

Context

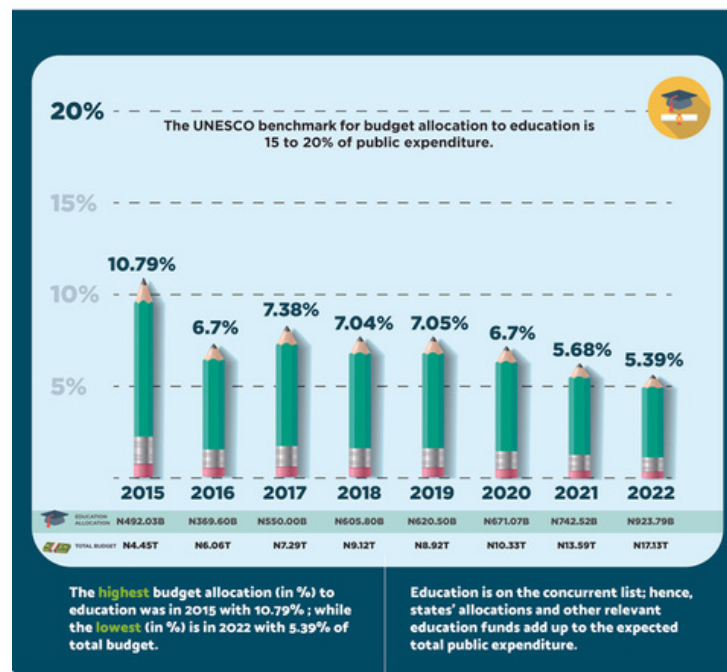
Budgetary allocations to education by the Federal Government of Nigeria ("FGN") have been abysmal. The UNESCO adopts a benchmark of 4 to 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or 15 to 20% of public expenditure. Nigeria, being a Federal State, has education on the concurrent list; hence, education is the duty and within the budgetary domains of both States and the FGN. The data in the image below shows only the FGN's allocation to education. The FGN's allocations to education control, mainly, tertiary education and unity schools to cover their capital expenditure, personnel, and overheads. Thus, to ascertain the total public expenditure for education in Nigeria, different sources of funds, such as FGN and States' budget allocations, TETFUND, etc, will be considered.

Lowest allocation so far

The current (2022) budget allocation to education by Nigeria's FG is 5.39%, that is N923.79 out of the N17.13 trillion overall budget, to be expended on Personnel (N662.7 billion), Overheads (N38.8 billion), and Capital Expenditure (N222.2 billion). This 5.39% is the lowest percentage allocation to education by the FGN in the last ten years. The 5.39% is a 50% reduction from the 10.79% allocated to education in 2015, and a minuscule 0.29% increase from the 2021 allocation in which, out of N13.59 trillion total budget, 5.68% (N742.5 billion) was earmarked for education.

Comparatively, the purchasing power in 2015 and 2022, when subjected to dollar exchange, shows only a slight difference in the Naira value of these percentage allocations.

Budget Allocation to Education (2015 - 2022)
(Federal Government of Nigeria)



The highest budget allocation (in %) to education was in 2015 with 10.79% ; while the lowest (in %) is in 2022 with 5.39% of total budget.

Education is on the concurrent list; hence, states' allocations and other relevant education funds add up to the expected total public expenditure.

Dire effects

The effects of the abysmally low budgetary allocations to education in Nigeria are countless. For instance, the need for better funding of FG-owned public universities is one of the many issues causing the seemingly endless strike actions by the Academic

Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The current ASUU strike, at the time of writing, has been on since February 14, 2022. Prior, between 1999 and 2021, education was halted for students of FG-owned universities for 60 months and seven days due to the numerous ASUU strike actions.

What others are doing

While we are in the process of collecting data on the budgetary allocations to education in the 36 states of Nigeria, as well as from other sources, as earlier mentioned, it is worth mentioning what other countries are doing. For instance, 2022 budget allocation to education in Ghana is 17.8%, Kenya is 23.9% taking the biggest chunk of its budget, Namibia is 19.9%, South Africa is 18.4%, and Rwanda is 11.6%.

Why increase budget allocation to education?

Budgetary allocation and investments indicate governments' priorities and political will. Increase in education budgeting by the FGN will mean, for instance, increase in the uptake of primary, secondary, and tertiary education; while ensuring that more students in Nigeria can access affordable and quality tertiary education. FGN's and State governments' investment in education is not only in fulfilment of their obligation to fulfil the right to education, it is also strategic, as investing in education is directly linked to, among others, reduction in poverty and crimes, as well as improvements in Nigeria's economic potential and capacity.