

NIGERIA TEACHER GAP

COMMENT BY:

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"Nigeria needs 1,320,135 teachers to meet the demands of the basic education by 2015." The above was statement credited to Professor Mohammed Ibn Junaid the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Colleges of Education which represents the official position of the teacher gap in Nigeria.

To confirm the gap and in furtherance of required solution, the Federal Government embarked on a teacher recruitment policy called "Federal Teachers Scheme (FTS)", in which the Federal Government recruited and posted 1,000 teachers to each of the 36 States of the Federation including the Federal Capital Territory, and paid them monthly allowance but the teachers so recruited enjoyed only two years tenure after which they were expected to be absorbed by the State governments under which they served. Unfortunately most of them were sent back to the labour market as their States of posting could not retain them.

The critical situation, one that has consistently drawn the union into battle with the various governments is the mass unemployment of young graduate teachers that are being turn out yearly by our Colleges of Education and University Faculties of Education.

Many trained teachers are available in the labour market, eager for employment. The problem of federalism and the constitutional provision of making States run education concurrently with the Federal Government has virtually placed teachers recruitment in jeopardy.

A policy where the primary schools teacher's salaries are being shouldered by the Local Government Councils has greatly affected recruitment of teachers into the primary schools as the Local Government Councils continually complain of lack of funds to pay the teachers thereby leading them to avoid recruiting teachers.

The Nigeria Union of Teachers wishes to confirm that a lot of teachers are needed in the system. We also confirm that there are many unemployed teachers across the Country.

We need to embark on aggressive employment of all the qualified but unemployed teachers in the Country after which it will be easy to determine the training needs of teachers by the teacher training institutions in the Country.

In spite of that it is our belief that production of much teachers from those institutions will continue to be on demand considering the rate teachers leave teaching jobs almost on daily basis in pursuit of better jobs.

The scenario will stop or at worst will be largely controlled when adequate incentives and enhanced remunerations are established and paid to professional teachers in the country.

It is also the prayer of the NUT that the National Assembly should review the Country's constitution to unambiguously take away the responsibility of salary payments of primary schools teachers from the hands of the Local Government Councils. Such salaries should be paid by first line charge from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Country.

It is also our view that the Federal Government should monitor the availability of teachers in schools and cause all governments and relevant agencies to fill every existing gaps in the system in the interest of effective service delivery in our schools.