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## Strategic Planning for Quality Teacher Education

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### **Introduction**

Most problems confronting teacher education in particular and the education system in general in African countries could have been avoided if careful planning and diligent implementation of plans had been done. A number of African countries embark on implementation of education programmes without giving serious thoughts to how the goals and objectives of such programmes would be realized, considering the resources available to execute the programmes. Most times, annual plans are designed without taking into account the desired state of the education system in the next five or ten years. Comprehensive and long-term planning is therefore relegated to the background. The result is that orderly development of the education system cannot be guaranteed. Disjointed programmes are executed and coordination of efforts is absent, especially when another government takes over the mantle of leadership after the expiration of the tenure of an incumbent government.

This chapter focuses on strategic planning and how it can help to promote the quality of teacher education in Africa. Specifically, the chapter examines the concept of strategic planning, the strategic planning process and what should be done to enhance the quality of teacher education through strategic planning.

### **What is Strategic Planning?**

Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/strategic\\_planning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/strategic_planning)) describes strategic planning as the process by which an organization defines its strategy or direction and deciding on how the resources available to the organization will be allocated to carry out the identified strategy. Strategic planning therefore focuses on the

future course of action to be taken by an organization. Ajayi (Alani 2005:39) defines strategic planning as ‘a process that includes a set of interactive and overlapping decisions leading to the development of an effective strategy for a given system’. It is one of the essential instruments that are utilized to re-focus the education system in a number of countries. A strategic plan may cover a period of five, ten or more years and it spells out the current state of the organization and where the organization will be at the end of the plan period. Thus, strategic planning, like other types of planning, is futuristic. With the unpredictable state of affairs of most education systems in Africa (accounted for by a number of factors: dependence on limited sources of revenue, political instability, growing population, economic recession, and a host of others), it is absolutely impossible for a strategic plan to forecast with precision what will be the condition of the education system at the end of the plan period. It is therefore imperative for those responsible for strategic planning to embark on strategic innovation and tinker with the strategic plan, if occasion demands it, so as to accommodate future exigencies.

On the prompting of some international development partners such as UNICEF, a number of state governments in Nigeria have developed strategic plans for their education systems to improve the quality of education. The Education Sector Analysis Unit of the Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja, Nigeria, has also designed some questionnaires which can guide the process of strategic planning at the institutional, local, state and federal levels. The hope is that strategic planning will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system so that the system can produce the needed human capital which is critical in promoting national development as envisaged in the development blueprints such as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Millennium Development Goals, and Nigerian Vision 20:20 and the 7-point Development Agenda of the current Federal Government.

### **Strategic Planning Process**

According to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/strategic\\_planning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/strategic_planning)), many approaches to strategic planning have been developed. One of them is the Situation-Target-Path approach where the planner evaluates the present situation in an organization and adduces reasons for the situation. He/she then defines goals and/or objectives to capture the state that is desired. After that, he/she charts an imaginable path to the goals and/or objectives. Another one is referred to as Draw-See-Think. Here, the planner identifies ‘the ideal image or the desired end state’. He then analyzes the current situation to point out the gulf that exists between the present situation and the ideal situation, and the reasons for such discrepancy. The next thing to do is to identify the steps to take to close the gap between the present situation and the desired state. Yet, another variant of Draw-

See-Think approach is called See-Think-Draw. Specifically, the planner examines the present situation; he defines goals and/or objectives and plots a route to attaining the goals and/or objectives. The last one, which is commonly adopted by state governments and some higher institutions in some African countries, including Nigeria, is that which points out the vision and mission of the organization and carries out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis. This examines the internal and external environments of the organization; formulates actions to be taken to achieve set goals; implements the actions and processes that are contemplated and controls the operation. This is fully discussed in this chapter.

### **Situational Analysis**

In strategic planning, it is pertinent to analyze the situation in the organization and its environment at the point of planning, and what it is likely to be in the future. In the area of teacher education, it is important to analyze the number of institutions providing teacher education and their ownership, the number of students enrolled and their gender, number of lecturers and their gender, number of non-teaching staff and their gender, number of students in arts- and science-based disciplines, the type of curriculum used, facilities that are available (for example, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, recreational facilities, and so on) and their adequacy or otherwise, to mention a few. This information is required to plan for quality teacher education.

