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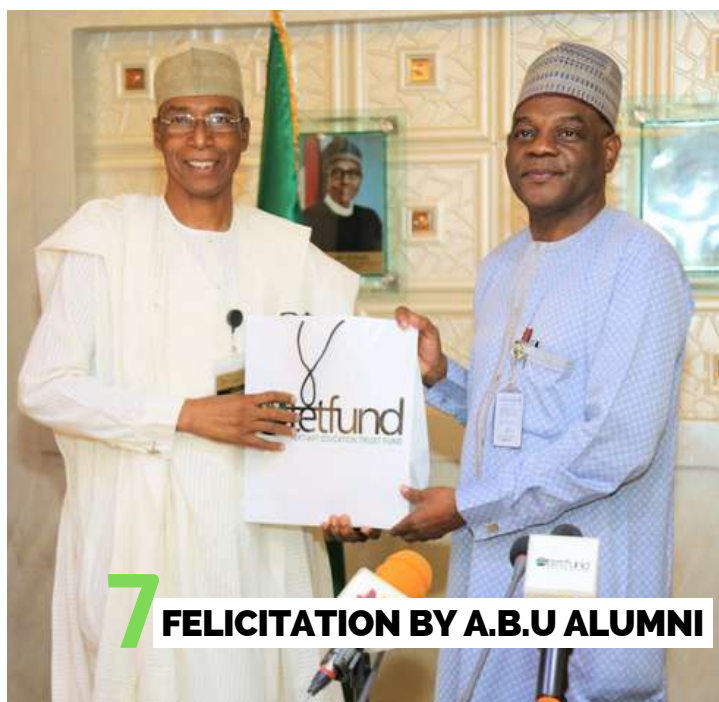
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This second quarter edition of the Panorama is filled with heartwarming news of events, showing the new directions of the foremost intervention agency, TETFund.

Editor's Note

Steering the wheel of progress, the Executive Secretary, **Arc. Sonny Echono is proving his mettle as an astute administrator**, not only exhibiting continuity from the previous administration, but also reinforcing them with additional transformative policies in line with the pressing needs of the Nation.

Worthy of mention is his new direction in providing the requisite capacity for Beneficiary Institutions to the level of producing graduates, equipped with entrepreneurial skills and employers of labour and not job seekers.

In addition, his passion for the embracement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a means of enhancing teaching and learning, as well as increasing the visibility of Nigerian Tertiary Education institutions to

the rest of the world is exciting.

It will interest readers to know that Arc Echono has initiated series of partnerships with notable institutions globally and locally, such as Federal University of Vicosa, Brazil,

Transnational cooperation with the Government of Britain, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), African Union (AU) among others; all aimed at articulating new strategies to reinforce existing efforts of the government at improving standard of education in Nigeria.



**ABDULMUMIN B.
ONIYANGI**

Editor

His avowed determination to improve the landscape of Agriculture through FARA culminated in the recent First Medal of Honour award bestowed on him at a forum in Ghana.

TETFund had also kick-started the Year 2022 intervention activities with the distribution of Allocation letters to the 244 Beneficiary Institutions across the country at a Stakeholders' Interactive meeting held in Abuja.

In addition, series of monitoring exercise for the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) programme were embarked upon by staff of the Fund to various Universities across the world to keep tab on the progress or otherwise of the sponsored scholars.

Also in the news is the intervention efforts of TETFund at the construction site of the National Library, following the directive of the Federal Executive Council (FEC). The Fund also played host to several of its partners and stakeholders on courtesy visits to the Executive Secretary.

Assistant Editors



Comfort Ukim [CRO]

DR. Comfort Ukim, heads the Publicity and Media Division. She is an active member of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and is one of TETFund Assistant Editors for the Panorama Magazine.



Stella Nwankwo [C.E.O]

MRS Stella Nwankwo is a trained journalist, with years of experience in print media. She is an active member of NIPR and Heads the Protocol, Administration and Management information System of the Public Affairs Department.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:

Amos Anetekhai || Aderoju M. Shitta || Chibogu Emodi || Adebayo A. Philips || Michelle O. Imasuen || Hadiza A. Mamu || Tenidunni Abiru || Juliana I. Obiakor || Musa M. Musa || Igah A. Anne || Maimuna Fagade || Hyelkuzuku Nggada || Abdulrazaq Ahmed || Abdulmalik Adio || Kayode J. Amoko || Kate Ibekw || Sandra Emmanuel || Zeal Eghove || Daniel Ochekepe || Habiba A. Rabi || Muazzam S. Garo || Chidozie C. Nwangu || Michael Agu || Otonbara F. Aprebo || Faith O. Eichie || Shehu Ibrahim || Jauro S. Mustapha.

Punctuality.....Outdated or a must have skill?

Words
Habiba Rabi'u and
Daniel Ochekepe

Photography
Zeal Eghove

In today's society, it is common to hear the expression "fashionably late", or the even more popular concept of 'African Time'. The person who arrives the latest at the scene takes the highest status; a notion probably derived from the order in which dignitaries arrive at official events. However, we have to ask ourselves: is this a pattern we want to extrapolate in the work environment? And is it a valuable skill for a world class agency?

Why is Punctuality important in the work place?

As staff in an organization, our abilities to be punctual determine our output at the end of the day. As the famous proverb goes 'the early bird gets the worm' also, it has been said "Punctuality is the key to success". Punctuality therefore becomes a necessary skill for each and every staff to master and utilize.

It brings about motivation, recognition and ultimately reward. While this may sound 'easy peasey', many employees become habitual/chronic late comers over the course of time. Ideally, this stems from certain factors that are brought about in the course of duty or general complacency. It is necessary to communicate the need to instill and ensure an improved skill like this in our work place.

How is this Related to TETFund ?

In the words of the Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny S.T Echono, "Punctuality is the first step in preparing every staff for leadership roles, it is actually, the second phase after taking homework from school" meaning punctuality leads to rewards and recognition everywhere in the world.

For an organization such as TETFund, late coming affects productivity and ultimately the reputation of the Fund.

John Daly in his book "Consequences of Being Late" described lateness as lack of time management skills and valuing other peoples time over yours. The younger generation would say, "it is part of self love"; however, John further added that, "if you are late 10 minutes per day, it equals almost an hour per week". Mathematically, that equals four hours late per month and eventually, per year, equals to approximately a week and three days. That is essential time you can use to make more wealth and be productive. Therefore, asking the question how much time is needed for self love.

Therefore, when everyone is punctual or aspires to be, morale in the workplace is higher. Chronic lateness disrupts the natural flow of work as other team members adjust to cover for the delay.

Employees who are waiting for a change of shift might become agitated and impatient knowing their replacement is always late.

Chronic late comers are also viewed negatively by their colleagues. In most cases it breeds an attitude of resentment; with the punctual staff feeling resentful towards the late comer. This is especially true in set-ups where there are no repercussions for lateness.

Being early at work affords staff extra preparation for the workday ahead.

Those who arrive a few minutes early can grab a cup of coffee or a beverage of choice and get organized at their desk ready to start on time.

Not only is a punctual arrival a basic job requirement, it also puts employees in a position to be seen as loyal, confidential, professional and ambitious.



How to become a punctual staff and sustain it

Organizations must employ successful strategies to promote punctuality.

It starts with leadership that models the desired behaviour by arriving on time to work, meetings and trainings. Implement attendance rewards. Punishments seem standard, but warnings and potential suspensions don't always change behaviour. Rewarding punctual team members positively flips the script.

