

Editorial

As Nigeria prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in December 2003, the Commonwealth Education Fund in Nigeria has produced this special edition of its Newsletter to inform her readers of the activities taking place as a build up to the CHOGM, some of which include a symposium on the Future of Education in Nigeria which took place in the UK in July, a Parallel Symposium to the Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (CCEM) to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland in October 2003. It is expected that recommendations from these activities will feed into CHOGM.

In addition to giving information on the activities leading to CHOGM, this special edition of newsletter seeks to showcase the activities of the CEF in Nigeria through the work of her partners. The CEF strategic plan identified four strands of work to be carried out in order to contribute to the CEF goal of ensuring that all Commonwealth Children have access to, and complete good quality primary education by 2015. These key strands of work are to promote direct engagement with government by civil society on CEF issues at various levels through support to projects, enhance the quality of civil society actors to demand and engage through capacity building, promote the engagement on macro-economic issues and improve awareness and information dissemination to a wider public on EFA/MDG issues.

To carry out the first strand of work CEF has identified 17 partners through a call for expressions of interest after which the Steering Committee considered the expressions using predetermined criteria. As at the time of this report 14 of the potential partners have been assessed and 10 partners given initial grants to carry out work while the remaining are at different stages of readiness. Partners are expected to carry out work to cover:

- Strengthening civil society to participate in education design and plans at the local and national levels partners undertaking this work include; the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education (CSACEFA), Development Research and Project Centre (dRPC) and the Education Cooperation Society (ECS) others are the Nigerian Union of Teachers and the Parents Teachers Association;
- Monitoring of government spending on education: Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), Socio-Economic Rights Initiative (SERI), Project Agape and the Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development are being supported to carry out budget tracking exercises;
- Innovative access: those to carry out work here include; Health Development Agency (Child to Child), Pastoral Development Initiative (PDI), and Pastoral Resolve (PARE) others are Karatu Nigeria, Health and Development Initiative (HADI), Children's Projects (CP), Life Vanguard and CiSCOPE.

In this special edition our partners tell their stories as they know it. We wish you a happy reading.

CHOGM 2003

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting tagged "CHOGM 2003" will hold in Abuja the Capital City of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from the 5th to the 8th of December 2003.

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of governments and people of 54 independent countries (former British Colonies) who come together to find common positions on issues through consensus, in a relatively informal manner. It is one of the oldest international groupings of nations in the world. Its first meeting known as the Colonial Conferences was held in 1887. The Colonial Conferences were replaced in 1911 by the Imperial Conferences which took place at regular intervals.

Between 1944 and the early 1960s this gathering was called the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Meeting (CPMM) and meetings were held in London. In 1965 the Commonwealth Secretariat was established and in January of 1966 the CPMM convened in Lagos, Nigeria the first meeting outside London.

In 1971 CPMM met in Singapore and changed the name of the conference to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) this was to encompass both Presidents and Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth Countries.

The aim of CHOGM is to bring together almost one third of the

Continued on page 7

CSACEFA partners towards increasing education budgets

Following the national elections, some civil society organizations; the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), ActionAid, Socio-Economic Rights Initiative (SERI) and Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) have come together to form Education Working Group.

This group being facilitated by CSACEFA seeks to influence the formation and implementation of more effective educational and budget policies that eliminate gender disparities and create increased access to quality education throughout Nigeria.

The objectives of the Education Working Group are to; foster gender informed research, analysis and data generation on educational policy, budget allocation and program implementation, use research finding in influencing policy making and resource allocations for education, support member organizations' on-going action agendas on educational issues and raise awareness and

build capacity of local communities to recognize, track and advocate for improved educational budget and policies.

The Group has held several meetings with key members of some Committees of the National Assembly in a bid to arrange a public hearing of the national assembly on the issue of priorities and budget needs for the 2004 national budget.

At the end of the exercise, it is expected that there will be increased spending on strategic budget heads under education in the 2004 budget that will reflect the priority area of bridging gender disparities and there will be a standing (as opposed to ad hoc) forum for engagement on educational issues between CSO's and key committees of the National Assembly and relevant members of the Executive.