### **Vision and Mission Statements**

A vision Statement explains the desired future state in the organization. For example, the vision of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, is 'to be a top class institution for the pursuit of excellence in knowledge through learning and research, as well as in character and service to humanity' (University of Lagos Strategic Plan: 2005 – 2009:3). With regard to education, the Mission Statement should indicate the principal objective of the entire education system at the local, state/regional, or country level. For instance, the mission of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, is 'to provide a conducive teaching, learning, research and development environment, where staff and students will interact and compete effectively with their counterparts, both nationally and internationally, in terms of intellectual competence and the zeal to add value to our world' (University of Lagos Strategic Plan: 2005 – 2009:4). Vision and mission statements should bear relevance to the development agenda of the government. It is equally essential to involve stakeholders such as students, lecturers, parents, professional groups, employers of labour, international development partners, and so on, when defining vision and mission statements. Staff, students and members of the public should be aware of the vision and mission statements of a teacher training institution.

### SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis involves the identification of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the educational system, Opportunities that can be tapped and Threats confronting the system. Strengths and weaknesses are located in the internal environment of an organization while opportunities and threats are visible in its external environment. Strengths and opportunities are internal and external conditions, respectively, which can help in the realization of set objectives. Weaknesses and threats are characteristics of the organization that are detrimental to the achievement of objectives.

In carrying out SWOT Analysis, attention has to be focused on some major areas of teacher education, such as Access; Equity; Quality; Science, Technical, Vocational and Technological Education; Institutional Assessment; Monitoring and Evaluation; Educational Management Information System; Educational Infrastructure; Educational Planning and Management; HIV and AIDS Education; Special Needs Education; and Costing and Financing of Education. In doing SWOT Analysis for each policy objective, internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) can be identified using PRIMO-F, while PESTLE can be used to spot the external factors (opportunities and threats). PRIMO-F is an acronym for:

- People;
- Resources;
- Innovation;
- Marketing;
- Operations;
- Finance.

The job description of the employees and the skills they possess; the material resources and equipment that the organization has; new ideas that are considered to be essential to the organization; getting customers/clients to know what the organization does/the products that the organization has; how the activities of the organization are managed; and the prices of products, costs of production and investments that the organization has made and/or the investments that it can make. are those things that strategic planners could consider in using PRIMO-F to identify strengths and weaknesses, that is, the internal factors.

PESTLE stands for political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors that should be considered in identifying the external factors (opportunities and threats). Issues such as intervention of government in the activities of all organizations that belong to a particular industry are those that come under the 'political factors'. To be precise, imposition of tax, labour law, environmental law, tariffs, trade restrictions and political instability come under the purview of political factors. Political factors are critical in SWOT Analysis in the education system because of the interest of government in the sector.

Matters such as economic growth, interest rates, exchange rates and inflation rate are germane when discussing 'economic factors'. Considering the education system, the rate of growth of the economy affects the resources that are devoted to the sector; interest rates affect the ability of educational institutions to borrow funds for their operations; exchange rates determine the amount of educational materials and equipment that educational institutions can order from overseas; while inflation rate – defined as general and sustained rise in the prices of goods and services – affects, in real terms, the value of the money devoted to providing educational services for the citizens.

Included under 'social factors' are issues such as the culture of the people, health consciousness, rate of growth of population, age distribution of the population, career attitudes and the premium placed on safety. In the case of Nigeria, culture, the way of life of a people, affects the rate at which people embrace western education. Because of the influence of culture, pupils' enrolments at the primary and secondary school levels are affected, thereby determining the demand for teachers and the rate of expansion of teacher education. The rate of population growth and age distribution of the population determine the number of school-age children, and hence, enrolment in primary schools and, therefore, the demand for teachers and teacher education programmes. If premium is placed on safety, the cost of teacher education programmes will increase because of the need to insure school buildings and equipment, teachers and pupils/students.

Matters that come under the 'technological factors' are research and development, automation, technological change and technology incentives. Research is one of the major functions of academics in higher education institutions, including those producing teachers. Innovations do arise from such research activities and these can affect the cost of education. In Nigeria, some teacher education institutions are producing technical and vocational subject teachers. Such institutions are supposed to invest heavily in technical and vocational equipment to give practical training to students. Where there are possibilities of procuring such equipment, they become an opportunity that can be tapped by an institution to have competitive advantage over its peers. There is also no doubt about the importance of computers in teacher education because of the need to equip teachers to keep abreast with developments around the world and also make use of the equipment in the teaching-learning process. Where resources are available to acquire computers, they become an external technological factor that provides opportunity for a teacher training institution.

