

**THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF EDUCATION (NAE)  
NCCE BUILDING, 829 RALPH SHODEINDE STREET CENTRAL BUSINESS  
DISTRICT, ABUJA, NIGERIA**

**A communiqué issued at the end of the NAE 2-Day Webinar (3) on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.**

**PREAMBLE**

In continuation of the NAE Webinar Series, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Webinar, focused on teacher education at two levels, **PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION AND COVID-19 and TEACHER CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COVID 19** on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 respectively. Simply put, preservice Teacher Education (TE) is the guided and supervised preparation of all teachers at any level of the education echelon for future professional classroom teaching. The serving teacher undergoes continuing professional development to improve and update performance. In Nigeria, preservice TE providers include Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education in the Universities, Institutes of Education in the Universities, Schools of Education in the Polytechnics, National Teachers' Institute (NTI), National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and National Mathematics Centre (NMC) while Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) continue with in-service training.

Renowned stakeholders in education led the discussions on related preservice teacher education and in-service professional development issues for the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Nigeria. The speakers included the following:

1. Professor Abdullah Yusufu Ribadu (Ex-Vice Chancellor), representing the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC)
2. Dr. Mchivga A. Abelega (Rtd. Ag. Director), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria
3. Professor Comfort Ekpo (Ex-Vice Chancellor), University of Uyo
4. Professor Julius M. Ademokoya (Chairman), Committee of Deans of Education in Nigerian Universities
5. Professor Emeritus PAI Obanya, FNAE
6. Professor Ahmed Iliyasu, National Teachers' Institute (NTI)
7. Professor Josiah Ajiboye (Registrar), Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)

8. Aleshin Olumayowa (Deputy Director), University Basic Education Commission (UBEC)
9. Professor Elizabeth Eke (President), Nigeria Academy of Education (NAE).

The webinar 3, moderated by Professor Kabiru Isyaku, attracted about 79 international and national participants made up of members of the NAE, scholars from different levels of education, stakeholders in education and related agencies.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

- (i) The teacher is the pivot to Education, which is the right of every child and also key to national development, therefore, the education and supply of globally competitive, competent teachers for every level of education must be given utmost priority.
- (ii) The quality of a nation's educational system depends, to a large extent, on the strength of the Teacher Education Programme (TEP).
- (iii) COVID-19 has brought about unexpected and unplanned disruption of the school systems globally resulting in prolonged school closures and lockdowns, that have transformed the landscape of teaching and learning and, also, demanding alternative sources of educational delivery systems. There is need for almost complete reliance on remote and distance learning, depending on the level of digital technologies available.
- (iv) In Nigeria, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore existing weaknesses and challenges in the system. Limited access to digital technologies and distance education as well as inadequate preparedness of teachers, especially in the public schools' system, prevented even the emergency provisions of remote instruction by FME to deliver adequately.
- (v) The obvious result of the lockdown and a pandemic whose end is not in view is a new normal in which teachers must learn to operate. The educational system and indeed the teachers must adapt to, function and excel in the face of challenges of the digital divide, existing learning gaps and the threat of a lost generation; of students' beset with unusual physical, socio-psychological and behavioural needs; of pedagogical demands such as evolving effective alternative lecturing when lecturers' cognitive and psychological preparedness

for effective delivery were in question. (and availability of the needed infrastructure and, of course, the Covid-19 protocols.)