The areas of work that members of this group have been involved in researching include previous budgets (CDD), the impact of costs on enrollment



and completion (CSACEFA), and both policy and other impediments to achieving the Gender 2005 EFA target (ActionAid). It should be recalled that CSACEFA has a significant institutional support grant from the Commonwealth Education Fund to enable them sharpen the voice of CSOs working on EFA

In a separate development, CSACEFA will be holding a workshop in late October to finalize plans for the upcoming CHOGM as well as refine campaign priorities for 2004 - including activities for the 2004 Week of Action (WoA) under the auspices of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

CSACEFA members now elected to State EFA Forums

As part of the process of developing the Nigerian national EFA plans, the process of setting up State EFA Forums is complete and draft plans are at an advanced stage. In March and April of 2003, CSACEFA facilitated six workshops to bring CSOs working on education issues together to discuss input to the

process from civil society. These workshops were funded through the Office of the EFA Coordinator with support from the Education Tax Fund.

EFA forums now exist and a number of them now have civil society representation. These representatives have been charged with inputting civil society perspectives and priorities into

emerging state EFA plans. CSACEFA itself is a member of the National EFA Forum.

During the upcoming October workshop, CSACEFA will be reviewing the impact of its presence in the state EFA forums and making recommendations for further action.

Early Child Care and Development a Way of Increasing School Enrolment

In the current project with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF), Child to Child (Health Development Agency), Niger State aims at increasing the enrolment rate of girls in schools in Niger State by ensuring that disadvantaged and less privileged children especially the girls have access to, and complete good quality education. Child to Child will contribute to the "Education for All" target of 2015 set in the Dakar framework, by advocating for the provision of community-based Early Child Care (ECC) centers as close to the mothers as possible on a national.

Though the CEF objective emphasizes access and completion of primary education, this Early Child Care Project seeks to promote community early childhood stimulation and care as a way of increasing school enrolment and completion. Other objectives include the encouragement of the participation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in Niger State in the setting up of ECC facilities. In addition the project seeks to enlighten policy makers, religious leaders and other stakeholders on the need for early child care and stimulation.

Child to Child is a non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Bida Niger State. The organization's



project interest was borne out of the research study of Bida and its environs. In the study it was discovered that majority of the women who have not had access to education do not see the advantage in it and so do not see reasons why they should send their girl children to school. It was discovered through interviews and discussions that if given the opportunity women would happily release their children to play and learn in a safe place while they engage in some income generating activities.

In line with this finding, Child to Child in 1997 started an Early Child Care Center in the modern market in Bida and at present there are over 150 children registered, with girls in the majority. This low cost ECC center has been replicated in Patigi-wari, Gudu Gbagba in Doko Local Government area and Bazhi in Azza Local Government area of Niger State. The emphasis is on community ownership of the project while Child to Child facilitates the monitoring and

supervision of project activities.

The market women where these ECC centers have been established are empowered economically and more of them are now engaging in petty trading having in mind that there is a safe place for their children to play and learn. They are particularly happy to have such a place close to them where they can come and see things for themselves and more importantly make useful contributions.

Beyond reasonable doubt, the NGO brain child the Early Child Care center or "market school" project has proved that if women have a safe place for their children to play and learn, they would allow these children including the girl child to go to school without hindrance.

Dr. Catherine Gana
Executive Director

Engendering Popular Participation through Grassroots Organization Building: The CAPP Example

Since inception a decade ago, Community Action For Popular Participation (CAPP) has worked assiduously with dislocated, fragmented, disadvantaged and abandoned communities particularly in North Central and North Western geopolitical zones of Nigeria.

From the entry workshops in Plateau State in 1993 to Sokoto State in 2002, CAPP has been resuscitating community based organizations by training their leaderships on advocacy skills and sensitizing their memberships on their civic rights and responsibilities and building coalitions and networks. The goal is to enable the communities to take active part in matters that affect their existence and lives - governance, environment and health, poverty eradication, education and the defense of rights.

The empowerment and capacity building activities are complimented by action research and publication of quarterly magazines and newsletters which serve as advocacy materials.

CAPP worked with the communities dislocated by the construction of hydro-electric dams of Jebba, Kainji and Shiroro dams in central Nigeria. Participatory need assessment of the host communities of these dams revealed the abject neglect they had suffered in spite of the adverse effects of the dams. The construction of the dams modified the local microclimate, altered, the terrestrial ecosystem the natural flow of the rivers changed to aquatic ecosystem while the quality of water changed. These raised a myriad of problems

including:

- Resettlement
- Reduced fishing downstream
- Rivers became in navigable
- Health problems
- Loss of cultural identify
- Food storage and
- Destruction of lives and properties due to flooding

To worsen matters, the immediate host communities were not provided basic amenities such as clinics, schools, potable water and even electricity which is generated from their back yards and distributed several kilometers in Nigeria and neighboring Niger Republic.

