

ENGINEERING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPPS) IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

University education remains a major player in the socio-economic revamping of Africa even though most African national governments have not leveraged the high output of the private sector for educational development. For the most part to date, private universities are running as parallels to their public counterparts. With fewer infrastructures, the private schools seem to be thriving much more than their industrial-action infested publicly-funded schools. It is on record that private schools seem more proficient and effective in service delivery than their public counterparts. It is high time that African national governments began to partner the private sector in evolving cutting-edge service delivery in tertiary education. Specific PPP (3Ps) approaches such as privatization of selected public institutions, private sector endowments and partnership of property developers among others are suggested. It is also proposed that synergy could be encouraged between public and private universities in linkage programs and sabbatical appointments.

Key Words: Public Private Partnerships, University Education, Africa, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are contractual agreements between public and private agencies to facilitate service delivery in specific areas of need such as health, education and agriculture, amongst others. Whereas Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) have become systematized in the industrialized nations of the world, for most of sub-Saharan Africa, it is still a new, or at best, an emerging concept. Apart from South Africa and Egypt with traditional PPPs in education, most of Africa's attempts at engaging the private sector potential has been in areas such transportation, tourism and health. In spite of the efforts, a system of partnerships between the public and the private sectors is not quite in place in most African states

While PPPs may be truly recent in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are already a number of success stories. The Kenyan government in expressing its commitment to encouraging PPPs envisages that 80% of its projects will be financed through PPPs by 2030. South Africa is also recording successes

using tried and verified PPP prototypes to create, grow and extend infrastructure. It is getting apparent that these dynamic partnerships between the public and private sectors must be embraced by African nations to facilitate robust development of their economies.

Even though the Nigerian government has a legal framework for PPPs under the Infrastructure Concession template, the focus is majorly on health, public transportation, tourism and ICT. Ohia (2011) posited that the legal framework for the operation of infrastructure concessions in Nigeria is principally the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (Establishment) Act 2005 and the Public Procurement Act 2007. These laws set out the requirements for competition and private sector participation in all public procurement as well as specify requisite approvals for all PPP contracts.

Nigeria as the most populous black nation in the world (USA Department of State 2012) easily represents the challenge of development in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria's infrastructure challenge is huge and it is evident that the govern-

ment alone cannot muster the human and fiscal resources to meet this need and the involvement of the private sector is not just desirable, but imperative.

The World Bank estimates that every 1% of public funds invested in infrastructure leads to an equivalent 1% increase in gross domestic product (GDP). Even though Nigeria has not had a consistent history of investment in infrastructure, however, recent government agenda shows that infrastructure development is gaining momentum. In the past 10 years, over 25 major infrastructure projects have been rolled out through PPPs. The Federal Government of Nigeria, state and local government areas (LGAs) have contributed over N10 trillion (\$66 billion) to these. However, the total investment required to meet the vision 2020 target for infrastructure projects is N32 trillion (\$210 billion) (World Bank 2006, Ohia 2011).

Unfortunately, University (Tertiary) education which is the primary provider of high caliber human capital and the key to Africa's technological advancement has not been benefitting from PPPs. Even though African governments have consistently invested heavily on training of high caliber human resources, most of the efforts have not translated to commensurate growth. From time to time, governments have invited African professionals in the diaspora and subsequently hired many of them to contribute to her industrialization. Since the advent of military leaderships in most of sub-Saharan Africa from the 1960s, and the subsequent take-over of all schools by the government in Nigeria, the provision of schooling is largely provided and financed by governments at all levels, thus limiting access to education since government funds are inadequate to cater for all educational needs. However, due to unmet demand for education coupled with reduction in government budgetary allocation to education, governments in several parts of the world are developing mutual and innovative partnerships with the private sector. In Nigeria, for instance, entrepreneurs started making incursion into pedagogical service delivery at elementary and high school levels since the early 1980s. Thereafter since the 1990s, forays were being made into the tertiary sector, with the government licensing several private universities to make education more accessible to Nigerians. Today, there are

more than fifty (50) private universities in Nigeria! This development is due to the fact that there are observable gaps in the training programs and products of the public universities since there are insufficient amenities required for training such as laboratories and instructional aids for the training of students in different programmes. Added to this are dilapidated infrastructure and poor working conditions that make teaching and research a bore, thus result in faculty protest by way of industrial strikes which most of the time leads to closure of the schools and by extension the elongation of academic calendar in every semester by academic staff union. Such disruptions have made a four year programmes in the university to become six or eight years, thus lowering the overall ranking of Nigerian universities.