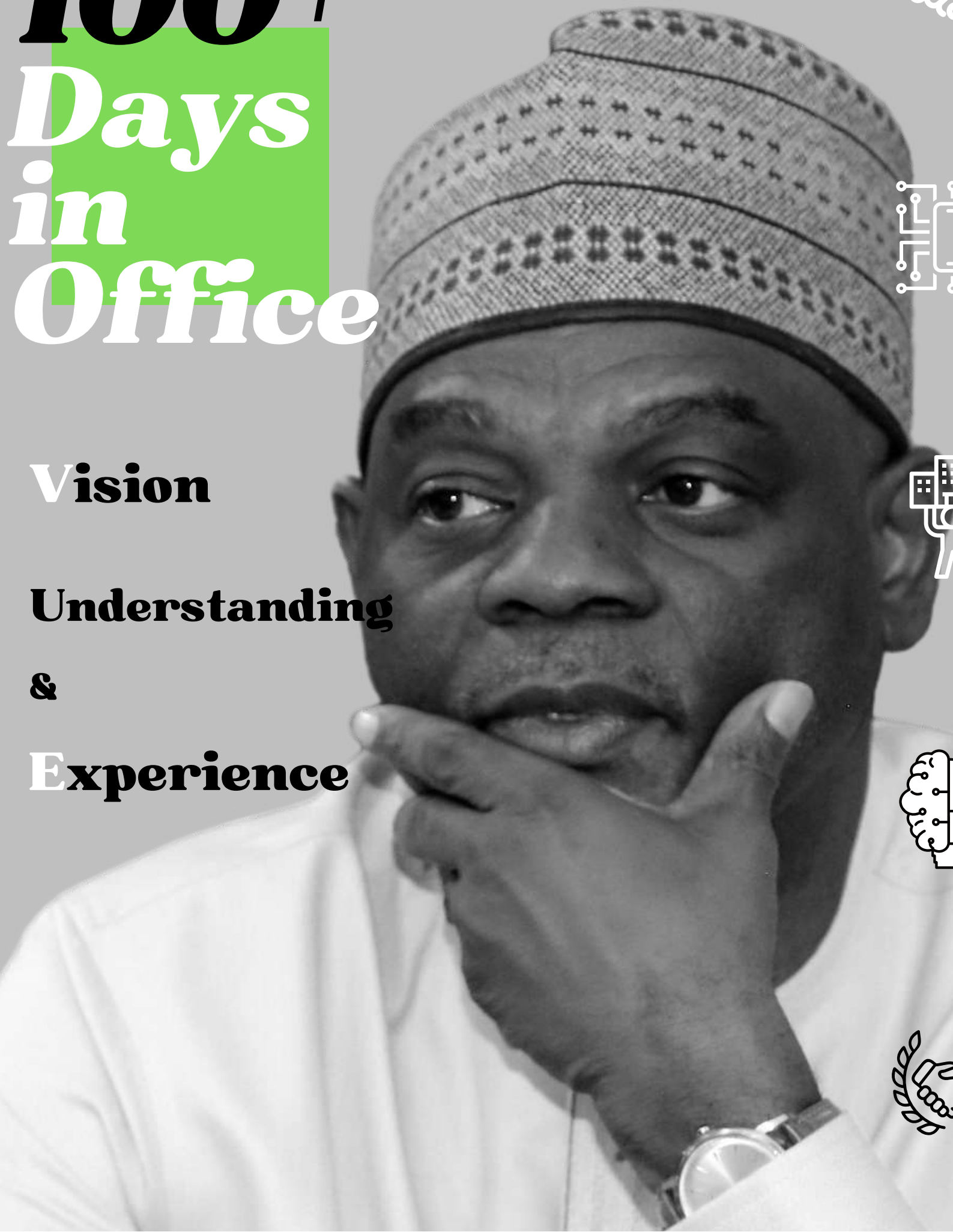
As a world class organization with enormous role to play in the transformation of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria, it behoves on staff to sustain the culture of punctuality while reward systems are institutionalized for deserving staff.

100+ *Days* *in* *Office*

Vision

**Understanding
&**

Experience



When news of the appointment of Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono as the new Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) filtered in the media, it was greeted with delightful comments from several quarters. This was expected given his background; having retired as Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education shortly before his appointment and a representative of the Ministry at TETFund Board for four years.

An accomplished technocrat and embodiment of knowledge in several walks of life, Arc. Echono brings to the job, a diverse wealth of experience in Infrastructure Development, Public Administration, Procurement Management, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Education.

On assumption of office, the Executive Secretary hit the ground running as he declared his determination during his maiden press conference, not only to tread the path of his predecessor, Prof. Suleiman Elias Bogoro, but to improve on his achievements.

The smooth change of baton from Prof. Bogoro to Arc. Echono is unprecedented in the history of the Fund. It was a moment of excitement for both at the handover ceremony witnessed by Management and staff of the Fund, as well as staff of the Federal Ministry of Education.

In his maiden press conference, the Executive Secretary outlined new policy changes needed to take TETFund to a new era of excellence; viz Curriculum Review, Entrepreneurship Studies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as Research and Development.

“This is because the Nigerian curriculum system is theory driven and does not meet the requirements of the industry. As such, graduates who join the workforce usually require further training and retraining to fit into job roles”, he said.

He stated that more funds would be earmarked for building capacity of lecturers so as to equip them with the requisite skills for Entrepreneurial Studies and Research Studies in Digital Technologies to prepare Nigerian students for global competitiveness with the end goal of building a knowledge economy and increasing the country's global presence.

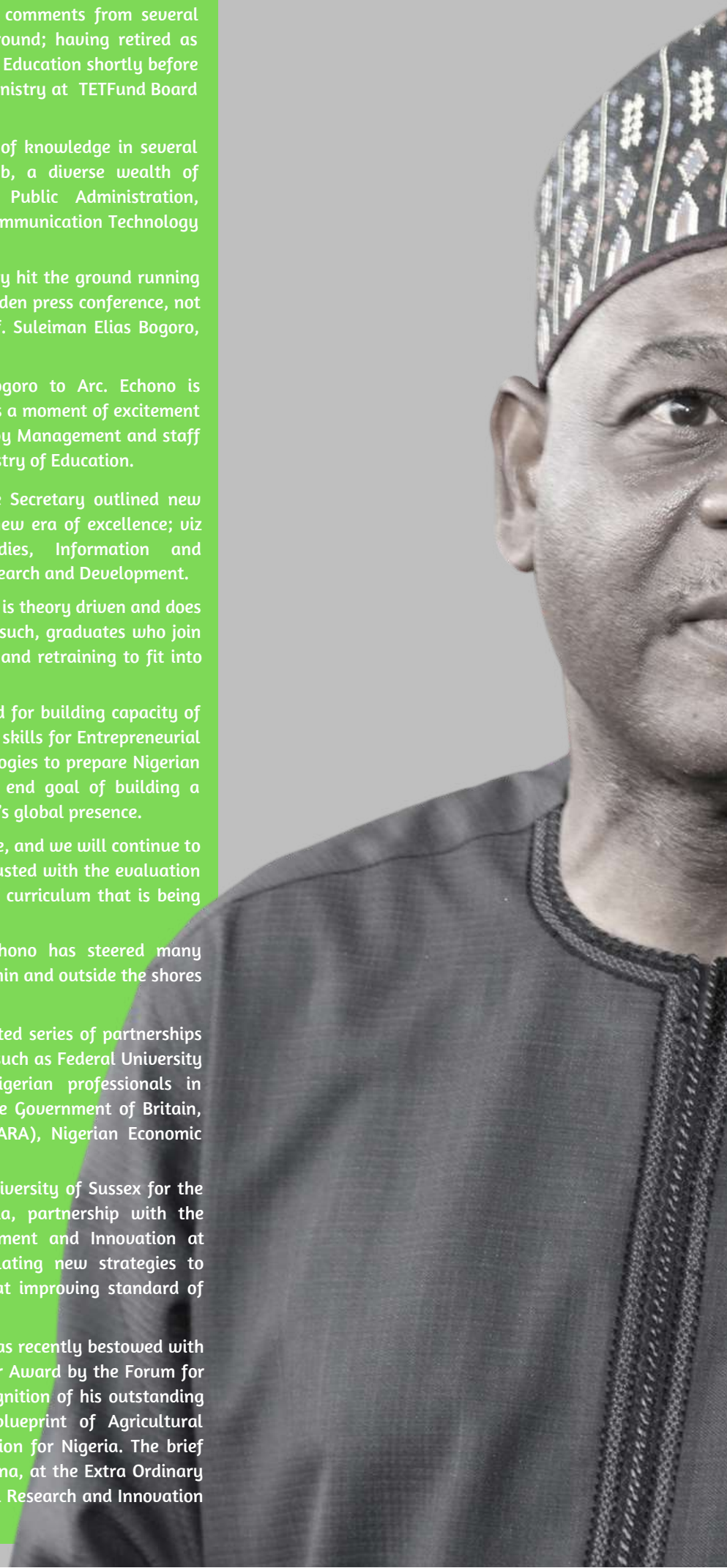
“We have done so well in physical infrastructure, and we will continue to do so but we also must focus on those we entrusted with the evaluation of our students. We must focus on the type of curriculum that is being taught and the delivery systems,” he added.

Since assumption of office at the Fund, Echono has steered many initiatives, activities and partnerships from within and outside the shores of the country, projecting the Fund globally.

It is worthy of note that Arc Echono has initiated series of partnerships with notable institutions globally and locally, such as Federal University of Vicos, Brazil, for training of more Nigerian professionals in Agriculture, transnational cooperation with the Government of Britain, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), and African Union (AU).

Others include signing of an MoU with the University of Sussex for the development of tertiary education in Nigeria, partnership with the European Union (EU) on Research, Development and Innovation at Brussels among others; all aimed at articulating new strategies to reinforce existing efforts of the government at improving standard of education in Nigeria.

The TETFund Boss again, made history as he was recently bestowed with the first and most prestigious Medal of Honour Award by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in recognition of his outstanding support and vision for implementing the blueprint of Agricultural Research and Development by the African Union for Nigeria. The brief but solemn ceremony took place in Accra, Ghana, at the Extra Ordinary Steering Committee Meeting of the Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa (ARIFA).





Presenting the award on behalf of the Chairman, FARA Board of Directors, Dr. Alioune Fall, Executive Director of FARA, Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo had this to say of Arc Echono: "An Architect by training and well-established agribusiness entrepreneur, he comes to his current position with strong accolades and solid footprints in the Agricultural sector. As the erstwhile Permanent Secretary of Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Arc Echono demonstrated a commendable support for the efforts of FARA as the Capacity Development Cluster with accelerated vigour".

The year 2022 Intervention activities kickstarted with the distribution of allocation letters to the 244 Beneficiary Institutions across the country. Speaking at the event held in Abuja, the Executive Secretary announced the Fund's decision.

Also, in a drastic move to restore sanity, protect the academic integrity of educational institutions and the academia, Echono constituted a Digitization Project Steering and Coordinating Committee with the mandate to create a national research bank to serve as a repository for academic works. These repositories will help generate a large collation of local institutional research into Digital Repositories in tune with international standards in public tertiary institutions across the country; and expose intellectual activities of Nigerians to the international communities across the globe.