CAPP documented these problems in a publication entitled: Damned by the Dams: The Story of Shiroro Communities. It was also discovered that the communities did not have a platform to advocate for redress of the problems. CAPP had to organize the communities to form an umbrella organization which they named NYACHESA (a Gbagyi word for "an idea whose time has come").

NYACHESA worked with another organization, Hydro-Power Generating Area Development Association (HYPOGA) from the Jebba dam area. NYACHESA and HYPOGA agreed to network, struggle and fight for a common cause while CAPP continued to provide technical support to them.

The advocacy of the communities was subsequently recognized by the Niger State Government in the year 2000. The State Government convened the first meeting of Governors of the four hydro-power states of Niger, Kogi, Kebbi and Kwara on July 29, 2000.

At the meeting, the four states resolved to pursue the establishment of Hydro-Electric Power Producing Areas Development Commission



(HYPPADEC) modeled after the Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC) which caters to the development needs of petroleum producing areas.

A bill to that effect was sponsored in the National Assembly which has been passed by the Legislature. This bill is, however, yet to be assented to.

CAPP is once more providing technical support to the communities to mount pressure for the realization of HYPPADEC. To bring the issue once again onto the front burner of national discourse, a national workshop on HYPPADEC is being planned for Lokoja, Kogi State capital.

The lesson CAPP has learnt in this activity is the limit of advocacy for a community as opposed to advocacy by the community. It has thus vindicated our strategy of empowering communities to control their destinies. In fact this encouraged us at CAPP to seek the support of the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) to establish school/community committees in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja with the view to engendering community participation in education. This, we believe, would assist immensely in the realization of Education for All Goals and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as they pertain to education.

Clement Wasah
Executive Director, Capp@email.com

A Participatory Budget Tracking Approach to Promote Quality Education for Girls and Disabled Children in Osun State

Two studies on education and gender in Nigeria were recently conducted by the Center for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD), with support from the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada, and UNICEF, respectively. The first one, which covered 18 States in Nigeria, evaluated the impact of cost recovery on education in Nigeria. The other study was on factors impeding girls' education in Nigeria.

The findings revealed that public primary education in Nigeria is in need of repairs and girls are the most disadvantaged. Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and Net Attendance Rate (NAR) were 43% and 57% respectively, for girls as compared with 57% and 61% for boys.

Studies also revealed that the budget for education has been decreasing in absolute value, over time, as a result of which facilities for quality education like teaching aids and qualified teachers are grossly deficient in most public primary schools. Even when money is voted for education in the budget, the actual amount released is insignificant and the wise spending of the money released is not assured. Due to lack of participatory education budgeting, parents, communities, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other grassroots stakeholders have no say in what amount goes to primary education and how the money voted for education by Local Government Authorities and the State

Government is spent and with what results.

Lessons from other countries show that budget tracking and stakeholders-targeted advocacy for quality education, especially for girls, can lead to improved quality of primary education. It was in this respect that CASSAD with support from the Commonwealth Education Fund embarked on a project aimed at using participatory educational budget tracking and advocacy approach to increasing the access of girls and disabled children to quality primary education in Nigeria.

The project which started in August, 2003 is attempting to enhance, through sensitization, mobilization and training, the active involvement of members of the communities (including their CBOs and NGOs) in education budgeting and tracking with a view to empowering them to collaborate with government, at the Local and State levels, in evolving and implementing education plans that will promote the access of girls and the disabled children to quality education and that will ensure increased enrolment and retention of girls and disabled children in primary schools in Osun State. It is also hoped that the project will promote, in Osun State, NGO/CBO advocacy activities for quality education, especially for girls and the disabled children who are, hitherto, marginalized and are vulnerable.

The project has, for a start, targeted 2 LGAs in Osun State in Southwest Nigeria. Hitherto, at the State level, the key stakeholders have been identified, sensitized and their cooperation have been secured. Among the key stakeholders are - the State Ministry of Education, the State Primary Education Board, the Local Government Education Authorities, the nine Schools for Handicapped

Children in Osun State and the Central Economic Planning Office in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. The selection of the 2 LGAs was guided by the pre-disposing conditions in the LGAs - existence of virile CBOs and PTAs; level of enthusiasm of community leaders, other researchers and the LGAs; willingness of the key actors to contribute time and effort; concern of the LGAs and the community leaders for girls and disabled children education; rate of girls' and disabled children's enrolment, among others. Data have been collected on the following: primary school pupils enrolment in all the LGAs, the total number of primary schools in each LGA; the net and gross enrolment rates; the school drop-out rates; among others.