Tables 1 and 2 show that successive Nigerian governments have not met UNESCO's recommendation of 26% of national budgetary allocation to education. This is quite unfortunate but paints the picture of the present situation clearly.

One primary reason for engaging Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in university education service delivery is the prospective role of the private sector in expanding equitable access to quality education and improving learning outcomes. Buttressing this point, Odekunle and Babalola (2009) submitted that the supply-demand gap in education is consequent on the inability of the public sector to meet education demand of the citizenry. They further asserted that while the overall needs of the labor market are met from the total output of the supply system, there is an obvious need for the private sector as a user of high level human capital to contribute to the supply of this category of manpower. It is clear that with well-articulated partnerships with the private sector, service delivery in both public and private universities would greatly improve. When private sector expertise is leveraged by the government in university education, it would definitely improve access to higher education and hopefully lower costs as well. Both financial and logistics' burden on government would be shared, even at minimal costs to the students. A PPP programme would engender for improved quality control mechanism and accountability in the entire university system.

TABLE 1
FEDERAL ALLOCATION TO EDUCATION IN NIGERIA FROM 1988 TO 2008

Years	Total expenditure	Allocation to education	Percentage allocation to education	UNESCO norm (26% of total exp.	Amount of under funding	Percentage of under funding
1988	27,749.50	1,458.80	5.25	7,214.87	5,756.07	79.78
1989	41,028.30	3,011.80	7.34	1,0667.36	7,655.56	71.77
1990	60,268.20	2,402.80	3.99	15,669.73	13,266.93	84.67
1991	66,584.40	1,256.30	1.89	17,311.94	16,055.64	92.74
1992	92,797.40	2,291.30	2.47	24,177.32	21,886.02	90.50
1993	191,228.90	8,882.38	4.64	49,719.31	40,837.13	82.14
1994	160,893.20	7,382.74	4.59	41,832.23	34,449.49	82.35
1995	248,768.10	9,746.40	3.92	64,679.71	54,933.31	84.93
1996	337,271.60	11,496.15	3.41	87,690.62	76,194.47	86.89
1997	425,284.03	14,853.54	3.49	110,573.85	95,720.32	86.57
1998	513,446.23	13,589.49	2.65	133,496.02	119,906.53	89.82
1999	606,608.43	43,610.65	7.19	157,718.20	114,107.55	72.35
2000	689,770.63	57,956.64	8.40	179,340.36	121,383.72	67.68
2001	777,932.83	39,882.60	51.13	202,262.54	162,379.94	80.28
2002	866,093.03	80,530.88	9.30	225,184.19	144,653.31	64.24
2003	954,257.23	64,782.15	6.79	248,106.88	183,324.73	73.89
2004	1,042,419.43	76,524.65	7.34	271,029.05	194,504.4	71.77
2005	1,743,200.00	82,795.06	4.75	453,232.00	370,436.94	81.73
2006	1,842,587.07	87,294.56	4.74	479,072.80	391,778.24	81.78
2007	2,348,593.00	107,529.39	4.58	610,634.18	503,104.79	82.40
2008	3,078,300.00	164,000.00	5.33	800,358.00	636,358.00	79.31

Source: CBN 2008

TABLE 2
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES 1990 TO 200

Years	Amount requested by universities (N billion)	Amount allocated (N billion)	Short fall between university request and government allocation (%)
1990	1,216	0.748	38.5
1991	1,453	0.779	46.4
1992	3,663	2,989	18.4
1993	5,075	4,532	10.7
1994	7,342	5,469	25.6
1995	11,328	6,392	43.6
1996	12,442	7,535	39.4
1997	15,820	7,059	55.4
1998	22,767	8,196	64.0
1999	40,884	10,507	74.3
2000	65,579	33,788	48.5
2001	68,911	31,844	53.8

Computed from National Universities Commission file

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN AFRICA

Historically, education service delivery in Africa just like in other parts of the world was private-sector driven. It was the religious body movements and other private concerns that initiated formal education services. This was generally in response to their felt needs. On the other hand, governments' role was to ensure quality control and provision of bench marks and standards for which the private schools were to operate. Even though it is globally accepted that government should ensure unfettered access to education

for all and sundry, the primary motivation or impetus was individualistic. In Nigeria, for instance, in the early 20th century, government's first role was to provide grants-in-aid to support the private schools and later few government (model) schools were established, first to cater for the needs of the Muslim community in Lagos and also to provide the required benchmark for the private schools to emulate. Hence, originally, there was a preponderance of private schools in Nigeria from inception up to the military take-over of schools, an exercise that commenced in 1970 (http://skoola.com/read_news.php?id=45).