Without doubt, Arc. Echono's 100 Days in office has witnessed sincere and exemplary leadership geared towards repositioning the Fund for better service delivery aimed at the development and global competitiveness of our tertiary institutions and ultimately, the overall development of the country.

Words Stella Nwankwo

***Cheers
to the
Future***



A.B.U. Alumni Felicitates With Echono

A VISIT BY THE A.B.U ALUMNI PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS

Words

Habiba Rabi'u

Photography

Zeal Eghove.

Over the years, the relationship between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Alumni Association has been a symbiotic one.

To further consolidate this, a team of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ABU Alumni Association paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono in his office in Abuja.

Speaking during the visit, the President of the association, Dr. Ibrahim Sani Khali congratulated the Executive Secretary on his appointment as well as his records of achievements in service to humanity.

He stated that he looked forward to increased support to the Association and the university at large, especially the dilapidated structures and expansion of existing facilities.

Speaking during the visit, Arc. Echono expressed excitement with the ABU Alumni visit, while taking pride in the modest efforts of TETFund to sustain its developmental efforts in the Tertiary Education sector in Nigeria.

"We feel very proud that despite the limited resources available, TETFund over the years has been able to bring such level of impact".

The Executive Secretary stated that TETFund would continue to play its role to sustain ABU and other pioneer institutions in the country, adding that the Fund would liaise with the association to see areas that fall within its mandate where support can be extended.

ADAN Charged On Making Agricultural Practices Attractive



The Association of Deans of Agriculture of Nigerian Universities (ADAN) has been challenged to bring their expertise to bear by making the Agricultural sector attractive and profitable for the farmers.

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono who gave the charge when the Association paid him a courtesy call in his office in Abuja, stated that it is regrettable that efforts at transforming the Agricultural landscape have not yielded much success.

He advised the Association not to renege, but explore necessary support required to ensure the transformation of the Agricultural Sector to make it desirable for the younger generation. This he noted can only be achieved by pursuing a robust agricultural programme and mechanized farming thereby doing away with archaic farm tools.



He said this is achievable "if we modernize our Agriculture to make it attractive to the younger generation. By doing so, we must pursue a robust programme by adopting simple modern tools to replace all those tools and equipment that are archaic. We must also leverage on technology to find new ways and better ways of doing things like irrigation, and better agronomy practices.

"My challenge to you is to promote things like irrigation, so we can have two or three cropping seasons in the year and cropping and planting will be done under controlled conditions" he said.

The Executive Secretary urged ADAN to help farmers create the right market and eliminate possible middlemen who take undue advantage of farmers, by exploiting them through giving them false incentives such as loans with high interest rates, seedling at exorbitant prices and at the same time create artificial scarcity to punish the masses.

To eliminate these ugly trends, the Executive Secretary encouraged ADAN to take advantage of the quality of personnel available to them to show greater commitment through funding, research and through effective communication and mobilization of farmers across the entire value chain of Agriculture.

He assured them of TETFund's support within the confines of its mandate towards ensuring that agriculture becomes a major contributor to the growth of Nigeria's economy.

In his remarks, the President of ADAN, Professor James Olumuyiwa Jayeoba, while congratulating Arc Echono on his well-deserved appointment, stated that the successes recorded by ADAN was largely because of the huge funding support it has enjoyed from the Fund through its various intervention projects in the beneficiary institutions.

Acknowledging the support from the Fund, he pleaded for more intervention from TETFund in areas such as research on commodity specialization and equipping Agricultural Institutions to help them reach their full potentials.

On the issue of Agriculture not being encouraged nationally, Professor Jayeoba called on the Federal Government to improve agricultural Infrastructures and create jobs for graduates in the field.



Courtesy visit by ADAN to the Fund



Presentation of Allocation letters by the E.S TETFund and the E.S of NCCE, Prof. Paulinus Okwelle

Beneficiary Institutions (BIs) get 2022 TETFund Intervention Fund

AS ECHONO MOVES TO RESOLVE DISTRESSED PROJECTS ISSUES

Words
Stella Nwankwo

Photography
Hyelkuzuku Nggada

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has kicked off the year 2022 Intervention activities with the distribution of Allocation letters to the 244 Beneficiary Institutions across the country, following the approval of President Muhammadu Buhari.

Universities got a total of N642,848,138.00 each, the sum of N396,780,086.00 was allocated to each Polytechnic, with Colleges of Education given N447,758,804.00 each, according to the ratio of 2:1:1 stipulated by the TETFund's operational mandate.

Distributing the Allocation letters at a Strategic Interactive Session for Heads of TETFund Beneficiary Institutions (BIs), held at the National Universities Commission (NUC), Abuja, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono explained that the allocation was in line with the guidelines of the various intervention lines.

He advocated for greater synergy between the Fund and Heads of Beneficiary Institutions, stating that the job of sustaining the development of tertiary education sector is a collective one and needed all the hands on deck to achieve desired goals.

The Executive Secretary said, "The enormous task of repositioning the tertiary education sector for sustained relevance is a collective one and requires that we work in harmony and synergy to achieve the desired national objective of meeting our human capital needs through a robust and high-quality tertiary education sector. "This synergy, which he pointed out, is the aggregation of multiple resources that provide greater value, cooperation and teamwork that requires that we bring on board our collective experiences and expertise towards finding solutions to specific national problems and goals".

He expressed worries over the rising cases of non-performing or distressed projects across the institutions, stating that the issue would be a thing of the past as plans are in progress to set up mechanisms that would bring a permanent solution.

Echono noted that to some extent, some of these issues escalated because of the Fund's policy on guidelines for assessment of Intervention funds, while some beneficiary institutions have their own share of the blame, assuring that necessary reviews would be embarked upon to reverse the trend.

The Executive Secretary also pointed out that the Management of the Fund had further taken a decision to remove policies that cause delays in project implementation by eliminating the compulsory Internal Audit Clearance on submissions to access second tranche payment, where there is a final tranche outstanding. This phenomenon, Arc Echono reiterated, "becomes even more worrisome, when viewed alongside the problem of un-accessed funds.

"We are mindful of the intricate variables in project management and delivery, as well as the constraints created by our own internal policies, and we are in the process of reviewing our processes where required but will also demand from beneficiary institutions accountability and give appropriate sanctions where needed" he said.

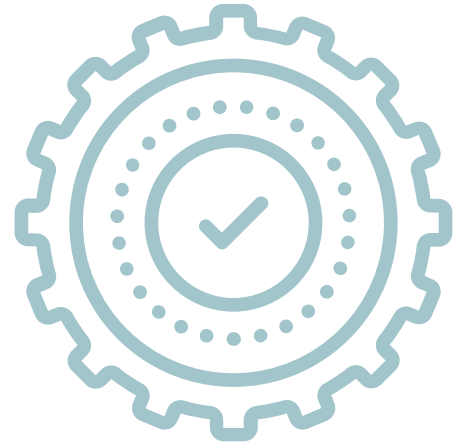
Furthermore, the Executive Secretary resolved that the Fund would beam the light on the disturbing case of Academic Publishing Centers (APC), that are yet to take off, despite being given all the necessary resources in terms of funding, capacity building as well as 'Strategic Framework and Establishment Guideline' developed by TETFund for the Centers.

He emphasized that in the coming weeks, he would be engaging beneficiary institutions that have these serious problems with the objective of bringing the projects to speedy completion and use.

On the recent partnership with Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and a consortium of nearly 40 Universities in Brazil to provide world-class, multi-disciplinary, tuition free Masters and PhD degree programmes for Nigerian scholars, he stated, that the collaboration will boost food security, science and technology-driven innovation as well as entrepreneurship and employability of Nigerian graduates.

Arc. Echono re-emphasized his commitment to build on the successes of his predecessors in the critical areas of Research and Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education.

He also pointed out that one of the Fund's primary areas of focus is digital literacy, development and deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to Beneficiary Institutions.



To fast-track institutions' ICT connectivity, he disclosed that his recent visit to the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Professor Ali Isa Pantami was to discuss possibilities and collaboration on interventions and other needs of public tertiary institutions.

The Executive Secretary added that reviews by the Agency would continue to unfold in few months to come, with a view to improving TETFund's processes and to deliver high quality services that would meet the expectations of stakeholders as well as deliver on the Fund's mandate.

Present at the meeting were the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education, Mr. Andrew David Adejo, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, Executive Secretary of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Prof. Paulinus Okwelle, who gave goodwill messages and lauded the efforts of the Executive Secretary at improving the standard of tertiary education in Nigeria.



BENUE VARSITY PRO- CHANCELLOR COMMENDS TETFUND AS INTERVENTION AGENCY

Words
Sanadra Emmanuel

Photography
Michael Agu

The Chairman of the Governing Council and Pro-Chancellor of Benue State University, Makurdi, Chief Sebastine Hon has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for committing about N7 billion to various intervention projects in the university from 1999 to date.

The Pro-Chancellor gave the commendation recently at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja, when he led the university management on a courtesy visit to the Fund's Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono.

Chief Hon, who congratulated Echono on his appointment as the new TETFund boss, also expressed appreciation to President Muhammadu Buhari over his choice.

He enumerated the number of projects in the university including some pending ones which he stated were affected by cost due to the Covid-19 lockdown. but would soon be completed, and the Fund formally invited for commissioning.

"It is important to mention that the Covid-19 lockdown affected the speed and cost as it were. The projects include construction and furnishing of Faculty of Education Building - 85%; construction and furnishing of Research, Development and Innovation Centre - 90%.



construction and furnishing of Faculty of Science Building – 45%,” he said.