In the next 2 months, the stakeholders at the LGA level shall be identified and mobilized. All Stakeholders Committee (ASC) shall be empowered on techniques of participatory rapid appraisal; participatory education budgeting; budget tracking; techniques of monitoring and evaluation; education performance monitoring and evaluation; and advocacy strategy for quality education for girls and the disabled children. All in preparation for budget tracking exercises which will be carried out over the next 24 months. CASSAD will provide technical supports to the ASCs so that, after the life of the project, the committee will be in a good position to continue to play leading roles in education budgeting and advocacy activities in their respective LGAs.

Prof. A.G. Onibokun
Secretary General
CASSAD

Accounting for the Right to Education

Socio-Economic Rights Initiative (SERI's) project with the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) centers on Accounting for the Right to Education through Budget Tracking. The project is in harmony with one of SERI's objectives which is the promotion of due process and basic standards in Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) rights, education being one of such rights. The project has two major objectives. First, it seeks to strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of education plans and frameworks and support for broad-based alliances. It also seeks to enable local communities monitor government spending on education at the state and local levels.

There are six specific activities under the project. These are Education Policy Analysis Workshop for Civil Society Organizations; Education Budget Advocacy and Monitoring Workshop and Five-year analysis of education budgets in three states. Others are collation and publication of state, national and international standards that impact on the rights to education; participation in education budgeting-involving civil society participation in the budgeting processes of call circular, budget preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and audit. The fifth activity is information dissemination.

Both in the design and execution of these activities, SERI draws a lot of insights from some of its previous works and projects. One of these is its book Study on the Right to Education which examines the state of education in Nigeria from

pre-colonial times to the present date. The second is the South East Budget Network (SEBN), the major platform for realizing the objectives of this project. SEBN is a network of civil society a n d

community-based organizations in the five South East states of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo which SERI set up for the purposes of democratizing civil society participation in the budgeting process. Thirdly, SERI also publishes a quarterly review of the state of ESC rights in Nigeria and through it, the state of education, among others, is always subjected to periodic critical examination.

So far, the Education Policy Analysis Workshop has been organized. This was preceded by the production and distribution of a two-page flyer entitled Introducing the Accounting for the Right to Education Project. Though addressed to members of SEBN, the flyer was nevertheless disseminated to the media (which publicized it) and to NGOs outside SEBN as well. The Workshop took place in Enugu from August 7-9, 2003 and it was attended by 44 participants drawn from non governmental organizations, Parent Teacher Associations, Nigeria Union of Teachers, Nigeria Labour Congress and the media. Its resource persons were drawn from the academia, civil service, trade unions and non governmental organizations. A Communiqué giving details of the power mapping exercise in the education sector undertaken by the participants, the issues of serious concern to them, their resolutions and next line of action was later issued. The



Communiqué and some of the workshop papers were publicized in the media.

The SERI/CEF project aspires to: cultivate a core group of informed, committed and dedicated civil society actors and groups able and willing to continuously make inputs to education policy frameworks; ensure enhanced school enrolment and improved quality of education and popular participation in the education process as well as ensure greater value for money, accountability by the state on the right to education and transparency of decision-making processes to the people. Other outcomes expected are greater empowerment of civil society to engage through improved understanding and capacity on education policy and related issues; favorable education policies and civil society positions on the contents and substance of education policies through proffering alternative frameworks and finally the guaranteeing of educational planning that takes cognizance of gender, the rights of people with disabilities, children in difficult circumstances and ethnic minorities.

Eze Onyepere Socio-Economic Rights Initiative
Lagos

Capacity Building for partners

In line with the strategy of enhancing the quality of civil society actors to demand and engage through capacity building the CEF carried out a workshop in Kano from the 29th of September to 3rd October 2003. The workshop objectives were to provide the participating organisations with a framework for self-assessment, identification of capacity gaps and provide the organisations with the understanding and skills in defining SMART objectives, setting measurable indicators and writing good proposals and reports. In addition, the workshop sought to facilitate a process that will enable them to redefine their values, vision and organisational mission and then draw up their action plans.

The five day capacity building workshop had 26 participants, 19 men and 7 women from 9 organisations within Kano State. At the end of the workshop participants

gained increased knowledge in organisation al self-assessment, were able to identify their organisation al capacity gaps and increased their knowledge and skills in setting specific and measurable objectives and indicators and also improved their skills in proposal writing.