- (vi) Preliminary efforts to deal with the challenges have started for the preservice teacher educational and continuing professional development especially in the arrangements to adapt to Covid-19 protocols in response to The Federal Ministry of Education guidelines for safe and efficient reopening of schools and learning facilities.
- (vii) (viii) All COVID-19 protocols (wearing of face mask, social distancing, regular washing of hands, limited crowd at events and limited out-door activities, among others) affect the conduct of TE training programmes. As a result, there is need to respond effectively to support students' learning and provide high quality instructions.
- (viii) (ix) Notably, Nigerian higher institutions have contributed at different levels in different geopolitical zones towards tackling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic through scientific and technological innovations. Such items like hand sanitizers, face masks, infra-red thermometers, and ventilators, among other items, have been recorded.
- (x) Though there is acknowledgement of the need for post Covid-19 adjustments in curriculum, evaluation procedures, pedagogical skills, the process of intervention has not started in earnest.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For successful TE after COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Nigeria must have the political will to go past mere rhetoric to implement the plans and policies which will enhance the position of the teacher in the educational system through a revamped TE.
2. Adequate funding from the government and donor agencies is required to achieve success. Not only must the current level of funding be improved, the allocated funds should be judiciously channeled to identified targets.
3. Concerning school reopening, the decisions should take cognizance of the state of Covid-19 pandemic, should involve and be constantly reviewed by all major stakeholders including all tiers of government, PTA, teachers' union, education

services providers, host community and civil society. Constant free flow of communication should be maintained.

4. Ensure through adequate funding, orientation and monitoring, the schools' capacity to maintain safe school operations, including adequate physical distancing, classroom size and students' capacity, adequate water availability, sanitation and hygiene by adopting special arrangements. This is in consonance with the Nigeria Centre for Disease and Control (NCDC) safety (mechanical) protocols stipulated. Others include outdoor learning, staggered attendance, alternate attendance, platooning, decreased interaction
5. Ensure operational school clinics/isolation centres to cater for the sick in school. In addition, ensure the establishment of school Covid-19 referral system, including protocols for transfer of infected individuals.
6. Research on teacher preparedness, student and system needs should guide post-covid-19 adjustments in curriculum, evaluation, digital technologies that will help bridge the gap, prevent drop out and reassure TE students and parents of work in progress.
7. Reimagine and restructure TE to facilitate necessary change in TE teaching and learning activities to foster 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set and transformational teacher outlook.
8. It is imperative to address the problem of low quality of entrants into teaching by enhancing the status of teachers, motivating teachers thereby attracting an intellectually higher level of candidates. To this end the recently announced Teachers salary structure and other incentives should be implemented. The action already taken for JAMB to use stricter measures in selection of education students as well as other planned selection processes specific to education should be pursued.
9. Guarantee stronger vision, leadership and coordination such that impactful and quality life-long learning can take place in segments of pre- and in-service TE system.
10. BLEND the training of pre-service teachers and gradually wean them into full integration of technology. Promote computer literacy, remote teaching skills, subsidize internet access and also ensure availability, accessibility to remote learning facilities.

11. Infuse digital literacy in TE training. Massive improvement is required in ICT skills and infrastructure both at the in preservice and in-service levels with enablement of each student or teacher to own a device - laptop or smart phone. Strengthen and re-enforce their use to facilitate teaching and learning.
12. Improve the infrastructural status of TE institutions. Encourage the use of solar power and other alternative energy sources for electricity Supply to educational institutions.
13. Encourage continuous sensitization to sustain awareness of the goals of TE especially digital aspirations and of Covid-19 protocols by internal and external personnel. A joint inspection team (FME & NUC) for on the spot assessment of the educational programmes and activities at all levels should be in place
14. There is a need to review the existing evaluation system of TE curriculum at all levels in order to align with the new thinking.
15. Reinforce TE capacities for confronting current and any future emergencies.

## **CONCLUSION**

No doubt, adequate adherence to the guidelines for school reopening after COVID-19 pandemic will limit the transmission and spread of the pandemic as well as provide a great opportunity for safe and successful learning environment for both preservice teachers and other stakeholders in education. In addition, TE adaptive pedagogies are urgently required to strengthen teachers' ability to respond to current crisis and build resilience in themselves and the learners.

**Professor Elizabeth Eke, FNAE**  
*President*

**Professor Owoicho Akpa, MNAE**  
*Publicity Secretary*

**14<sup>th</sup> October, 2020**