Even though the West and other developed parts of the world seem to have mastered Public-Private Partnerships to the advantage of their nations and peoples, it is only recently that Nigeria started engaging the PPPs in the health sector. In the case of education, there is not much happening. What operate in Nigeria presently are parallel education services in which case the public and private schools operate with little or no relationship at all. It is evident that there is a lot that both sides could learn and benefit from each other. It is on record that private universities' faculty and students do not engage in industrial actions; neither do they take the laws into their own hands as there are regulations that guide students and staff attitude and behaviors within and outside the institution's premises. It is evident that there

are studies that confirmed that even though the private schools may not be able to boast of the caliber of faculty and resources that the public schools command, they usually compensate with better service delivery because of the private sector efficiency drive (Odeleye, Oluwatimilehin & Akinnola 2012). It is reported that some private colleges operate almost flawless services without compromising lecture hours, a big challenge to Nigeria's public universities. Also, quality control mechanisms of some private universities may seem to be more effective in ascertaining basic standards for teaching services, curriculum and course ware development. Again, with the National Universities Commission pronouncement on illegal and substandard private universities in Nigeria, those operating ones are then performing within the ambit of NUC regulations. It becomes imperative therefore that government and its agencies need to engage the strength and expertise of the private sector in charting a course for both the short-term and long-term development of tertiary education.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Whereas the public universities have the requisite pedagogical environment, fully complemented with physical plant, equipment and human capital, for the most part, the resources are poorly maintained. The implication is that most of the resources, including the human capital, may be in a state of inertia and would always need revamping and overhauling. On the other hand, private universities may not boast of the quantum of human and physical resources available to publicly-funded universities, they compensate for whatever deficiencies with almost flawless quality control system lubricated by sense of commitment from the founder and their boards, high output in terms of research and teaching service delivery.

Funding is a fundamental issue in providing tertiary education services. At the moment, only public universities in Nigeria are funded by government and its agencies. Also, there seems to be no palliative measures put in place by government to ensure that indigent citizens have access to private education, which is usually fee-paying. Scholarships, grants, bursaries and loan facilities are not readily accessible to all and sundry. This

seems to negate the premise that government should ensure access to quality education. In Korea, it is reported that government subsidizes university education (and private universities are major beneficiaries) and maintains effective quality control in all facets. In Nigeria, public funds are available to publicly funded institutions while private universities are left to themselves. If the true essence of university education is to help accelerate national development, then it could be that the Nigerian government is working contrary to impetus that could help realize the objective establishing university education as all efforts are geared towards achieving the aim of making availability and maintenance of human capital required for the economic development of the country in all ramifications a continuous process looking at the essence of establishing private university by the side of the public ones.

Presently, public and private universities operate as competitors rather than as complements, every one doing "their own" thing. The whole essence of university education is "the quest for the truth", for which no school is an island. It is imperative for both public and private sector education providers to initiate collaborative campaigns to find solutions to lingering national and international challenges.

In the typical private school, even though with little infrastructure, there is higher output and greater effectiveness; in the public, even though the potential is so enormous, usually most of the infrastructures are dilapidated and best practices are not sustained. When public funds are injected into private universities under PPPs, it can engender for increased access to education and will also afford indigent students opportunity to study courses appropriate to their needs.

CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

In spite of the efforts of the Nigerian government at equipping and revamping public universities all over the country, infrastructure is still grossly inadequate. Hostel accommodation, library facilities and lecture rooms/halls are either not enough or are in poor state. Also, utilities such as water, electricity and roads are usually a great challenge. Primarily, governments could enter

into partnerships with the private sector to provide some if not all of the aforementioned needs.

However, there are some other fundamental issues that need to be addressed if the public agency and the private investor would be able to make success out the partnership.

Chaotic System of PPPs

In most of the industrialized Europe and North America, PPPs are forged on specific systems which make the terms of partnership clearly defined and progress is usually easy to assess. In Nigeria and in most of sub-Saharan Africa, there is no systematic program for public-private partnerships in university education. Hopefully, when requisite infrastructure is made available through the Infrastructure Concession program, the impetus for PPPs would inevitably come from the public sector and then the private sector agencies could begin leveraging the opportunities for investment in the universities. However, this is only plausible when there is a platform upon which the partnerships would be based.

Poor Infrastructure

Key infrastructure like power, road network, public transportation and communication are not fully in place hence it has not been quite easy to deal headlong with the university infrastructural challenges. Governments have put the necessary framework in place to upgrade infrastructure in the key sectors of the economy.