The next capacity building activity will take place in late November 2003 on a date to be announced. The workshop will be on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) for CEF partners. The objectives will be to bring partners together to articulate community level Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation specific objectives for the CEF project goal, enhance partners' knowledge and skills on PM&E and develop PM&E work plan for the CEF project activities.

At the end of the workshop it is expected that the participating organizations would have enhanced their skills and knowledge of PM&E and also develop an action plan for monitoring and evaluating the activities. The time table for other trainings would be announced later. For further information please contact us at CEF@actionaidnigeria.org or check C E F web site www.actionaidnigeria.net/cef.htm.

Continued from cover page 1

CHOGM 2003

worlds' leaders, mostly Presidents and Prime Ministers to discuss matters of common interest and progress initiatives to benefit the Commonwealth's diverse membership. The key areas of achievement are in promoting democracy, racial equality, conflict resolution, cultural diversity, education, economic development and access to modern technology. At the end of each conference a communiqué of mandates and

policies, declarations or statements on important matters is issued by the leaders.

As part of initial plans for CHOGM related activities, the Commonwealth People's Forum called for Expressions of Interest from civil society organization across the Commonwealth Countries. In line with that, the CEF secretariat in conjunction with the Global Campaign on Education (GCE) and ANCEFA sent in their expression of interest and also booked for space to run meetings and workshops. In addition the African

Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) will also be holding its AGM in Abuja. It is expected that coalitions and networks at country, sub regional and regional levels will be attending. It is expected that the recommendations and views emanating from their meetings will contribute to democracy and people-centered development, as well as develop recommendations for strengthening the policies and conditions that enable civil society to carry out such roles.

Self-Help in Universal Basic Education (UBE) / World Bank Support to Community Development

As part of highlighting policy actions aimed at achieving EFA in Nigeria, the CEF News is focusing on the UBE/WB Self Help Project in this edition. This project is overseen by Dr Ubani who is a member of the CEF National Steering Committee submitted this article.

Education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering the populace, promoting human rights and democracy, perfecting the environment and controlling population growth. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in the context of the Nigerian strategy for achieving Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015 is the pivot in which the education system revolves. In particular, primary education determines the foundation on which other levels of education build on and hence, forms the cornerstone of sustainable development in all its ramifications.

Over the last three decades, primary education in Nigeria has been plagued with different kinds of problems ranging from inconsistencies in policy to policy implementation. There were also reports on the decline both in the qualitative and quantitative primary education sub-sector. The World Bank Economic Sector Work dedicated to primary education in Nigeria also reported deficiencies in financing, control and management of primary education in the country. Besides these elements, human and material resources were also inadequate. Based on these and other reasons the Nigerian First Primary Education Project CR-2191-UNI came on board to assist the country improve the primary education services delivery systems.

The major thrust of the project includes the provision of textbooks for four core subject in primary school curriculum (English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Primary Science). Two levels of support project were carried out and they include school level matching grant projects and State-level improvement projects. The two levels differed essentially in the amount of support funds given to the beneficiaries. The school level received a maximum of N200, 000 per school while the state-level received N2 million maximum per project of at least one component. However, all projects must be school-based and initiated by a significant community generically defined to represent groups such as PTA, NGO or CBO, Town/Village Unions, autonomous communities, district and religious organisations and others.

The process of instituting the self-help small scale pilot projects involved stakeholder consultations including National, State and Local Education Authorities' representatives, consultants, World Bank officials and other sectoral representatives. The process of selecting beneficiaries involved call for and evaluation of proposals based on agreed guidelines and criteria using a three stage assessment process. An Implementation Manual adapted from the Implementation Manual of similar project in Lusaka, was prepared to aid the implementation process and made user friendly for the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) members in each project site. Altogether, 132 distinct project sites were covered during the pilot phase.

The community Self-Help projects model has greatly helped in forming the public and private sector partnerships in community ownership of schools for sustained educational delivery in Nigeria. In this wise, the model will continue to support the UBE programme in its dictum that EFA is the responsibility of all by:

- Strengthening the foundation of Basic Education development;
- Seeking more financial support for local level manpower development and school improvement activities;
- Undertaking projects that create conducive learning environment;
- Ensuring access to educational facilities, equity and quality of educational opportunities particularly at the grass roots;
- Engaging interested communities in the process of generating acceptable proposals for viable projects that meet the needs of their schools even with input from civil society organisations (CSO).

