

COMMUNIQUE EMANATING FROM THE WORKSHOP FOR DISSEMINATION OF REPORT OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHENING OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE EDUCATION(SMASE) AND JOLLY PHONICS(JP) PROGRAMMES CONDUCTED ON WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE 2023 AT CANDALLUX HOTEL AREA 1 ABUJA.

SMASE and JP are flagship programmes of the Universal Basic Education Commission designed to improve literacy, numeracy and science proficiency skills among learners in basic education. The acquisition of these skills are fundamental in educational development of learners and are indices for measuring how effective teaching and learning are.

Having implemented the programmes for more than 10 years, the Commission engaged the expertise of Resource Persons drawn from renowned Institutes of Education in Nigeria, to conduct impact assessment of the programmes in 12 States of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Benue, Kwara Taraba, Bauchi, Imo, Anambra, Osun, Ondo, Kano and Sokoto. The conduct of the Assessment entailed rigorous processes such as Instruments Development, Trial Testing of Instruments, review of instruments bases based on the outcome of the trial testing, conduct of the main Impact Assessment, Analysis and Interpretation of Data, and Report writing.

Having generated the Report of the Impact Assessment, the Commission organized a dissemination workshop to share the outcome of the Impact Assessment with stakeholders for improvement and further decision making on the implementation of the programmes in the 36 States and FCT.

The dissemination workshop was attended by dignitaries such as the Executive Secretary, UBEC, ably represented by the Deputy Executive Secretary Technical, Professor Bala Zakari, Director General/Chief Executive National Mathematical Centre, Dr Promise Mebine, National Coordinator of SMASE from Federal Ministry of Education, Mr J.O. Ajadi. Other participants at the workshop were UBEC Directors, Resource Persons from Teacher Training Institutions, members of the National Steering Committee on SMASE made up of representatives from FME, NCCE, NTI, NERDC, UBEC, and TRCN, the Directors in charge of Teacher Professional Development in the 36 States and FCT, Universal Learning Solutions(ULS) and UBEC TPD Staff.

In the course of the in-depth deliberations and presentations on the outcome of the Assessment, it was observed that;

- the mean performance of learners in Jolly Phonics schools were consistently better than those in non Jolly Phonics Schools;
- many teachers in the 36 States and FCT are yet to be trained on Jolly Phonics and SMASE;
- percentage of learners in the highest learning continuum across the States is consistently higher for Jolly Phonics schools than non-Jolly Phonics schools;
- indiscriminate transfer of trained JP and SMASE teachers was a significant challenge in the implementation of JP and SMASE Programme in the 36 States and FCT as this led to learning loss;
- the Jolly Phonics training improved the skills of teachers in teaching early grade reading;
- teachers of Jolly Phonics were not adequately motivated;
- there was limited use of ICT by some Jolly Phonics teachers due to non availability of such resource in the school;
- in cognitive assessment of learners' achievement in both Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics schools at the State level, the difference in performance between the Jolly Phonics and non-Jolly Phonics Schools was significant in favour of JP in nine States of Kwara, Bauchi, Kano, Sokoto, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Ondo and Osun whereas it was insignificant for Benue, Taraba and Delta;
- for the national and regional levels, the learners in Jolly Phonics Schools performed better in terms of their cognitive achievement than their counterparts in non Jolly Phonics Schools;
- SMASE intervention significantly enhanced Primary 4 learners competence in mathematics as learners in SMASE schools achieved significantly higher than their peers in non SMASE Schools;
- Learners in SMASE schools located in urban and rural areas were more proficient than their counterparts in non-SMASE schools in both urban and rural areas;
- SMASE intervention enhanced the competency of learners in most content areas (Number and Numeration; Basic Operation; Algebraic Operation; Mensuration and Geometry; Everyday Statistics)

- SMASE intervention helped learners in solving questions involving knowledge, understanding and thinking levels of cognitive domain;
- more head teachers are yet to be involved in the SMASE training and this results to non implementation of the skills in the classroom as the head teachers may not be able to assess the lessons;

In view of these observations, it was recommended that;

- the SUBEBs and FCT UBEB should intensify efforts to ensure the scale up training of all Early Grade Teachers in the States on Jolly Phonics Strategies;
- the States and FCT should make available funds for the training of teachers on JP and SMASE to facilitate the scale up of the programme to all the teachers in the States;
- all the teachers at the basic education level in the 36 States and FCT should be trained on the use of SMASE strategy in teaching of Mathematics and Science;
- States and FCT should put in place regulations that will ensure that trained teachers on SMASE and Jolly Phonics are not transferred indiscriminately;
- SUBEBs and FCT UBEB should mandate teachers in the States to use the Jolly Phonics and SMASE strategies in the Classroom;
- a school support strategy should be developed to assist trained teachers on SMASE and Jolly Phonics to help them implement the skills effectively in the Classroom;
- States and FCT UBEB should make plans to assess the effectiveness of teacher training programmes in their States;
- efforts should be made to deploy resources that will aid the acquisition of ICT skills in schools to assist teachers in delivering effective teaching of JP and other programme;
- more head teachers should be included in SMASE trainings in the 36 States and FCT;
- SUBEBs and FCT UBEB should make arrangements to motivate teachers in the schools by providing adequate resources for the teaching of SMASE and JP for the effective delivery;

Conclusion

The meeting came to an end with the States making commitment on intensifying efforts at implementing the recommendations of made at the workshop.