

***Evaluation of Community Mobilization and Enrichment of School Curricula Strategies for the 9-Year Schooling Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria***

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**Abstract**

*This study focused on stakeholders' perception of community mobilization for participation and enrichment of school curricula as strategies for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. To carry out this research work, two research questions were formulated; the ex-post facto design was used to provide information on the existing situation regarding the variables of concern in the study. Two hundred community members and two hundred and fifty teachers were sampled using simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentages and bar charts. The results of the analysis revealed that community members have been mobilized to participate in the UBE programme but not consistently; school curricula have been enriched and revised. Recommendations were provided based on the findings of the study.*

**Keywords:** community mobilization, school curricula, Universal Basic Education.

**Introduction**

Mobilization is the ability to get people involved in an action and if people participate in a programme they take ownership of such a programme and protect it to success. Education stakeholders who put together the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria thought it wise that for the programme to succeed in achieving desired objectives, community members and all down line stakeholders must be adequately and actively involved in the implementation process. This predicated the various activities created for community members, parents, village heads and Non- governmental organizations for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria. Participation by those expected to implement any new program is identified by Ozturk (2003) as an effective strategy in the process of achieving desired programme objectives.

Asiyai, (2012) conducted a survey to investigate the contributions of community participation in the management of the universal basic education programme in Delta State, Nigeria. The researcher used the stratified random sampling technique to select a sample of 600 teachers and 400 school heads in the three senatorial districts of the state. The findings show that community participation will help to improve quality of education and accessibility to education by all.

Olatonye and Ogunkola (2008) classified traditional modes of parental involvement in education into contributions to their children's home-based activities spanning into helping with homework, encouraging reading and enforcement of school attendance. Other contributions are school-based activities which may include attending Parents Teachers' Association meetings, Parent/Teacher conferences, seminars and assisting or contributing to raise funds for school activities. The universal basic education programme keyed into these traditional modes of parental participation and adopted it as a major strategy for increased enrolments, stem the tide of drop outs and ensure school completion by pupils. In agreement to this point, Uzoechina and Obidike (2008) noted that parental involvement in children's education now is manifested in their interest in school activities and active participation in children's school work. The authors listed a few of these activities which correspond with those of Olatonye and Ogunkola to include fund-raising, inter-house sports, involvement in school's decision making, information dissemination, monitoring of children's school and enforcing pupils and staff discipline. Cross River State Law No. 1(2006) which is a law to provide for compulsory, Free, Universal basic Education and for matters connected therewith has increased the role of parents and community members in the UBE programme implementation. They have been made "watchdogs" over school age children during school hours.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has the mandate to develop school curricula for all levels of the educational system in Nigeria. In 2006, NERDC developed the 9-year UBE curriculum as part of the strategies to achieving the objectives set for the UBE programme. Obioma and Ajagun (2006) observed that the major basis for the reform in the school curriculum in the context of the 9-year basic education lies in eliminating the perceived disconnect between the primary and Junior Secondary Schools, defining the philosophy of basic education and reviewing and realigning the curriculum contents of primary and Junior Secondary Schools into a continuous whole. In the process of reviewing and realigning the curriculum contents emerging issues in values, morals, peace, environmental education, HIV/AIDS and entrepreneurial skills were infused using relevant extant subjects as carriers.

This curriculum was made up of 20 subjects initially, as table 1 shows; but on the course of implementation of the 20 subject curriculum, feedback from the field indicated subject overload for primary and junior secondary school students. This caused the NERDC to, in December 2011, commence the revision of the curriculum. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) (2012), “related UBE subjects curricula like Agriculture, Home Economics are brought together to create a new UBE curriculum called Pre-Vocational studies”. In the same vein, FMOE (2012) reports that “Islamic studies, Christian Religious studies, Social Studies, Civic Education that focus on the inculcation of values which she classifies as societal, moral or interpersonal now form the UBE subject called Religious and National Values this curriculum review according to the Council, is to “ensure that topics are not repeated in various subjects, such that key concepts in the former curricula now form integrating threads for organizing the contents of the new subjects into a coherent whole.”