'Legal factors' are essentially all legal enactments that affect the operations of an organization. Applied to the education system, all laws that touch on the operations of educational institutions should be considered in analyzing the opportunities that can be tapped and threats that they have to deal with. For instance, teacher education institutions in Nigeria can anticipate patronage on the basis of the fact that enrolments in primary and secondary schools will continue

to rise because of the provision of the Child Rights Act of 2003 and the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 which compel parents/guardians to give their children/wards a minimum of basic education (9-year basic education consisting of primary and junior secondary education). Most state governments have also enacted Education Laws that list the legal requirements to be met before individuals and private organizations can establish private primary and secondary schools, while the federal government has promulgated Act 9 of 1990 which spells out the conditions that must be fulfilled before any individual, group of individuals or private organizations can open an institution of higher learning (university, polytechnic or college of education). Employment/labour laws, health and safety laws also come under the legal factors since they guide the employment of personnel in educational institutions. These laws itemise health and safety conditions that must be maintained in educational institutions respectively.

'Environmental factors' which apply mainly to educational institutions are weather and climate. At a time, school calendar in Nigeria had to be changed from January – December to September – June because some parents make use of their children on the farm during the rainy season, especially from May to July, thereby affecting pupils' attendance in school. Moreover, the way school buildings are constructed may vary from one place to another in a country because of weather and climatic conditions. This can raise the capital cost of education in those areas where heavy winds and cold weather can negatively affect school children and so they have to be protected against these vagaries.

The relevance of each of these factors in SWOT Analysis may vary from one teacher training institution to the other depending, for instance, on the location of the institution, the type of teachers it is producing (technical, vocational, science or art subject teachers), proprietorship (government or privately-owned), sources and amounts of funds and other resources at its disposal, influence that its proprietor(s) wield(s), reputation of the institution, the support it can garner from its old students, to mention a few. The location of an institution in an area with good topography will present opportunities for it to practice agriculture on a large scale for it to increase its revenue base, construct school buildings with modest cost and spend less on welfare support for students, for example, transport facilities (which can be provided by private vehicle owners as a result of good road networks), provision of fans and air conditioners (which may not be necessary because of the clement weather).

### **Policy and Strategic Framework**

For each policy objective in each of the major areas of teacher education such as access, equity, quality and so on mentioned earlier, the planners need to identify the targets to be met, the strategies for achieving such targets, and individuals/bodies responsible for carrying out the activities. Table 1 shows what a policy and strategic framework looks like.

The first policy objective in Table 1 focuses on access to teacher education. The targets to be met, the strategies to be adopted and the bodies which will help to achieve the objective are found in the table. The second policy objective deals with the quality of teacher education. In the same vein, the targets to be achieved, the strategies to be taken and the bodies that will ensure that the objective is realized are mentioned.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation**

After the preparation of a Strategic Plan and approval of same by relevant authority, the next thing to do is to implement it. A Strategic Plan Implementation Committee can be constituted to guide implementation. This can be done at the institutional, local, state/regional or federal level. It may also be necessary to set up sub-committees on each of the thematic areas of teacher education, namely: access, equity, quality and so on as given before. This will enable the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee to give each of these areas the attention it deserves. If it is not cost-effective to set up this committee, some other structure should be put in place to direct strategic plan implementation. In Nigeria, for instance, the Local Government Education Authority, State Universal Basic Education Board, State Ministry of Education or the Governor's Office can steer the implementation of the strategic plan. Some of those who formulated the plan should also be involved in the implementation of the plan. They can help to explain technical words used in the Plan, provide expert advice during implementation and help administrators interpret the plan. Stakeholders, such as students, lecturers, non-academic staff, representatives of government, and so on, should also be engaged in strategic plan implementation because they can provide invaluable information during this stage and also assist to co-ordinate the activities involved.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

There is the need to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan in order to ensure that set objectives are achieved. The results obtained have to be evaluated to determine any departure from set objectives/goals and standards. In doing this, performance indicators that will be used at this stage have to be devised so that officers that are responsible for monitoring and evaluation will use the same yardsticks for measuring performance. Furthermore, with such performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation will be done objectively. A monitoring committee can be constituted and, depending on the coverage of the Strategic Plan, the committee can operate at institutional, community, local, district, state/regional and federal levels. The committee may also be based in the agencies of the state/regional or federal ministry of education. While monitoring should be done regularly, evaluation can be done on monthly, quarterly or yearly basis during the period that the strategic plan covers. Reports on monitoring and evaluation should be prepared and feedbacks given to those responsible for strategic plan