As more communities, not hitherto involved in our current programme are showing a lot of interests and want to participate in the programme, the self-help community initiated small scale projects model aspires to further;

- Engage in Comparative Basic Education Analysers and Linkages that would enable the improvement of the current strategies for schools improvement;
- Adapt and customise good practices in functional education systems that would be relevant in realising the goals of basic education for sustainable development at the grassroots; and
- Obtain and generate support for application of information communication technology for ultimate benefits of the rural and urban schools that form the major clientele for the self-help projects across the country.

ActionAid can, through its management of the Commonwealth Education Fund and other funds sources be part of self-help process, its dreams and aspirations. Other agencies are also welcome.

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Education Remains the Best Legacy

Most times discussions around education are in abstracts and often do not quite drive home the message to the most affected. Beyond their immediate comprehension, forums where decisions that could change the course of their poverty are taken in nice looking conference halls and published on glossy papers. Yet so often she cannot capture the significance of it all neither do the gains of these decisions trickle down to them. With their senses dulled by poverty, they grope their way through a tunnel of ignorance. Their breed is characterized by voicelessness and vulnerability and their fruits face a further danger of a legacy in shackles.

Against this end the CEF has provided a unique opportunity for civil society in Nigeria and 16 other commonwealth

countries to cry out for these victims of inequity and injustice, caught in the web of poverty, ignorance, marginalisation and poorly implemented policies that they on their own cannot disentangle themselves from; by assisting their government in achieving EFA goal by 2015 and ensuring a gender balance in school enrollment by 2005. A challenge the world watches closely.

Today Nigeria may have reached its threshold in education as we are been categorized as a high-risk country that is not likely to achieve these goals within the specified time frame.

The need therefore, to push for free and quality education, more than ever before, with gains that enables the child read, write and possess skills in numeracy, comprehension, analyses and reasoning cannot be overemphasized in a highly

competitive global village. "Education Is the Best Legacy" was a slogan by late Obafemi Awolowo, a strong political preacher of free and quality education. He had analyzed the dimensions of what it took a nation to be truly great and like great minds before and after him knew education was a factor that could not be removed from the equation.

Education remains the best legacy for the Nigerian child and working in partnership with Government, Civil Society, Private Sector and Communities to achieve EFA is the surest way to leave such legacy for future generations.

Joyce Enaboifo.
Programme Administrator (Education)
ActionAid Nigeria

CBO Capacity Building for Girl Child Education in Northern Nigeria

CBO Capacity Building for Girl Child Education in Northern Nigeria Indicators of primary school education in general and girl child education in particular paint a dismal picture of education in the North of Nigeria as compared to other zones of the country. In a recent survey of primary and pre-primary school education in the North of Nigeria conducted for USAID under the leadership of the Development Research and Project Centre (dRPC), negative attitudes towards modern education at the primary level were identified amongst community members concerned about falling moral and education standards in schools as well as increasing costs (Northern Social Assessment Report for USAID, 2003). The table below shows that net primary school attendance and early childhood education is lowest in the Northeast and Northwest when compared to other zones of the country.

Zone	Net Primary School attendance in %	Early Childhood education in %
SW	81	41
SE	79	39
NW	28	4
NE	39	3
National	55	18

MICS, 1999

State governments, regional associations under the auspices of Arewa House as well as international organizations such as UNICEF have all sought to address these problems through various programs and projects. However, it has been civil society associations especially at the community level which have consistently endeavored to address the problem of education in the North using indigenous strategies and methods.

In the past 3 years, the dRPC has sought to build the capacity of a core group of CBOs working on primary education in the North of Nigeria. Using a unique learning circles capacity building training methodology the dRPC has worked with a core group of 15 CBOs to enhance their performance to contribute to primary education goals at the community level. The dRPC's experience of running the Learning Circles Capacity Building Program for CBOs in the North reveals two clear gaps in the performance of these groups:

Gap 1: While many CBOs working on primary education in the North are genuinely concerned about the problems of access, availability and standards in modern education in general, they have yet to be convinced that girl children are disproportionately disadvantaged educationally. Moreover, they not

convinced that there are structural and cultural obstacles to girl child education in the community and that the strategies for alleviating the problems of girl child education in the community lie in building consensus through advocacy and demonstration effects by community leaders.

Gap 2: Most CBOs working in the area of primary education in the North simply endeavor to build schools by generating their own limited resources. Little or no attention is given to advocacy to local or state government educational authorities. CBOs therefore operate in a vacuum and often find the sustainability of their projects threatened by their inability to generate funds on a sustainable basis.