**Table 1:** Basic Education Curriculum structure in Nigeria as at 2006

S/N	Basic education levels	Core compulsory subjects	Elective subjects
1	Lower basic (Primary 1-3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Language</li> <li>2. One Nigerian Language (L<sub>1</sub> or LIC)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science and Technology</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural &amp; Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religions (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical &amp; Health Education (PHE)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computer Education*</li> <li>2. Agriculture</li> <li>3. Home Economics</li> <li>4. Arabic Language</li> </ol> <p><u>Note:</u> Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 2.</p>
2	Middle basic (Primary 4–6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Language</li> <li>2. One Nigerian Language (L<sub>1</sub> or LIC)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science and Technology</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural &amp; Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religions (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical &amp; Health Education (PHE)</li> <li>9. French Language.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computer Education</li> <li>2. Agriculture</li> <li>3. Home Economics</li> <li>4. Arabic Language</li> </ol> <p><u>Note:</u> Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 3.</p>
3	Upper basic (JSS 1 – 3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Language</li> <li>2. One Nigerian Language (L<sub>1</sub> or LIC)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural &amp; Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religions (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical &amp; Health Education (PHE)</li> <li>9. French Language</li> <li>10. Basic Technology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computer Education</li> <li>2. Agriculture</li> <li>3. Home Economics</li> <li>4. Arabic Language</li> <li>5. Business Studies</li> </ol> <p><u>Note:</u> Must offer 1 Elective, but not more than 3.</p>

Source: adopted from Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2006).

The ten new subjects listed for primary and junior secondary schools in the reviewed curricula include: English Studies, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, Religion and national values, Cultural and Creative Arts, Business Studies, Nigerian languages, Prevocational Studies, French and Arabic.

Pupils by these new curricula can offer a minimum of seven and maximum of eight subjects for those in primary 1-3 while those in primaries 4-6 are allowed to take a minimum of eight and a maximum of nine subjects. Junior secondary 1-3 students will offer a minimum of nine and a maximum of ten subjects. This is a wonderful innovation from the overload the students had to carry with the pilot curricula that was developed in 2006. This is a clear indication that the NERDC is evaluating itself based on the performance of the students as well as adjusting her strategies based on the feedback from the stakeholders which include teachers, curriculum experts, policy makers, employers of labour and parents. FMOE (2012) has “encouraged teachers to enrich the contents of the curriculum with relevant materials and information from their immediate environments by adapting to meet their needs and aspirations” (p.vi).

Obioma (2006), Edem and Okon (2008) noted that, the Universal Basic Education Curriculum implementation strategies as put together by Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) proposed “to commence with new curriculum in primary 1 in September 2007 and gradually phase out the old primary school curriculum by 2012; concurrently commence with new curriculum in JSS1 in September 2007 and gradually phase out old junior secondary (JSS) curriculum by 2010; review old text books in compliance with the new curriculum, print and distribute by September 2007; develop new textbooks for subjects and distribute by 2008; by the end of school year 2015, the entire curriculum will have been implemented for all pupils and for all classes; sensitization of teachers and stakeholders in the contents of the new curriculum to commence immediately with the collaboration of NERDC, UBEC, NCNE, NCCE and FIS; and prepare teachers’ handbook and commence the capacity building of serving teachers in the new curriculum in September 2006. These strategies are being implemented at both Federal and State Government levels” (p.32).

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) on Tuesday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014 launched the e-curriculum portal which is a digital software to be accessed from the internet through computers and smart phones. The electronic curriculum which is an electronic and accessible online platform will contain content of various subject syllabuses for teachers and students. Parents too can access the structural contents to be able to guide their children and wards appropriately. The major import of this e-curriculum according to Professor Godswill Obioma (former Executive Secretary, NERDC) is to assist students in public examinations to be exposed to the same curriculum content and be prepared for through the same platform.