Table 19. 1: Policy and Strategic Framework

Policy Objectives	Targets	Strategies	Action By
Increase admission into teacher training institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher training institutions to increase enrolment</li> <li>•Increase number of beneficiaries of scholarship schemes by 500 each year up to 2015</li> <li>•Provide qualified lecturers in teacher training institutions by 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Conduct needs assessment to determine the demand for courses in teacher training institutions</li> <li>•Conduct a public enrolment drive for teacher education</li> </ul>	Federal/State Ministry of Education  Teacher training institutions
Improve the quality of teacher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide physical and material resources and equipment in teacher training institutions by 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Increase enrolment by 20% each year to reflect the need for teachers</li> <li>•Institute scholarship scheme to assist teacher-trainees in areas of critical need</li> <li>•Conduct survey on the need for more lecturers and more resources</li> <li>•Recruit qualified lecturers by 2012</li> <li>•Replace lecturers who leave the institutions every year</li> <li>•Monitor the performance of lecturers in the institutions</li> <li>•provide classrooms, equipment and materials needed by the institutions by 2015</li> </ul>	Federal/State scholarship Board  Teacher training institutions  Governing councils Governing councils Heads of departments and Deans of Schools/Faculties  Federal/State Ministry of Education

implementation. The feedback will ensure that deviations from set standards are corrected in time and that pre-determined objectives/goals or targets are accomplished.

With the treatment of the strategic planning process, the relevant question to ask here is: How can the quality of teacher education be enhanced through strategic planning? The answer to this question is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

### **Improving the Quality of Teacher Education through Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning can help to improve the quality of teacher education. It is therefore recommended for all teacher training institutions in Africa. In Nigeria, for instance, most teacher training institutions only prepare annual budgets without carrying out comprehensive or long-range planning which strategic planning entails. When designing annual plans, situational analysis is hardly done. In the case of state-owned teacher training institutions, it is what the state governments can afford that is approved for the institutions except when accreditation of courses is to be done by the supervising agencies, such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC). In teacher training institutions owned by the federal government, annual budget estimates are first scaled down by the NCCE before they are submitted to the Federal Ministry of Education for inclusion in the national budget. In most cases, the resources available are always not sufficient to implement programmes and projects. If strategic planning is instituted, situational analysis will point out the current state of affairs with a view to identifying the kinds of programmes that are run and the needs of the institutions, if stated objectives are to be accomplished.

Vision and mission statements are imperative in strategic planning. Unfortunately, a good number of teacher training colleges and faculties of education in Nigeria, for instance, have no stated vision and mission statements which can guide the planning process. To enhance the quality of teacher education, there will be the need to develop vision and mission statements with input from all stakeholders – students, lecturers, teachers' associations, employers of labour and international development partners. This will enable the institutions to benefit from the experiences of all concerned so that international best practices can be adopted. After all, African countries cannot operate in isolation; they have to take cognizance of what is happening around the world. Such vision and mission statements should concentrate on the three major functions of higher education – teaching, research and community service.

Identification of the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats which impinge upon the functioning of teacher training institutions will help them to list internal and external factors which facilitate the achievement of stated objectives

(strengths and opportunities) and those that hinder the performance of the institutions (weaknesses and threats). Such exercise will help the institutions to determine the influence of political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors on the operation and management of teacher training institutions and develop strategies for counteracting their negative effects and for utilizing their positive externalities.

Developing a policy and strategic framework will assist the institutions to be holistic in planning teacher education. All the relevant areas of the system will be covered, from the issues of access, equity, quality, the curriculum, the evaluation, the management and funding of the system. This will make for overall efficiency and effectiveness of teacher education. A strategic plan will therefore eliminate the narrow and myopic thinking (focusing on academic programmes and the resources required to run them) which annual budget estimates focus upon in planning teacher education.

### Conclusion

Most of the problems associated with the educational planning process in African countries, for example Nigeria, such as lack of long-range planning, absence of situational analysis of the education sector, less emphasis on vision and mission statements and identification of the internal and external factors which are helpful to the achievement of set goals (strengths and opportunities) and those that can impede the performance of the education system (weaknesses and threats), less premium on targets and strategies for accomplishing policy objectives and time limits for each activity, non-identification of personnel/bodies responsible for implementing each activity and the like, can be tackled through strategic planning. Development of annual plans can be facilitated where there is a strategic plan which normally covers five to ten years. Strategic planning therefore holds a promise for giving proper direction to the education system. It will help the efforts of co-ordinating the activities of all parts of the education system to promote effectiveness and efficiency in education.

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