non-inclusion of feeding as a retention strategy by the States and Local Governments. It was observed that only a few states have taken action in this regard.

## **6. The Way Forward**

For successful implementation of this Programme, the states are expected to among other things:

- i. Adopt and replicate the programme, including the construction of Almajiri Model Schools.
- ii. Recruit and deploy teachers to these schools.
- iii. Integrate Alarammas/Mallams/Proprietors into the programme.
- iv. Adopt appropriate mechanism for the enrolment of Almajiri pupils into these schools.
- v. Provide school uniforms to the enrolled pupils
- vi. Include feeding as a retention strategy.
- vii. Maintain the infrastructural facilities.
- viii. Ensure the sustainability of these schools.

## **7. Conclusion**

The issue of out-of-school children in general, and in particular, the Almajiri pupils in Nigeria, is a serious challenge to the international conventions (EFA and MDGs) entered into by the Nigerian

Government. Therefore, the response of the Federal Government to the Almajiri menace is in the right direction. The Commission reiterates the need for continuous political will on the part of the State Governments for the success of this programme. Adequate facilities should continue to be provided so as to sustain the programme. The efforts of the Governments at all level should be complemented by communities, Non-governmental organizations, NGOs and well-meaning individuals with all the seriousness it deserve since Education for All is the Responsibilities for All.