Adesulu (2014) reported that the new e-curriculum portal was launched in association between Sidmach and NERDC. The NERDC e-Curriculum Portal is expected to signal a new era in Nigeria's educational development; 'it is a complete teaching and learning tool which makes teaching and learning easier, faster, better anywhere, anytime. It is also programmed to provide an interactive, analytic and collaborative learning environment for teachers and students. This innovation will help boost the implementation of the universal basic education programme and teachers and students in both rural and urban areas will have equal access to the same contents at the same time. This will at the long run promote efficiency in curriculum delivery and faster attainment of programme objectives. This curriculum according to the report is downloadable and will help teachers prepare scheme of work and lesson plans.

### **Statement of the problem**

Several researchers have studied various aspects of the strategies for the implementation of the universal basic education programme in Nigeria. However, there are still areas to be investigated in terms of how community members have been mobilized to participate in the implementation of the UBE programme as well as the provision of enriched curricula for schools. In the light of this, the present study sought to investigate whether or not community members have been mobilized to participate in the UBE programme as stipulated by law, as well as whether enriched curricula have been provided for schools.

### **Research questions**

1. How have community members been mobilized and sensitized to participate in the implementation of UBE programme in schools of Cross River State?
2. To what extent have enriched curricula been provided in schools for effective implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State?

### **Methodology**

The survey research design was used for this study. The design was most appropriate for this study because it provides the researcher the opportunity to investigate issues that have already occurred using a representative sample to generalize for an entire population. The population of this study consists of Junior Secondary School (JSS) teachers spread across the three Education Zones of Cross River State, namely: Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja education zones; and parents drawn from the 250 public schools communities. The units of analysis are teachers and parents.

A combination of stratified random sampling, proportionate and purposive sampling techniques were adopted for selecting respondents for this study. The target

population was stratified into three according to the education zones (Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja). Simple random sampling technique was applied to select 6 local government areas in the state, fifty (50) schools were selected using proportionate sampling technique. At the school level, simple random sampling technique through the hat and draw method was applied to select teachers. While community members were purposively selected. The sample for this study consists of a total of 250 teachers, and 200 parents from public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Two instruments were used to obtain data for this study. Teacher Questionnaire on Implementation of UBE Programme (TQIUBEP) sought information from teachers on whether or not new curricula have been provided in schools. Community members Questionnaire on Community Mobilization and Participation (CQCMP), was designed to provide data on involvement of community members in the implementation of the UBE programme in their community. The questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents. The responses obtained were coded and scored. Descriptive statistics of percentages and frequencies were used for data analyses.

### **Presentation of results**

**Research question one:** To what extent have community members been mobilized and sensitized to participate in the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State schools?

**Table 2:** Summary of the responses of community members on their mobilization, sensitization and participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River Stateschools

S/N	Opinion	Yes	No
<b>Indicate Yes or No to the items below:</b>			
1	Sensitization about free and compulsory education	135 (68.88)	61 (31.12)
2	Registration and attendance to classes	154 (78.57)	42 (21.43)
3	Workshops and meetings	172 (87.76)	24 (12.24)
4	Establishment of mobile court	15 (7.65)	181 (92.35)
5	Sensitization of community members to free and compulsory education	187 (95.41)	9 (4.59)
6	Stake holder forum for interaction with school authorities and SUBEB	177 (90.31)	19 (9.69)
7	Equal access to schooling	189 (96.43)	7 (3.57)
8	Knowledge of UBE act	15 (7.65)	181 (92.35)
9	UBE sensitization campaigns on radio and TV	2 (1.02)	194 (98.98)
10	LGEA enrolment drive during vacation	86 (43.88)	110 (56.12)

