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For Development, Education and Leadership*

Anambra, Enugu, Kwara, and Plateau top list of states that have failed to access over 66.8 Billion Naira from the Universal Basic Education Fund since 2017.

Following the analysis of the response from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request filed by YouthHubAfrica in March 2020, it was discovered that Anambra, Enugu, Kwara, and Plateau topped the list of states that have failed to access over 66.8 billion Naira from the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Fund for over three years – from 2017 till date. These four states combined were the only states yet to access UBE Funds of 2017 with over 4.06 billion Naira in Education funds domiciled with the Universal Basic Education Commission.

In the response from the Universal Basic Education Commission, only Osun and Jigawa have accessed UBE Funds of 2019, leaving 34 states including FCT with a total of 53.19 billion Naira unaccessed funds. The UBEC Fund is provided by the Federal government wherein states are required to provide 50% counterpart funding in order to access the matching grants.

As a civil society organization, it has become necessary to demand immediate action from concerned state governors in accessing grants disbursed to their various states for the benefit of improving the quality of basic education in Nigeria as a whole. It is important to note that this has become a recurring problem with states unable to access UBE funds meant to support education in their states. This speaks to institutional challenges in the way the UBE funds is currently structured:

Following these revelations, we call on:

- The National assembly through its committee on education to call for a public hearing on the status of the state of UBE Grant disbursement from 2005 till date and the urgent need for reforms in order to find innovative ways to unlock these resources for the benefit of the Nigerian child.
- The Government of Anambra, Enugu, Kwara and Plateau to take immediate and urgent action to access its untouched UBE funds from 2017 till date. This will help improve the quality of education in their respective states, particularly in the light of the impact of COVID-19 on education nationally.
- The Nigerian Governors Forum to organise a peer review on the UBE matching grant to proffer concrete ideas for reforms of the UBE Funds

It is no longer tenable that a country with one of the highest number of out-of-school children in the world will have over 66.8 billion Naira in untapped education resources. As the nation prepares to re-open schools in the light of COVID-19, it is imperative that State Governments mobilise all available resources to ensure that no child is left behind and all children are safe, even in their learning environment.

Signed,
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