Based on the gaps identified dRPC sought the support of the Commonwealth Education Fund to carry out capacity building on girl child education for 20 NGOs in the Northern States of Nigeria. The goal of this project is to improve the quality of life and life chances offered through education of girls 6-14 in 8 educationally disadvantaged states in the North of Nigeria.

Symposium on the Future of Education in Nigeria

CEF Nigeria was represented at a civil society symposium on the Future of Education in Nigeria organised by the Council of Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) in London. The symposium was a first step in a three tier event which will culminate in the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting (CHOGM) taking place in Abuja- Nigeria in December 2003. The event was a platform on which Nigeria presented her achievements, aims and needs to a sympathetic audience from the UK. The objectives of the symposium were to:

- Promote a wider knowledge and appreciation of the achievements and challenges of educational development in Nigeria and particularly of the country's efforts to increase participation in schooling, along the lines of Education for All plans;
- Assist Nigerian professionals and policy-makers to acquaint themselves with experiences, innovations and resources in the UK and the Commonwealth which may help them in meeting the present challenges of educational development;
- Help voluntary/professional bodies in the UK to understand better how they may usefully contribute and to help them identify appropriate Nigerian partners;
- Stimulate the flow of UK resources to Nigeria for the support of education and to promote the two-way

movement of scholars and educational professionals;

- Appraise Nigeria's place as (i) a major recipient of UK development assistance and (ii) an important Commonwealth market for education services.

Due to the CEC's Parliamentary connections there was sharing of ideas on education and political accountability between members of the Nigerian National Assembly who attended the symposium and members of the British Parliament. Immediate outcomes of the meeting were new exchanges/links between education policy-makers and education professionals in Britain and Nigeria and a publication on the links/interchange. Other outcomes included a wider knowledge on Nigerian education and the development of new partnerships and networks. The presence of key Commonwealth figures provided an opportunity to think about Nigeria's role in the forth coming CHOGM. Recommendations from the symposium are to be sent to the Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (CCEM) taking place in Edinburgh,

Scotland in October 2003 which should feed into CHOGM.

The Commonwealth Education Ministers meet every three years in different countries to discuss issues of mutual concern. The last meeting was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2000 this years' conference is in Edinburgh with the theme Closing the Gap: Access, Inclusion, Achievement. The ministers will address the key issues of ensuring all children and young people have access to the highest quality of education, ensuring that their education is fully inclusive and ensure that it enables them to maximise their achievements.

In the course of the Conference, the Ministers will interact with delegates to a Parallel Symposium and hear their recommendations and conclusions. The Commonwealth Education Fund will be represented at the Parallel Symposium by Coordinators from the 17 Commonwealth Countries benefiting from the fund and it is expected that they will also have audience with the Education Ministers from their countries.

Pati Wari Community School

Pati Wari is one of the four communities where Child to Child (Health Development Agency) is carrying out an intervention.

Child to Child discovered that there are neither school structures nor literate person in Pati Wari in addition the women in the community were not allowed to speak to strangers for fear that they may be corrupted. However after a few advocacy visits to the community leaders and decision makers Child to Child has now been allowed access to the women in the



community. The traditional ruler has also given Child to Child two of his "Zaure" which are his traditional reception halls to use as learning centres. Child to Child has since established learning centers in Pati Wari and has 50 children in attendance with 90% of them girls.

Strengthening Basic Education in Pastoral Communities Through Community Mobilization

Pastoralist Development Initiative (PDI) is one of the beneficiaries for the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) in Nigeria. In developing the proposal for funding by the CEF, PDI focused on enabling local communities to monitor government spending on education at local and national levels and to address issues of girl-child education in the pastoral communities. The three main components of the project are capacity building, budget tracking and campaign for girl-child education.

Nomadic Pastoralists in Nigeria are socially, economically and politically disadvantaged and have little or no access to basic education. The nomadic school systems are at best a weak attempt by the government to provide education for the nomads. Five years after the creation of nomadic education centers, most remain under trees with no facilities and teachers hardly come to the centers. Traditionally and increasingly for economic reasons, majority of pastoral boys and girls are engaged in economic and household chores and hindered from acquiring basic education where such services are found. Pastoral girls are more educationally disadvantaged due to socio-cultural reasons. For the same reasons, pastoral women do not have a voice in decisions regarding the education of the nomadic girl-child.

The project is being carried out in the six area councils of the Federal Capital Territory, it is expected that the results and analyses will be applicable to Pastoralist in most part of Northern Nigeria.