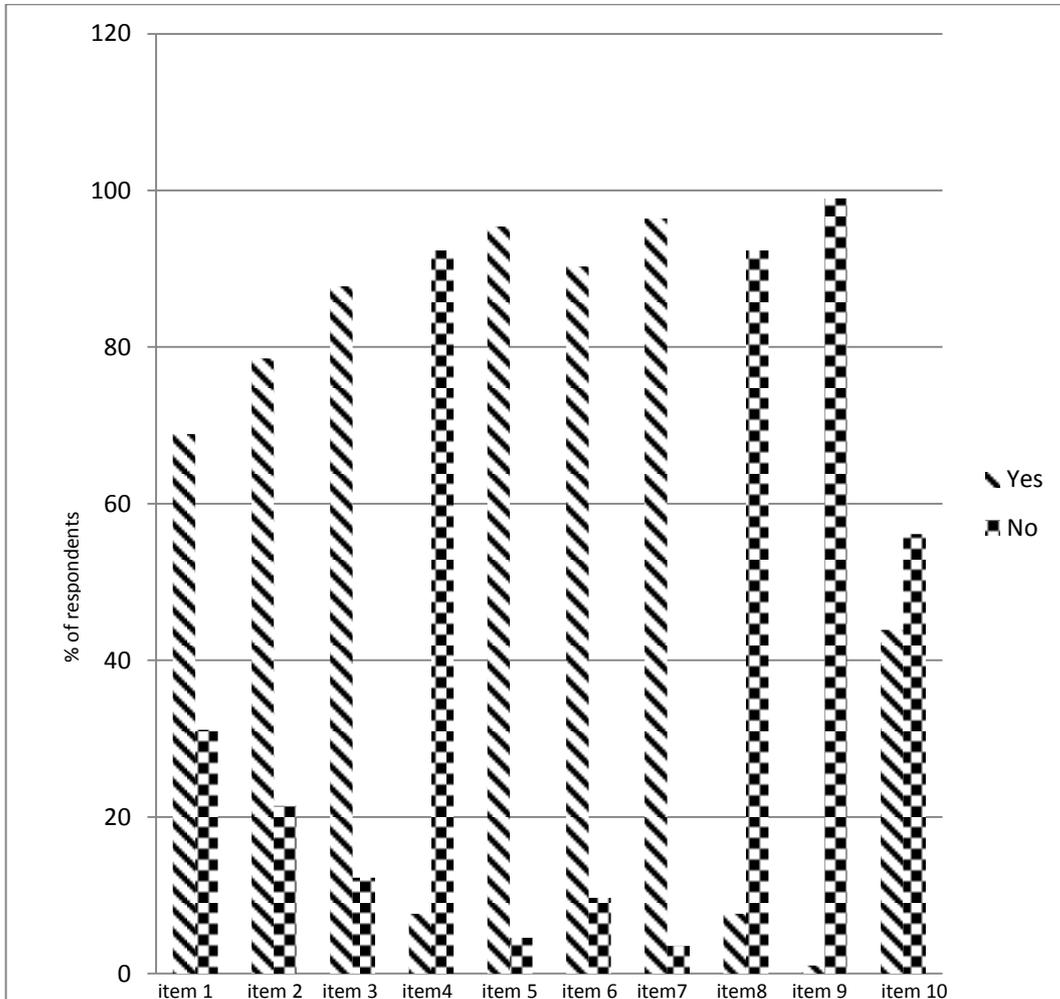
N=196. Source: Field work.

It can be discerned from Table 2 that 135(68.88%) of the community members that participated in the study affirmed that they are sensitized about free and compulsory education of the UBE programme and its implementation plan while the remaining 61(31.12%) are of the opinion that they are not mobilized. This implies that majority of the respondent are mobilized, sensitized and are participating in the UBE programme in Cross River State. 154(78.57 %), of the respondent are of the opinion that they have registered their children/wards and are attending classes in the UBE programme in Cross River State; while 42(21.42%) say they have not done so. This implies that majority of the respondents in the study area are sensitized of registration and attendance to classes as an implementation plan of the UBE programme. A total of 172(87.76%) of the respondent said yes they attend regular workshops and meetings while quite a few number 24(12.24 %) of the respondents say no, they do not attend workshops and meetings.