Poor institutional Framework

Standards and best practices in the Nigerian public service seem to have been so compromised to the extent that it might be difficult to get requisite human resources to power the PPPs. Also, corruption and favoritism in award and execution of contracts might militate against the implementation of partnerships with the private sector. Since the private sector is committed to performance and upholding best practices, working with the public service may require some serious overhaul and reorientation.

Challenge of Accountability

At virtually every tier of national life in Nigeria, corruption continues to be a cankerworm, destroying the moral fabric of the society. For some in leadership positions, the primary consideration in investment may not be the social good but "What accrues to me?" For most part, there seems to be a lot of distrust within the Nigerian body polity and the economy is not excluded; private organizations might find it rather difficult to operate within the confines of systemic decay as seen in the Nigerian public service.

Policy Instability

With incessant changes in political leadership and subsequent policy changes, it may be rather tough for public and private sector operators to agree on key performance targets. This may also explain the apathy of many private investors towards public sectorial investments. In actual fact, it may be unwise to commit capital into a public system that is not self-accounting and for which probity confidence level is quite low.

Organizational Barriers

Given the contrasting terrains of public and private sector agencies, negotiation and reaching agreement on contract terms may be difficult. It is still quite a challenge getting business done in Nigeria.

Socio-cultural Prejudice

For most Nigerians, there seems to be widespread prejudice against Education. Even though Education remains the primary platform for human capital acquisition and development, it is quite surprising only few attempts at initiating PPPs in education are recorded. Also, Nigerians seem to have penchant for running their nation down by making despicable comments about her.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

The interesting thing is that the public agency needs the private sector just as much as the private sector also needs the public agency. While the government needs the private agencies

The issue is in which ways could the entrepreneurs and government cooperate? What should government and its agencies begin to do which they have, hitherto, not been doing? How can Nigeria's tertiary institutions effectively contribute to national development through functional innovations and relevant inventions? This is the essence of Public Private Partnerships in tertiary education. It is the synergy of government (its agencies) and private sector to provide cutting-edge educational services. In the first place, private universities do not embark on industrial actions. It is quite expedient to investigate how private universities ensure that lecture hours are not compromised and thus tend to make students concentrate on their studies. It is being suggested here that government and other public agencies leverage private sector expertise in providing avant-garde services without compromising or mortgaging standards? It is the thesis of this paper that in order to revive the ailing education industry, it is imperative for the public sector to engage PPPs in revamping Africa's tertiary education.

How can this be engineered? In the first place, there is need for government to take the lead in evolving a system of Public Private Partnerships in for all-round development in tertiary education. As at present in Nigeria, there is no system whereby the government can engage the private sector for the primary purpose of revamping Nigeria's education industry.

In common-sense economics, sole entrepreneurship is disfavored against corporately owned enterprises. Long-term growth and development of single owner business may not be secure as a result of apparent weaknesses. In terms of decision making, sole proprietorship negates the dictum that "two heads are better than one". One of the challenges militating against economy of African states is the distrust in the system. The present scenario whereby there seems to be a preponderance of sole-owner schools, especially at pre-school, elementary and high school levels is worrisome. However, happily, at the tertiary level, there seems to be a healthy deviation, with religious agencies and corporate agencies facilitating the establishment of universities. While it is true that out of the fifty plus private universities in Nigeria, at least ten of them are singly-owned, it is heart-warming that more corporate

organizations are investing in tertiary education. It is envisioned that as government at all tiers (local, state and federal) engage the apparatus of Public Private Partnerships in facilitating better access to tertiary education, more corporations, community-based organizations and communities would begin to get involved in this massive human capital industry.

Public-Private Partnerships come in a variety of forms and no two PPP projects are exactly alike. The following PPP variants were extracted from "Public-Private Partnerships: Terms Related to Building and Facility Partnerships", Government Accounting Office (GAO), April 1999.

- O&M: Operations and Maintenance,
- *OMM: Operations, Maintenance & Management
- DB: Design-Build,
- DBM: Design-Build-Maintain,
- *DBO: Design-Build-Operate,
- *DBOM: Design-Build-Operate-Maintain,
- DBFOM: Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain,
- DBFOMT: Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain-Transfer,
- BOT: Build-Operate-Transfer,
- BOO: Build-Own-Operate,
- BBO: Buy-Build-Operate, Developer Finance,
- EUL: Enhanced Use Leasing or Underutilized Asset,
- LDO or BDO: Lease-Develop-Operate or Build-Develop-Operate, Lease/Purchase, Sale/Leaseback, Tax-Exempt Lease and Turnkey

(Source: <http://www.ncppp.org/>)

While the position of National Council for Public Private Partnerships (NCPPP) on PPPs, types and approaches is in order, it must be emphasized that given the peculiar nature of the African socio-economic terrain, the first thing to do is to have all stakeholders cultivate a belief that PPPs are workable and germane to Africa's socioeconomic development. Also, it is expedient to customize perspectives for public agency partnerships with the multinationals and corpo-

rations since what operates readily in the industrialized West may not fit into the typical African landscape. Again, it is pertinent for African governments to initiate the tertiary education partnerships, starting first with the simple, easy to execute templates, especially the ones that have worked in transportation, health and infrastructure.