The goal of the project is to empower



communities of nomadic pastoralists to participate in all basic education processes to ensure access, gender balance in enrolment, retention and completion, and monitor government spending in education provision in order to ultimately facilitate participation in socio-economic and political activities and to contribute to poverty eradication.

PDI seeks to empower nomadic pastoralists to engage in advocacy and budget tracking and to participate in the management of the nomadic education centers. Another objective is to encourage girl-child enrolment, retention and completion of basic primary education through awareness raising programmes in pastoral communities. Six pastoral settlements have been selected for project activities while 6 others will serve as control communities. Both selections are based on criteria jointly developed by the pastoralists and the PDI project team.

PDI will assist the six project communities to form Community Education Committees (CECs) that will have the mandate of the communities to take part in the implementation of the project as well as to lead the educational development of the communities. Members of the CECs and PDI as well as representatives of the National

Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), FCT Department of Education, the FCT Commission for Nomadic Education and the Area Council Education Department would then receive some training on budget tracking. The pastoralists will receive further training on budget tracking and advocacy through on-settlement workshops to be facilitated by the PDI project team, following which a committee would be formed in each area council to form the nuclei of the advocacy and budget tracking initiative.

The campaign for girl-child education will also be led by the pastoralists following the selection and training of community facilitators and further on-settlement capacity building. Women who have excelled in their careers/businesses will be involved in the campaign as role models who will visit the pastoral settlements and talk to the pastoralists. Participatory monitoring and evaluation will be carried out based on indicators developed by PDI and the pastoralists.

Haluta Mijinyawa and Safia Zakama
Pastoralist Development Initiative,
Abuja

The First Steps in the Right Direction: Mobilizing Rural Dwellers

On the 5th September 2003, Representatives from Educational Cooperation Society (ECS), Association for Empowerment and Education (ASSEEMP), partners in a Common Wealth Educational Fund (CEF) project, held a meeting with twenty representatives from the various communities of Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State. The visit and meeting was to formally initiate a Rural School Development Committee (RSDC) Project in the area.

The Rural School Development Committee Project proposed for the community through the CEF seems apt at this stage of social development of Ibeju people, to help them foster constructive dialogue among themselves, develop sense of mutual respect and shed old prejudices that constituted obstacle to social harmony therein. For the first time in ages, the communities are coming together to talk to each other and deliberate on their common good. Besides buoying up their sense of belonging to the human community, it will help them identify with the global movement on Education for All (EFA) and contribute in their own way, to make it a success in their community. All this of course, will encourage and empower the Ibeju community to understand and demand the rights of their children to education in a cordial way, such that the Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Authority may be encouraged to deliver educational



services due to the people.

All these expectations impressions and resolves came through during the preliminary visits and meetings with the community people at Ibeju-Lekki in the first week of September 2003. The local heads representing their people were not only thrilled at the innovative idea of "doing it themselves" but also at the idea of training on participatory approach to development in education which will empower them to carry on self-help projects and advocate for themselves on educational issues where they felt excluded for ages on end. The initiation of the project in the community was acclaimed by all as a veritable first step in the right direction towards bringing a people back to the human fold and to revitalizing education in the rural community.

Alhaji F. O. Ogunbekun, the Local Government Education Administrative Chairman (LGEA) said, "I personally went round some of our schools in this community, to test some of our pupils and convinced myself that our primary six pupils could not read nor write as we did when I was in standard one. ...I have since then resigned myself to fate and gave up hope on the state of education of our children until this proposal came by! I assure you that we shall co-operate with you and follow it through to the end"

Chudi Ihanacho
Education Cooperative Society
Lagos

Committee meeting

The last CEF Committee meeting was held on the 11th of September 2003. Key issues that were explored included;

- Fundraising: The Committee has agreed to re-strategize and begin to engage with the private sector,
- Advocacy: It was agreed that members would carry out advocacy visits during the last quarter of the year.
- Engaging FBOs/FBAs in education policy: A round table discussion will be arranged to discuss the role of faith bases organizations/associations in education.
- Developing a concept for integrating HIV/AIDS into the education process

More details of progress in the next edition.

CEF appoints 'Focal Point' in Cameroon

Francis Vernyuy Ndzenyuy has been appointed as the focal person for the CEF in Cameroon. His role is to support the Education coalition in Cameroon (COSEC) in its utilization of CEF funds in Cameroon. It will be recalled that in February 2003, the CEF (with support from ANCEFA and ActionAid Nigeria) held a workshop, which saw the emergence of the National coalition on education in Cameroon - COSEC. COSEC will be the principal vehicle for achieving CEF objectives in Cameroon.

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