A total of 15(7.65 %) of the community members agree that they are sensitized of the establishment of mobile courts while 181(92.35%) are not aware of the establishment of mobile court in the study area. On sensitization of community members to free and compulsory education, 187(95.41%) of the respondents say yes while only 9(4.59%) say no they are not aware of sensitization of community members to free and compulsory education as an implementation plan of the UBE programme in the study area. 177(90.31%) said yes they are invited to attend stakeholders' forum with UBE authorities on the implementation of the programme in their state. Only 19(9.69%) said no. 189(96.43%) of the respondents agreed that everyone has equal access to schooling in the UBE programme while only 7(3.57%) said no there is unequal access. This means that there is free and equal access for all in the UBE programme. Only 15(7.65%) of the community members agreed to have knowledge of the UBE act whereas 181(92.35%) said they did not have knowledge of the UBE Act. Meaning therefore that most community members have not seen nor read the contents of the UBE Act in the state. On sensitization programmes on radio and TVs for the UBE programme, 2(1.02%) of the respondents said yes there is sensitization on the mass media but 194(98.98%) responded no to the question signifying that there are no jingles on air in the state for the UBE programme.

On whether the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) engaged in enrolments drive during vacations, 86(43.88%) responded yes while 110(56.12%) voted no. This implies that LGEAs seldom engage on enrolment drives during vacation in the state. From the summary of the analysis, the average responses show that community members show positive response to mobilization and sensitization for participation in the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State schools. This finding is further buttressed with figure 1, bar chart showing frequency

of responses on community members' mobilization and sensitization for participation in the UBE programme.



**Figure 1:** Bar chart on opinions of community members on their mobilization for participation.

**Research question two:** To what extent have enriched curricula been provided in schools for the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State schools?

**Table 3:** Summary of teachers' response on the provision of enriched curricula in schools for the implementation of the UBE programme.

	Provision of enriched curricula	Yes count	% of total	No count	% of total	Total count	Total I%
1	Provision of new curricula	226	91.13	22	8.87	248	100
2	Fewer subjects to learn now	197	79.44	51	20.56	248	100
3	Merging of school subjects	201	81.05	47	18.95	248	100
4	Achievement of UBE objectives with curricula	132	53.23	116	46.77	248	100
5	National development with new curricula	97	39.11	151	60.89	248	100
6	Thematic approach better than modular one	119	47.98	131	52.02	248	100
7	Introduction of new issues into the curricula	128	51.61	120	48.39	248	100
8	Review of the new UBE curricula	239	96.37	9	3.63	248	100
9	Teachers making inputs into the curricula	25	10.08	223	89.92	248	100