The Pro-Chancellor also requested for a waiver to enable the university to access its 2021/2022 allocations to address its challenges, in addition to a special intervention on the institution’s library complex recently affected by storm.

“We have a very small campus, and we desire to expand in terms of content-base and infrastructure. Our university has commenced appreciable steps with the National Universities Commission (NUC) to commence the following programmes: Architecture, Pharmacy, Engineering, and Building Engineering.

“Therefore, and further to the level of completion of the above listed projects, we hereby appeal to you to grant us a waiver to allow the University to access the 2021 and 2022 annual allocations to enable us to proceed with the projects tied to those allocations.

“We wish to also report that our central library suffered severe damage caused by a recent storm. This has left the building and property therein exposed to the elements. We desire to submit a request for disaster intervention,” he said.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund expressed appreciation to the Visitor and management of the university for their goodwill and commended the institution for its contribution to the production of relevant manpower in the country.

Photo Collage of Events



AGRICULTURE: NIGERIA, BRAZIL, FARA FORGE TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIPS

The Tripartite Partnership Nigeria Needs



Determined to achieve the needed transformation in the Nation's Agricultural sector, the Federal Government, through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has formed a partnership with the Government of Brazil and Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) to achieve the objective.

The deal was sealed at the First Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa (ARIFA) Symposium, held at Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil, with the theme "Pedagogic Retooling Strategy for Africa's Agricultural Research and Innovation System: Lessons from Brazil".

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono, who led the Nigerian delegation to Brazil, said the Fund is committed to the success of the partnership, having weighed the multiplier positive effect to Nigeria.

He recalled at the meeting that TETFund had under its sponsorship about 120 scholars undergoing Masters and PhD programmes in Brazil with the sole objective of under-studying the country's Agricultural Revolution Policy and its impact on the national economy.

Arc Echono noted that Nigeria stands to benefit a lot, considering the advantage of similarities in climate, ecology and crops of the two countries, "meaning that whatever grows or works here will also work in Nigeria", he explained.



AGRICULTURE: NIGERIA, BRAZIL, FARA FORGE TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIPS

He emphasised that the ideal research must be for development and whatever area of research must translate to value addition to humanity, noting that the Fund has been at the forefront of advocating for Research and Innovation to proffer solution to national problems.

The TETFund Boss added that the focus was leading the transformation of Public Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria to make them more relevant to addressing developmental challenges and improve their global ranking, stating that the Fund would spare nothing to strengthen this collaboration to effectively deploy Science and Technology Research in Agriculture.

Echono said: “Until we make our educational institutions relevant to our national development objectives in our country, we won’t optimize the objectives for tertiary education, that is why we are strengthening collaboration.

“Our challenge is the quality of our graduates. When you say you are a graduate in Nigeria, what special skill do you have? Because in today’s workplace, it is not the length of your certificate that matters. Employers want to see what you are bringing to the workforce and what value creation you are going to be adding on. So essentially, they want fit-for-purpose graduates, the previous and current practice of employing people and sending them for trainings in Europe and other countries to retrain them before they can now work, should be a thing of the past”, he said.

In his remarks, the Executive Director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Dr Yemi Akinbamijo said the theory of change of ARIFA is to generate a new cohort of science-based change-makers in Agri-business.

According to him, this theory has to do with breaking the vicious circle in recycling of near moribund and non-functional Agric mechanisms, which includes bringing innovations for public good, massive capacity building, as well as public/private partnership.

The Executive Director pointed out that ARIFA has become a working model for other African countries to emulate as it pushes for imperative areas such as retooling Africa for development, exchange of knowledge and technology, joint capacity development, advancing research frontiers, among others.

Dr. Akinbamigo advised that for Nigeria to make a significant progress in tackling food shortage and over dependence on importation, there is need to scale up the number of scholars being trained for the Agricultural programme to as much as 500, to ensure food insecurity becomes a thing of the past.

Also speaking, Nigerian Ambassador to Brazil, Professor Mohammad Ahmad Makarfi appreciated TETFund for spearheading the partnership, which he described as very critical to the Federal Government's agenda on food security.

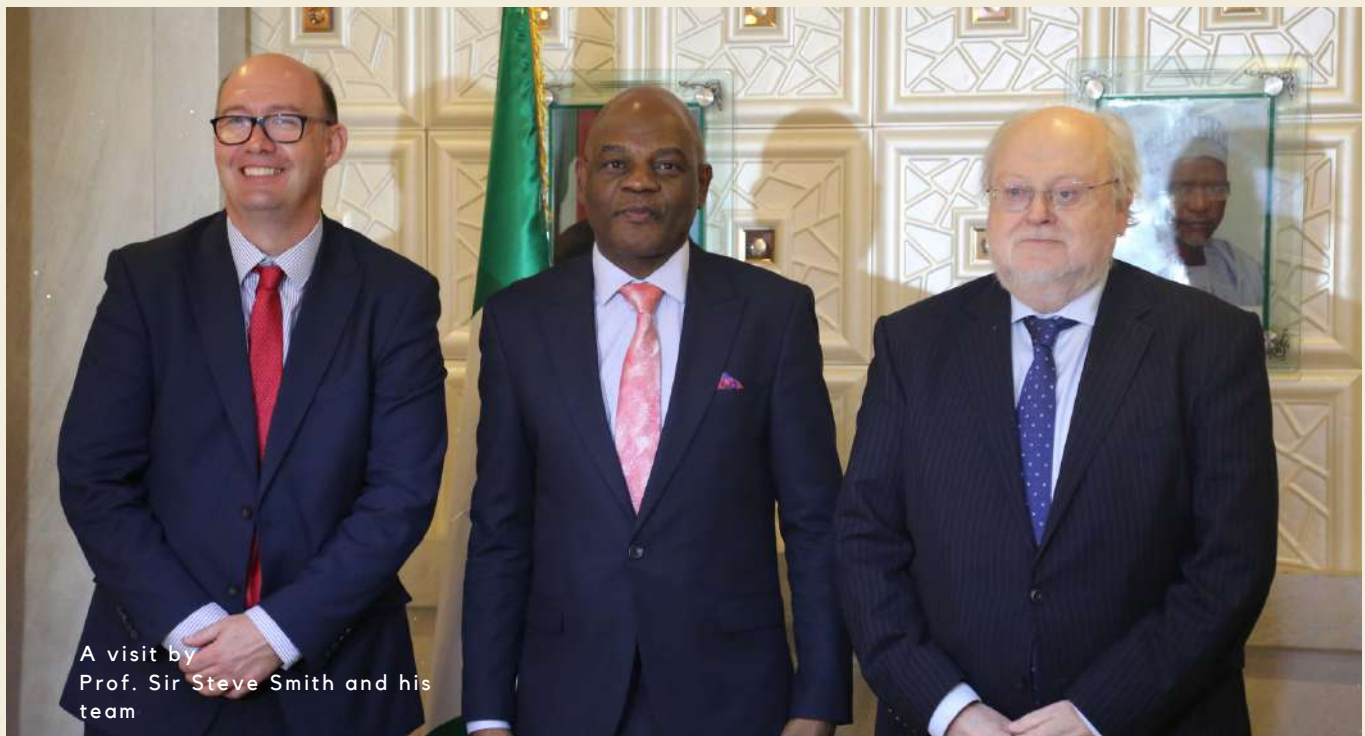
He assured the Nigerian delegates of his maximum support to facilitate the successful partnership that would translate to a major boost in the Agricultural sector.

"What TETFund is doing is to expose Nigeria to these better technologies and I will continue to support Echono to achieve these. We must run. There is no time to waste because a lot of West African countries are depending on Nigeria for food. The Brazilians have already done a lot of research, so we just need to get what we can from them", the Ambassador said.

A Roundtable discussion on Agricultural Research and innovation FARA



Photography Chidozie C. Nwangwu



BRITISH COUNCIL PUSHES FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION

The United Kingdom and Nigeria have set plans in motion for a collaborative venture that would lead to an improved and sustainable transnational cooperation in tertiary education sector.

The United Kingdom Government International Education Champion, Professor Sir Steve Smith led a delegation from the British Council on a courtesy visit to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in Abuja to declare the country's intention to partner Nigeria for a more inclusive transnational education that would be of symbiotic benefit for the two countries.

According to Professor Sir Smith, "we are here to see how we can push the ambitious plan the Federal Government of Nigeria have for education, to develop a plan to improve transnational education, a long standing and sustainable partnership for a positive link on a long-term basis".

He emphasized the imperative of expanding transnational education system whereby the institutions in the United Kingdom would partner with Nigeria Universities in an all-inclusive educational system in terms of Research.

The delegation also sought for clarifications on TETFund processes, plans and strategies for supporting development within the Tertiary Education sector in Nigeria to enable United Kingdom identify areas of supporting the Fund with a view to achieving its mandate and identifying areas for potential future collaboration.

The UK Education Champion revealed that the United Kingdom has identified 5 countries to partner with, including Nigeria, Vietnam, India and Saudi Arabia, to further strengthen their bilateral ties through Research and Development in the education sector.

He noted that building on the UK Research Eco-System is critical, and if transnational Doctoral training is supported, it would be a win-win for both countries.

The Executive Secretary, Arc Sonny Echono while responding, told the delegation that the Fund is excited about the proposal and would want to have the partnership in multiple dimensions.