The following are recommended to establish PPP options for Africa's tertiary education:

Government should put in place effective communication strategy to make plain to all stakeholders and all the people. In executing this, it may be expedient to get leading public figures to champion the imperative of PPPs

- There is usually need to build the requisite capacity for the public agency involved in the partnerships. It is only appropriate the skills, information and expertise required for the PPPs should be mastered by the public agency. For instance, the public partner should be able to design, monitor and evaluate programmes for the PPPs.
- There must be shared objectives by both public and private sector partners from the beginning of the partnership. Each of the parties has definite strengths and would complement each other in the partnership.
- There is need to establish performance measures and that should include incentives for performance and sanctions for failure to perform. In essence, the partners should institute a system to evaluate the step-wise and overall performance of the partnership.
- There should not be discrimination between public and private universities in terms of funding and quality control. Under mutually terms and agreement, private universities should be funded by the state for increased access, improved pedagogical services and quality control. Education Trust Fund (ETF) grants for research and infrastructural development should be available to private universities for development and growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Engineering PPPs in tertiary education service delivery will lead to many significant changes in Africa's tertiary education. It is apparent that a significant option for the development of sustainable qualitative and quantitative tertiary education in Africa is for the various governments to engage the private sector organizations and multinational companies in mutually beneficial partnerships. Since the industrialized nations of the world have consistently utilized PPPs to revamp recessional economies, provide requisite infrastructure for roads, aviation, health and transportation among several others, Africa should begin to leverage the opportunities available for human capital development.

It is suggested that African governments should keep up with the pace of partnerships with the private sector in various sectors of the economy. It is hoped that once solid infrastructure for power, public transportation and water is in place, the economic environment would be attractive for investors in tertiary education.

Also, it is suggested that public and private universities begin to forge linkages and collaborative efforts. This is in line with the recent directive by the National Universities Commission (NUC) placing newly licensed private universities under mentorship of older established public universities. When universities, irrespective of status, begin to relate as equals and collaborate on mutual areas such as research, faculty development and technology transfer, among others. This step would undoubtedly accelerate development of the Nigerian university system.

With the various infrastructure and funding challenges in African universities, one viable option for optimal service delivery is for university administrators to begin to initiate healthy partnerships with the private sector. And it is a win-win situation because the private sector agencies would have ample returns on investment and would have been seen to fulfill their corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Government should encourage jointly/corporately owned private schools as against sole proprietorships. Generally the common practice in Nigeria is sole-owner schools (except for religion-

based schools), which for obvious reasons do not outlive the original owners. There has been a perpetual distrust in business circles so much that most businesses tend to subsist on individualism, thus literally stunting the growth of the enterprise.

Governments should encourage the construction of hostels for public and private universities by private agencies under various forms of PPP agreements. Other areas of partnership include endowment of buildings, programmes (chairs) and projects by multinational corporations, philanthropists and corporate organizations. In order to upgrade the tertiary education system to world class, it may be appropriate to appoint private sector administrators to head selected public universities under pilot projects.

It is suggested that government's quality control mechanism should be liberalized, allowing for more private participation in regulation of standards. In the event of increased funding into private universities, it would be government's responsibility to enforce enrolment and tuition limits. Academic and non-academic staff remunerations and other benefits would also be benchmarked. This would undoubtedly limit if not completely eliminate industrial unrests in universities; and once this template is adopted at other tiers of education, Nigeria's human capital development sector would begin to play its role of engineering national socioeconomic development.

Access to private university education could be facilitated by empowering indigent students if federal and state governments would revive the scholarship and loans boards and also begin paying bursaries to students. Through this, the main objective of PPPs is to increase access by making funds available to every university undergraduate to invest in their schooling (Patrinos 2000). This is in consonance with Gauri and Vawda (2004) who opined that demand-side mechanisms promote parental choice, school competition, and school accountability. When there is more access, both public and private universities would be under pressure for outstanding performance.

Finally, governments should seek to encourage organizations, corporations and multinational companies to take the issue of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to society with ut-

most seriousness. It may be appropriate for the public service agencies to put a system in place to encourage its agencies to forge partnerships with the companies.

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