N=250. Source Field Work

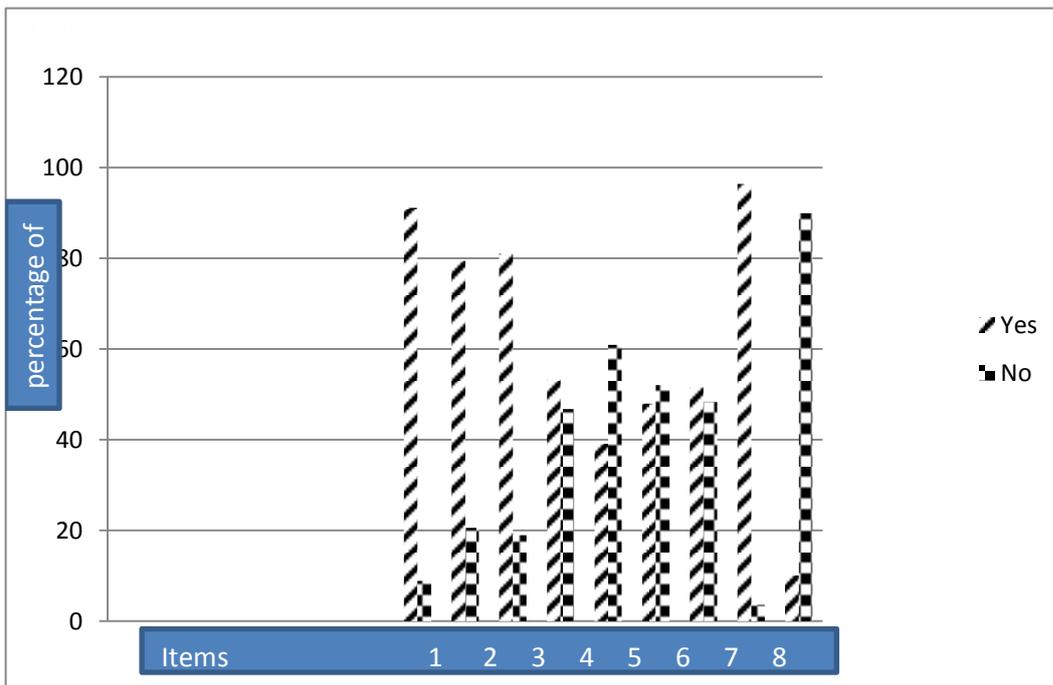
Simple percentages were used to analyse the responses of teachers on the provision of enriched curricula in schools for the implementation of the UBE programme. The result in table 3 indicates that 226 representing 91.13 percent of the respondents agreed that new curricula have been provided for the UBE programme in schools in the state; while 22(8.87%) disagreed. Also, 197(79.44%) of respondents said students learn fewer subjects with the new curricula with the UBE implementation; while 51(20.56%) disagreed to that effect. On whether merging of subjects has reduced the curricula content, 81.05 % that is 201 respondents agreed while only 48(19.35%) disagreed. 132(53.23%) teachers agreed that the objectives of the UBE programme can be achieved with the new UBE curricula in schools. But 116 representing 46.77% of the respondents said UBE objectives cannot be achieved with the curricula provided. 97(39.11%) of the respondents agreed that the new UBE curricula can lead Nigeria to rapid economic development but a massive 153 teachers accounting for 60.89% disagreed that the curricula can lead Nigeria to rapid economic development.

A total of 119(47.98%) preferred the new thematic approach to curriculum implementation than the erstwhile modular one whereas 129 (52.02%) said no, the modular approach was better. On the introduction of new issues into the curricula, 128 respondents representing 51.61% agreed while 120(48.39%) disagreed by responding no to the item. On whether the new UBE curriculum has been reviewed

since the past two years, 241 respondents that is 96.37% of them all agreed while only 9(3.63%) disagreed. Finally, a minority 25(10.08%) of the teachers agreed that they make inputs into UBE curriculum process whereas a large majority of them 223(89.92%) said they do not make inputs into the curriculum process.

This result indicates that the percentage for agreement for the items was more than 50%. This implies that the respondents are of the opinion that new curricula have been provided for schools for the implementation of the UBE programme. The respondents say teachers' are not involved in the planning process and the new curriculum cannot lead the nation to rapid economic development.

The graph on figure 2 shows the frequencies of the responses of teachers on the provision of curricula for the UBE programme for implementation in schools in the state. It is obvious from the graph that new curricula have been provided for the UBE programme; how well can these enriched curricula be used to better the skills of learners in schools in the state.



**Figure 2:** Bar chart showing frequency of respondents' opinions of provision of enriched curricula.

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **Mobilization and sensitization of community members for participation in the UBE programme**

This study found out that community members have been mobilized and sensitized to participate in the implementation of the UBE programme in Cross River State schools. This finding agrees with Asiyai (2012) who conducted a survey to investigate the contributions of community participation in the management of the universal basic education.