In a PowerPoint presentation, Arc Echono took the visitors through the history of TETFund activities, brief processes of intervention activities and the emerging challenges bothering on dwindling Education Tax generation as well as partnerships with other countries.

He stated areas of needs to include, Information and Communication Technology, Academic Staff Training and Development, Research and Development, among others.

The Executive Secretary expressed that the Fund is committed to addressing issues of deficits in infrastructure, human capacity. He added that the Fund has also established Centres of Excellence to encourage specialisation and for institutions to leverage on comparative advantage so that each institution could be identified easily with specific area in Research and Development, which will ultimately help proffer solutions to national needs.

Echono explained that the proposed partnership should be symbiotically beneficial to Nigeria and United Kingdom, "where we can learn from one another, we need global partners to have their presence on various campuses in our institutions for provision of modern integrated laboratories, where research can take place, including partnership with industries".

He informed the delegation that the Fund has sponsored more than 37,000 scholars in Academic Staff Training and Development in various countries overseas, stressing that bringing resource persons down to Nigeria, will to a large extent, reduce cost drastically.

He decried the international rating of tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria which has dropped drastically, stating that such partnership would further expose Nigerian institutions through linkages and leveraging on ICT.

Director of Research and Development and Centers of Excellence of TETFund, Dr. Salihi Girei Bakare in a vote of thanks, appreciated the delegation for their interest in Nigeria's education, stating that UK is in a better standing than any country in the world to forge a strong partnership with Nigeria.

Collage of Various Events



Courtesy visit by Governing council of Benue Universities, Markudi



Courtesy visit by the Head African Union



Presentation at Raw Material's Auditorium



Presentation at Raw Material's Auditorium



Presentation at Raw Material's Auditorium



"C.V.C.N.U.

A KEY PLAYER IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR "

- Sonny S. T. Echono

Words

Habiba Rabi'u

Photography

Michael Agu

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arch. Sonny Echono has described the Committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (CVCNU) as a key player in the education sector.

Arc. Echono stated this during a courtesy visit by the CVCNU to TETFund Office in Abuja.

He said, "I want to state that over the years, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities has remained a key player in the sector that render advice and promote stability in the university system.

"I crave your indulgence to continue to play this role, and to also look into the current challenges being faced in our universities today with the view of proffering solutions for government and other stakeholders to adopt and restore normalcy in the education sector as well as promote the rebuilding and internationalization of our university system", he said.

While assuring the Committee of the Fund's commitment to sustain ongoing reforms in the education sector, with increased emphasis on the content component of its interventions including research and ICT, the Executive Secretary urged other key players including the private sector to be involved in strengthening the system to complement government's effort.

He said, "We have existing partnerships, particularly in the digitization of thesis. We are confident that once this is accomplished, it will not only provide open learning resources for researchers and students who want to access previous works done in their respective areas of research but also promote a culture of academic excellence.

"One of the problems of our education today is the quality of our graduates, particularly the quality of thesis. Many students plagiarize other people's work.

"We believe the anti-plagiarism device you have developed will go a long way in detecting this and ensuring compliance. Indeed, we have adopted a policy in TETFund that going forward, all proposals coming to us must go through your system and receive certification that it has passed a minimum -

standard that is required and for all publishers and authors before it can benefit from our support Intervention”, Echono added.

Speaking earlier, Chairman, CVCNU and Vice-Chancellor Niger Delta University, Prof. Samuel Edoumiekumo congratulated Arc. Echono on his appointment and pledged the commitment and support of his Committee to the attainment of TETFund’s goals.

While commending the Fund for its role in transforming public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, Prof. Edoumiekumo requested for a review of the funding support to beneficiary institutions towards improving capacities of staff and students; building capacity of academic staff for generating content; embarking on professional certifications in current Information and Technology (IT) platforms among others.

Photo Collage of Various Events



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



courtesy visit by Provost Technical, Kogi State
College of Education, Kabba.



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



Inspection of South West Zonal Office



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



TETFund Inaugurates Thesis Digitization Project Steering And Coordinating Committee

*Words
Tenidunni Abiru*

*Photography
Hyelkuzuku Nggada*

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has inaugurated a Digitization Project Steering and Coordinating Committee aimed at creating a national research bank to serve as repository of academic research works and theses for the nation's academic community.

The move which is aimed at protecting the academic integrity of educational institutions and the academia and will also help generate a large collation of local institutional research into Digital Repositories in tune with international standards in Public Tertiary Institutions across the country.

It will in addition engender exposure and appreciation of intellectual activities of Nigerians by the international communities across the globe.

Inaugurating the Committee made up of subject experts, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono, informed members of the Committee that the project is being sponsored as a Library Intervention by the Fund, originally borne out of the need to redress a situation that saw the amassing of a rich collection of research dissertations with limited access.

He pointed out that though there existed some repositories for these research theses, they were not accessible to either the local or international audience and as such the aim was defeated.

Arc. Echono reiterated that his tenure would focus on Entrepreneurship, Pedagogy and Research, leveraging on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and that the digitization of theses and dissertations is one step to accomplishing these goals as it involves the creation of institutional repositories using ICT for the institutionalization and commercialization of research products.

The Executive Secretary charged the Committee to adhere to its Terms of Reference which include: the development and adoption of a model digitization policy for beneficiary institutions; provide coordinating support and guidance for the project management team to implement this digitization project successfully; develop frameworks and procedures to ensure that the project deliverables are strictly adhered to; Identify intellectual property issues, ownership and reward models for institutions and stakeholders.

Other terms of reference are to provide monitoring and evaluation support for the project; liaise with the various beneficiary institutions to ensure that the project is on track as scheduled; provide scheduled reports on the progress of this project to TETFund; promote adoption and achieve conflict management among identified stakeholders whilst maximizing the project benefits across key stakeholder groups amongst others.

Arc. Echono expressed the need for the project to be carried out urgently as it could bring immediate value to the national academic sphere. He therefore tasked the Committee to give the project their best.

The Chairman of the Committee and Secretary General of the committee of Vice Chancellors of Nigerian Universities, Professor Yakubu Ochefu, in response, assured that the Committee will deliver on the Terms of Reference, saying that they will commence evaluating policy framework, data management systems and as well seeing to the creation of key metric systems to monitor uploads and downloads.



Professor Ochefu also stated that the Committee would liaise with other institutions globally to benchmark their theses digitization processes and systems in order to advise the Fund on a repository management system that would be reputable and sustainable.

In a goodwill message at the inauguration, Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Prof. Idris M. Bugaje stated that this digitization process was long overdue, as institutions exist as silos and that the digitization of dissertations and theses will undoubtedly allow for cross communication between institutions and the free flow of information as well.



He also noted that it would reduce plagiarism significantly, which will give room for the production of authentic academic products, thus ushering the Nigerian educational system on the path of excellence.

The National Librarian and Chief Executive of National Library of Nigeria (NLN), Professor Chinwe Veronica Anunobi, re-echoed the words of other speakers, saying that the digitization of theses will enhance the visibility of research output in the country. She also expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Committee.

A PowerPoint presentation by the TETFund Acting Director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Mr. Joseph Odo, revealed that presently, digitization is only at 7%. The goal however is to capture at least 2 billion theses over the past ten years starting with Post Graduate theses. The digitization process he said is expected to start from a hundred of the least digitized institutions, to put Nigeria at par with other academic community across the globe.



The Acting Director, ICT Mr Joseph Odo, Presenting at the meeting

ECHONO BAGS FARA'S FIRST MEDAL OF HONOUR AWARD

WORDS MICHAEL AGU

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has again made history as he bagged the first and most prestigious Medal of Honour Award by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

Arc. Echono received the award in Accra, Ghana, at the Extra Ordinary Steering Committee Meeting of the Agricultural Research, and Innovation Fellowship for Africa (ARIFA) for his outstanding support and vision for implementing the blueprint of Agricultural Research and Development by the African Union for Nigeria.

It would be recalled that FARA has been in partnership with TETFund since 2020, working together to build a strategic competence through ARIFA with the goal of systematic infusion of a new crop of professionals in Nigeria for the delivery of commensurate competencies in Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D).



The partnership leverages the best practices of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) strategy for FARA to contribute to building the knowledge-based economy through TETFund Centres of Excellence (TCoE) across the country.

To date, TETFund has sponsored close to 100 fellows drawn from a cohort of Nigerian academia to undertake tailor-made master's degree programmes in various fields of sciences related to Agriculture in Brazilian universities led by a consortium of the Brazilian Federation of International Education (FAUBAI) and the Federal University of Vicosa.

Speaking during the meeting, Arc. Echono, in his continued drive to support agricultural transformation expressed commitment to expanding the number of fellows to at least 500, given the encouraging footprint of the programme.

Presenting the award on behalf of the Chairman, FARA Board of Directors, Dr. Alioune Fall, Executive Director of FARA, Dr. Yemi Akinbami stated that the award was in recognition of the Executive Secretary's continued effort to support agricultural transformation in Nigeria through Science.

He said' "An Architect by training and well-established agribusiness entrepreneur, he comes to his current position with strong accolades and solid footprints in the Agricultural sector. As the erstwhile Permanent Secretary of Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Arc Echono demonstrated a commendable support for the efforts of FARA as the Capacity Development Cluster with accelerated vigour".

"You are the first recipient of this kind of honour, so it is my pleasure to give it to you in recognition of what you did for us in the past and what you are doing now. It is very inspiring for us", he added.

The FARA Executive Director noted that the Medal is an insignia of honour bestowed on deserving laureates to promote leadership in African Agricultural Research and Innovation.





DIGITAL LITERACY IS OUR FOCAL POINT

ECHONO

Words

Michelle Imasuen

Photography

Zeal Eghove

The realization of the centrality of digital literacy in every aspect of life has given the impetus for its total embrace, particularly in the tertiary education sector, the Executive Secretary, Arc Sonny Echono has said.

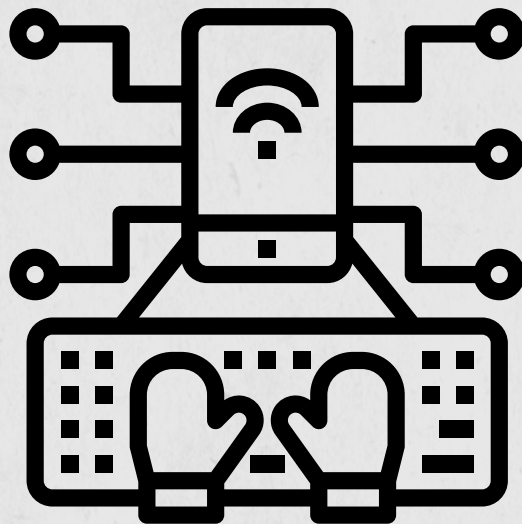
The Executive Secretary made the observation when a delegation from the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, led by its Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Kimbir paid him a courtesy visit in his office in Abuja.

He emphasized that tertiary institutions in Nigeria must not lag behind but should join what has become a revolution that the global community is taking a cue from. Arc Echono said, “digital literacy is our focal point, because that is where the world is going now. Digital revolution is so central to every aspect of life, and we must follow that trend.

“We want our universities to adopt hybrid mode, where they should be able to interact online and real time in order to maintain our competitive edge”, he further explained.

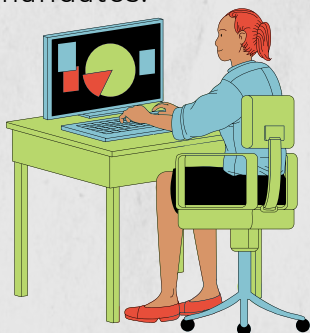
He expressed appreciation to the team for the great work they are doing to uplift the university, noting that Benue State is one of the leading states in the Northern Nigeria in terms of human capital development.

On the request by the Vice Chancellor for the completion of two suspended buildings in the institution, Arc Echono assured that the Fund has gotten Federal Government’s approval to earmark sufficient funds to speed up the completion of all suspended projects across the beneficiary institutions. “We will work out a schedule to address these pending issues of suspended projects”, he added.



In his remarks, the Vice Chancellor made an appeal to TETFund for an Information Communication Technology building, which he noted the university is in dire need of.

While congratulating the Executive Secretary, Professor Kimbir pledged his total allegiance to the TETFund Boss, with a view to ensuring the successful execution of TETFund mandates.



**12 New
varsities**



Prioritising New Varsities

The 12 newly enlisted Universities popularly referred to as the G12 are set to a speedy development as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has assured of giving priority and special consideration in intervention projects to the institutions.

Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono who made this known while receiving the G12 on a courtesy visit to the Fund in Abuja, stated that the universities are faced with challenges of infrastructural deficit and as such, deserve to be focused on to fast track development on their campuses.

Arc Echono, whose assurance was premised on the earlier request by the G12 universities for a special consideration, explained that there is need to prioritize because of the challenges of not being able to generate sufficient Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) to fund Projects, due to low student population.

*Words
Habiba Rabi*

*Photography
Hyelkuzuku
Nggada*

You (G12) need to develop a 5-year strategic master plan that will make it easier for project selection, and improve due process for transparency and accountability.

-S.T. Echono

He advised the universities to develop a 5-year strategic master plan that will make it easier for project selection, pointing out that those projects must pass through an open bidding process for transparency and accountability purposes.

The Executive Secretary also emphasized the need for strict compliance to quality project delivery, which is one of the cardinal objectives of TETFund intervention in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

On the issue of Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D), Arc Echono stated that the newly enlisted institutions are in dire need of capacity building for their lecturers, TETFund would take a holistic approach to fill up existing vacuum.

He, however, stated that there would be series of consultations, to look at areas of improvement, in addition to review of TETFund intervention guidelines and processes.

In his remarks, the leader of the delegation and Vice Chancellor, Federal University, Dutse, Professor Abdulkarim Sabo Mohammed, said the appeal for special intervention became imperative to assist the institutions tackle various challenges hindering their path to academic progress.

He noted the need for the institutions to catch up with their counterparts, that is, the old generation tertiary institutions, who have passed through series of development processes and are at greater advantage to withstand the present economic challenges.

Photo Collage



Director F&I, with her team in South Africa



Director F&I, with her team in South Africa



Director F&I's team in South Africa



A courtesy visit by Benue State University to the Fund

You (G12) need to develop a 5-year strategic master plan that will make it easier for project selection, and improve due process for transparency and accountability.

-S.T. Echono



Words
Michael Agu

Photography
Chidozie C. Nwangwu

"We Pledge to Support Production of Skilled Graduates" - Echono

The Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Echono, pledged the commitment of TETFund towards the production of graduates that can be globally competitive with the vital skills through Science, Technology and Innovation.

Arc Echono who stated this during a visit to the INNOV8HUB in Abuja, noted that building an innovative technology solution in Institutions within the country will not only enable graduates to be self-employed but also provide the needed workspace for graduates through expertise and entrepreneurship.

He said: "We need to do things creatively so that we can employ all our youths that are unemployed.

"We can fast-track the process and also modernize the training programme that we have to bring them in tune with the needs of industry and the workplace".

"The message that we are spreading across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is to make sure that Nigeria is the hub for innovation, and then we spread out the message across Africa.

Africa must become competitive; ultimately, we have shown this in various spheres through our scholars who make exploits and contribute to the global knowledge and economy" Echono added.

Africa, he explained, is currently contributing about 0.5 percent to the global economy, pointing out that it is not something to be proud of, and that the dynamics must change.

Echono further stressed the need for collaboration between tertiary institutions and private sectors to groom generations of innovators to place Nigeria on global recognition.

On his part the Founder of Innov8 Hub, Professor Ibe explained that the organization is a focal point for innovation start-ups incubation, technology transfer and skill acquisition.

He said it will help train academics in tertiary institutions, through different programmes and initiatives to bring together brilliant minds and gifted hands across board.

"We need to do things creatively"
-ES. S.T. Echono

Photo Collage of Various Events



Inspection of the South West Zonal Office



Inspection of the South West Zonal Office



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



Capacity Building workshop for Colleges of Education



Workshop in Chelsea Hotel, FARA



Courtesy visit by Representatives of the E. U. Embassy



Courtesy visit by the Chairman committee of Heads of Polytechnics and Colleges of Education



Courtesy visit by V.C. Rivers State University, Port Harcourt



Committed To Solving TETFund Scholars CHALLENGES - Echono

Words and
Photography
Amos Anetekhai

The Acting Director, Information Communication Technology (ICT) of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Mr. Joseph Odo has expressed the commitment of the Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny Echono towards solving some challenges associated with the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) programme, with a view to making it more seamless and impactful in the enhancement of knowledge and overall development of the country.

Mr. Odo stated this at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) during the 2021 Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D) Monitoring and Evaluation exercise held at the university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia recently.

The ICT Director stated that the Fund was not unaware of challenges faced by some foreign institutions in promptly confirming scholars' tuition fees remitted through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and had initiated consultations with the Apex Bank towards solving the problem.

Reacting to observations made by some scholars that payments by the Fund do not cover duration of programmes in some cases, Mr. Odo noted that this could be attributable to vagueness in admission information provided by some scholars. He, therefore, urged beneficiaries of TSAS to ensure clarity in communication with the Fund on their admission status; such as nature of programme, duration, number of semesters among others, to prevent ambiguities during processing by the Fund.

While assuring the scholars of the Executive Secretary's dedication to ensuring that the essence of the TSAS programme is fully achieved for national development, he expressed optimism that they would use the knowledge and expertise gathered under the programme to generate ideas and proffer concrete solutions to the socio-economic challenges facing the country.

In his remarks, the President, Nigerian Students' Community, UPM, Hammed Abubakar Abubakar expressed appreciation to TETFund for the sponsorship opportunities extended to the scholars and also taking their welfare as priority.

While speaking on some of the challenges facing scholars at the university, the President expressed the inability of the university to verify payment of tuition fees made by TETFund in favour of some scholars due to lack of payment evidence and appealed to the Fund to establish a mechanism that will ensure prompt verification of scholars' tuition fees payment to avoid programme disruption.

Speaking while welcoming the TETFund delegation to UPM, the Deputy Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Prof. HJH Firdaus Mukhtar thanked the TETFund team for the visit and expressed hope that the meeting would give an overview of the Fund's progress in the scholarship programme, as well as strengthen its relationship with the university.

The TETFund team later held a meeting with the Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Prof. Dr. Zalilah Mohd Shariff; the Bursar, Mazitah Ahmad and some management staff of the School of Graduate Studies and useful discussions were held concerning the academic progress and welfare of the 357 TETFund scholars at the university.



TETFund To Release Funding for the completion of the National Library Project

Words

Tenidunni Abiru

Photography

Michael Agu

The completion of the National Library of Nigeria building project is underway as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has set aside the first tranche of N15 Billion to fast-track the commencement of work at the building.

Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono disclosed this when he received in audience, the Executive Members of Nigerian Library Association led by its President, Professor Innocent Akocha, in his office in Abuja.

Arc Echono noted that the Fund has put all plans in place for the completion of the National Library building, adding that it has conveyed its readiness to provide the funds to the ministry as soon as the Federal Executive Council assents to it.

"On our own part, we have set aside the first tranche of about 15 billion already in our coffers to be deployed as soon as the approval from the reversed cost is granted by the Federal Executive Council", he said.



Courtesy visit by President, National Library Association and his team

"For us in the tertiary education, library is where learning takes place, including research, teaching materials and resources that students access to improve themselves are all deposited for record purposes. Library is usually the center of any academic institution, he added."



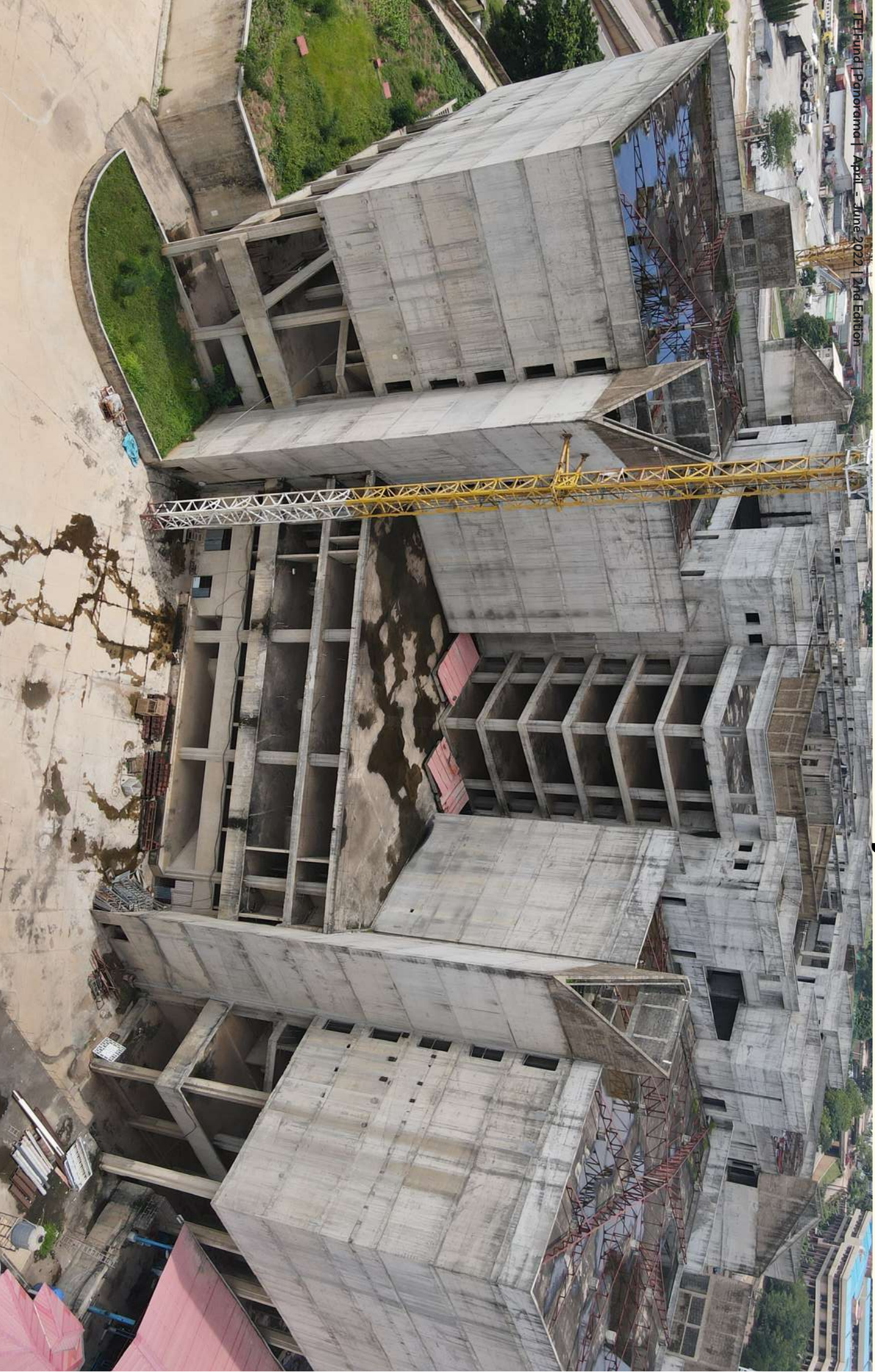
Drone shot of the National Library Project, Central Business District

The Executive Secretary commended the Association for its tenacity in ensuring that library is given adequate recognition in national affairs and also for the various programmes it organizes to promote literacy and reading culture in Nigeria.

While responding to the association's request for upward review of library funds, Arc Echono stated that, "when the new Board of Trustees of TETFund is appointed, we will look at your request and see how we reflect the convergence, as this is an area, we are trying to accord higher priority. I believe this will translate into a direct increase of funding for libraries".

He reiterated that every academic institution must update their subscriptions to identify resources that would keep students at the cutting-edge, noting that more often, individual students have more current journals than departments or institution, an anomaly which, must change as the nation moves to embrace knowledge-driven society.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY PROJECT





The Executive Secretary assured the delegation that TETFund will continue to partner with the Association as library is the only place that teaches every subject.

In his remarks, Professor Akocha informed the gathering that Arc. Echono, with the support of the Minister of Education, Mal. Adamu Adamu, was the brain behind the initiative for the completion of the National Library Building through deployment of TETFund resources, after presidential approval was granted.

He eulogized the virtues of Arc Echono and expressed strong belief that he will bring his wealth of experience to bear in his new assignment as the TETFund Chief Executive.

He was appreciative of the Fund's intervention activities, saying, "when it comes to Tertiary Education in this Country, TETFund has been doing very well for us and we want to say thank you."

Inauguration of Committee on the Human Resources Establishment and Related Assignment in the Fund



Photography Michael Agu



NASRDA Seeks TETFund Partnership

The Director-General and Chief Executive of National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) Dr Halilu Shaba Ahmed has solicited for partnership between the Agency and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in space technology development.

Dr. Halilu Shaba who spoke while he led a team from NASRDA on a courtesy call to TETFund, highlighted the capabilities and capacity available in the Agency and stressed that the proposed collaboration would go a long way in assisting the agency in designing, building, and assembling satellites. It would also aid in the training and intellectual empowerment of budding space scientists and engineers, he added.

The Director General of NASRDA reiterated that other areas of possible collaboration would include the establishment of a TETFund Centre of Excellence for Space Science and Engineering for the advantage of space researchers and students in the field of space science and technology from tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

Words Hadiza A. Mamu

*Photography Hyelkuzuku
Nggada*

He further intimated the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono on the already existing partnership with TETFund Beneficiary Institutions such as the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Kaduna, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and pledged the Agency's willingness to be of service to TETFund, especially in areas of mutual interests such as education.

While congratulating the Executive Secretary on his well-deserved appointment, he explained that NASRDA is working diligently as directed by President Muhammadu Buhari to collaborate with relevant organisations to fast-track the delivery of the Nigerian Space Programme.

He maintained that the space agency remains the sole institution saddled with the responsibility of engaging in empirical research and data analysis in all space-related activities in Nigeria.

In his remarks, Arc Echono welcomed the NASRDA delegation, and commended them for the tenacity in accomplishing the mandate of the organization. Echono also lauded the Agency on its achievements through the years.

He informed the Management of NASRDA that the fund is constrained by law that defines its area of intervention which only permits the sponsorship of projects in Public Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Nigeria, however, partnerships can be formed to enable support for NASRDA initiative through institutions benefiting from TETFund.



A Courtesy visit by the Executive Secretary, NCCE, Prof. Paulinus C. Okwelle and his team

Words Tenidunni Abiru

Photograph Philips Adebayo

NCCE BOSS SEEKS CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH TETFund

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has appealed for stronger synergy between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the Commission by instituting some changes in TETFund's intervention processes as it relates to Colleges of Education (COE).

The Executive Secretary of NCCE, Professor Paulinus Chijioke Okwelle made the appeal when he paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono.

Speaking at the meeting, Professor Okwelle, urged TETFund to add to the accreditation criteria for Colleges of Education, the submission of evidence of compliance with NCCE to ensure that Colleges of Education are indeed compliant with the extant rules and regulations of the Commission.

He also appealed that NCCE be involved in monitoring the activities of the six COEs' Centres of Excellence established by TETFund in the six geopolitical zones of the country and requested that the Centres of Excellence be extended to more Federal Colleges of Education to aid access to modern methodologies and research in Teacher Education.

The NCCE boss also pleaded for assistance in the provision of more reading materials for the TETFund Early Grade Reading Project created to adjust the curriculum for the infusion of early grade reading in indigenous languages as early as primary one.

According to Professor Okwelle, the project has been highly successful since its inception and has enjoyed partnerships with USAID for the production of reading materials in indigenous languages.

He also called on the Fund to establish Modern Micro-Teaching Laboratories in the six newly established Federal Colleges of Education as established in the older Federal Colleges of Education and as well fund Model Practical Teaching Centres in Federal Colleges of Education as their existence serve as laboratories for Teaching Practice.