This study aligns itself with Asiyai's opinions especially in the light of the fact that the Cross River State Law No. 1 (2006) which is a law to provide for compulsory, Free, Universal basic Education and for matters connected therewith has increased the role of parents and community members in the UBE programme implementation. They have been made watchdog over all children within the community; the law has provided for a mobile court which will try and convict any parent who will not release or take their school age children for enrolment in schools. And though, the Local Government Education Boards that should have been in place in every LGA has never been inaugurated in the state since the law created it, it is believed that if it is made functional, UBE activities will be beefed up considerably. The study however found out that majority of the community members who participated in the study have not read the state's UBE law nor the UBE act. This inaction may be blamed on the SUBEB and LGEAs who if they were consistent in inviting community members to seminars and training workshops, the parents would have had opportunity to have copies of the law. Little wonder most of the community members in the study responded no, regarding their invitation to stakeholders meetings as well as sensitization/enrolments drives in their community.

UBEC between years 2000 and 2001 conducted advocacy and mobilization visits to the 36 states of the federation, launched the National enrolment drive and repeated advocacy visits to some critical states whose enrolments were grossly low. This finding is surprising because of respondents' ignorance about the domiciliation of the UBE act in the state; and also the inability of the state to implement the mobile court in the state because this may have contributed to the lull in enrolments and a slight increase in the dropout rate. The planned enrolments drive that should have been held on every long vacation in the state has seized.

#### **Provision of Enriched curricula in schools**

The results of the findings of this study revealed that the curricula being implemented in schools in Cross River State have been enriched. New curricula have been provided for schools with the introduction of the 9-year UBE programme in not just the state but the entire federation. This is in line with FMOE (2012) who

reported that she developed a “basic education curriculum (BEC) in 2006 to meet the ideals of the UBE programme”. The NERDC in 2009 studied inadequacies of the old curriculum and reported that the curriculum that was in use in schools can no longer meet up the goals of basic education hence the necessity for a change.

This finding is also in agreement with FMOE (2012) which states that the “implementation of the BEC curriculum commenced nationwide, in primary one and JSS 1 respectively in September 2008 with the old curriculum systematically being phased out”. On the course of implementing the curriculum, feedback received by the Council indicated that the curriculum was overloaded in terms of content and subjects against global best practices. In 2012, precisely six years later, the NERDC revised the curriculum for the first time to achieve a reduction in subject overload (from 20 to 10); elimination of content overload and repetitions within and across subjects. FMOE (2012) also reported that the new curricula were organized to ensure continuity and flow of themes, topics and experiences from basic one to nine in schools.

On the activity put in place by UBEC in its implementation guideline to facilitate the review of basic education curriculum by 2007, this finding has proven that this was achieved as the achievement indicator stipulated by UBEC in 2007 states that “there shall be availability and utilization of a reviewed curriculum and modules in schools” with a timeline of 2007 has been met. UBE has even gone ahead to review the first curricula produced earlier. The surprise of this finding lies in the inability of the curricula planners to draw up a practical oriented, technologically based curricula content. It is surprising that the nation has yet to make the big move towards a production based economy.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn: Community members have been mobilized and sensitized to participate in the UBE programme implementation but the activity is not consistent and not wide in outreach to cover all communities and citizens; New and improved curricula have been provided for schools with the implementation of the UBE programme and revised to suit trending developmental pursuits.

### **Recommendations**

1. Curricula provided in schools should be research based and tailored towards providing hands-on practical skills for the learners to enable them become self-employed upon graduation or drop-out.
2. Local government education boards should be constituted as the Cross River State UBE law rightfully directs; by so doing, various organizations that make up

the community will be represented in the day to day running of schools in their communities; they will be made to attend regular meetings with school managements, participate in training programmes and make contributions where necessary.

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