Responding, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono noted that NCCE is a member of the TETFund Board of Trustees and as such considered a part of the Fund.

Speaking on the request for the establishment of new additional Centres of Excellence for Colleges of Education, Echono relayed that it is of great importance to the Fund that the Centres of Excellence excel in their various areas of focus as this would contribute to the transformation of education in the country.

The Executive Secretary assured his counterpart of more funding for Teaching Practice interventions for the purpose of improving curriculums for better learning outcomes across the country.

He stressed that teacher education is paramount to the development of education in the country and as such forms part of the primary focus of TETFund.

Recall that Arc. Echono had on assumption of duty as the Executive Secretary of TETFund, declared that his main agenda would be the production of high quality graduates through the review of the Nigerian curriculum to include Entrepreneurial Studies, Digital Technology as well as creating a strong partnership between the Government, Academia and Industry.

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Kindly, follow and engage with us on vibrant and interactive topics, we look forward to interacting with you.

Our handles are as follows:



TetfundNg



Tetfund



Tetfund



Tetfund TV



Words

Anne A. Igah

Photography

Hyelkuzuku Nggada

THE OPENING OF A SECRETARIAT TO BOOST PARTNERSHIP

As part of efforts towards promoting Nigeria's drive towards a knowledge economy, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has approved the setting up of a Coordinating Secretariat to operationalize the partnership between government, private sector and academia.

Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono gave the approval during a visit by the leadership of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, (NESG) to the Fund's headquarters in Abuja.

Arc. Echono noted that the opening of the Secretariat which would be domiciled in NESG was part of the synergy-building efforts by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and TETFund under its policy of the Triple Helix approach to research which is anchored on government, industry and academia partnership.

"I am giving a go ahead today, that a Secretariat should be operationalized because we need a structure to ensure that this happens; we cannot keep wishing it. We have to have a group. The Secretariat will be domiciled with you. Let's try and find a way of ensuring that we operationalize that and let's start the work because all that remains, really, is the will to commence. A lot has been going on; about four different committees were set up under the auspices of NUC.

"A couple of days ago, we met with the private sector arm of the World Bank and they are already collaborating with us to assist us in an assessment and evaluation of the preparedness, the readiness of our institutions to imbibe the spirit of entrepreneurship and employability of graduates.

They have a template they have built in a number of countries. And we said this type of baseline is good for us, let us even know where we are starting from. But the real coordination of that policy will rely on NESG," he said.

He further stated that the partnership "is all part of the efforts being made to ensure that our institutions become more relevant to the society, to our national development aspirations, to the needs of industry,

solving our own problems, improving lifestyles and standard of living of the people generally".

Arc. Echono described NESG as the policy arm or coordinating group for the Nigerian private sector and represents the industry, stressing that partnership with NESG was imperative to drive the concept of employability for graduates, improving curriculum delivery in institutions, making graduates of institutions more relevant to the workplace and the work opportunities of tomorrow.

He urged NESG to provide a work plan with specific timeline as well as the requirements, the deliverables and targets to commence implementation of the policy direction and objectives.

Speaking earlier, the Chief Executive Officer NESG, Mr. Laoye Jaiyeola recalled that talks about the partnership began way back in 2018, stressing that all the issues that necessitated the partnership were still relevant.

"Before you settle down and your pen begins to get sticky, let me remind you that we have work that has been left undone. That work we both started 3, 4 years ago is still relevant today. It's relevant tomorrow.

"For us at NESG, we were very ready and available. At that point was the point of saying so how do we have the coordinating Secretariat, which we were graciously willing to provide so that we can see how we can fund it and bring the issues to fore.

"The reason why we believe this approach is important is situated in the fact that it's beyond just education. It is multifaceted industry involvement that will solve it," he said.



Words
Otonbara F. Aprebo

Photography
Hylelkuzuku Nggada

A Call for More Professionalism in Architecture

The Executive Secretary Tertiary Education Trust Fund Arc. Sonny Echono has urged Architects to exhibit more professionalism in carrying out their duties.

He gave the admonition when he received in audience, members of the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), Abuja chapter in his office in Abuja.

The Executive Secretary, who just ended his tenure as the President of NIA appreciated the gesture while affirming that, the Fund has been fair to the profession.

The Executive Secretary further stated that TETFund does not take lightly, partnership with professional associations because not only do they bring their expertise and experience onboard, but they also bring added insurance because they belong to associations that can hold them accountable for their professional or unprofessional conduct on the job.

The TETFund Boss stated that he is an advocate of engaging professional consultants while counting on them to deliver the best they can offer, because TETFund has established a track record and want significant improvement in the quality of physical infrastructure as well as the time of delivery.

In his remark the Chairman of the Nigerian Institute of Architects Abuja Chapter, Arc Ninnah Briggs commended the Executive Secretary, for his tremendous works while he was with the Federal Ministry of Education. He congratulated Arc. Sonny Echono on his new office and wished him the very best in his new task.

He used the opportunity to encourage Architects in TETFund and their professional colleagues across Nigeria to adhere to their professional ethics, while urging them to get more involved not just in matters of the Institute but also matters concerning the Fund and how it operates, pleading for more commitment from them.

Arc Ninnah Briggs assured Arc. Echono of the readiness of the Institute to assist in any way it could to achieve his mandate.



A Pledge to the Development of Technology in Africa

Words

Habiba A. Rabi

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has affirmed the Fund's commitment to the development of technology in the African sub-region.

Arc. Echono made this known when the African Union Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Prof Mohammed Belhocine along with officials from the Pan African University paid him a visit in his office in Abuja.

The Executive Secretary stated that, "the government of Nigeria thinks in the direction of promoting technology and we are in the process of establishing a national institute here in Abuja. There will be a post graduate institution, which is also intended to stimulate the technological transformation of our country.

"The Pan African University also fits into this general framework, and we believe the partnership will enable us to learn one or two things to attract the right faculties and the right scholars into the University, and how we can also build on that", he added.

According to him, the Fund was delighted with the philosophy and approach of the Pan African University towards creating more Pan African universities for young African students, which will yield a more beneficial and prosperous future for the country and committed to forge a relationship with the Pan African University to push the African Union (AU) agenda and that of the university forward.

He said, 'I can assure you that as soon as we get your request, we should be able to build on that and forge the right partnership that will enable us to push the idea of the African Union forward.

In his remarks, Professor Mohammed Belhocine expressed gratitude to TETFund for its support to the Pan African University sited at the University of Ibadan, saying it wouldn't have been possible without the Fund's support.

He said, "We are very grateful for that. We are sure that it will create better working conditions for our Pan African University. Nigeria has been one of the advocates for the creation of this University, which is now 10 years in existence".

"The Pan African University is very important in terms of bringing young Africans together, because so far, we have been able to train more than 1500 Master's Degree holders in different fields of study, and more than 400 PhDs. and these people come from 50 different nationalities. That is the most important thing for us. It's not about technical performance, but more about how we are bringing young Africans together.

"When these Africans come together for a curriculum of 4-5 years, they get to know each other better, their cultures, their languages, and their beliefs and this creates the idea of Pan Africanism", Professor Belhocine noted.



TSAS: Over 33,000 Scholars Sponsored since Inception

Words
Chibogu Emodi

Photography
Philips Adebayo

The Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono has disclosed that the Fund has sponsored about 33,000 scholars to date, through the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) programme which commenced in 2008.

Arc. Echono stated this during his address at the 2021 Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D) Monitoring and Evaluation Exercise at the Universities of Glasgow, Dundee, Robert Gordon and Aberdeen in the United Kingdom recently.

In the address, which was delivered by the Acting Director, Public Affairs Department of TETFund, Mr. Abdulmumin Oniyangi, the Executive Secretary stated that the foreign component of the TSAS programme was designed to reduce inbreeding among Nigerian academics and also expose them to international best practices; while expecting that skills and knowledge acquired during training would be imparted in their respective institutions for national development.

Speaking during interactive sessions with TETFund scholars at the four universities, Mr. Oniyangi expressed the appreciation of the Fund to the various institutions for the support rendered to its scholars in their respective fields of study, particularly during the covid-19 lockdown in 2020.

While reacting to comments made by the scholars concerning delay in payment of tuition fees and problems of foreign exchange, Mr. Oniyangi noted that the Executive Secretary and management of the Fund are working with relevant agencies to solve their challenges.

Mr. Oniyangi explained that the Fund is also considering making full payment of upkeep fees of scholars to the foreign institutions, to enable scholars facilitate their school activities without disruption.

He assured them that their challenges and recommendations would be collated and reported to the management of TETFund for action, even as he added that the welfare of scholars remained of utmost importance to TETFund.

In her remarks, the International Recruitment Manager (Africa and Glasgow International College), Pamela Armstrong welcomed the TETFund team to Glasgow University, expressing delight over the positive feedbacks from the scholars.

Speaking in another meeting with officials of the University of Aberdeen, the Dean of Postgraduate Research, Professor Graeme Nixon, expressed appreciation to TETFund for the visit.

Professor Nixon stated that the university was making plans to provide platforms for linkages in terms of research with some industries and is hoping to create new partnership strands with international countries that would benefit the society.

He assured that the university would continue to support the scholars to make their stay in the institution valuable.



Entrepreneurship: Polytechnics Education, A Welcome Narrative Change

Words
Ijeoma Obiakor

Photography
Michael Agu

Adapting to modern trend in raising a generation of skilled manpower needs of Nigeria is achievable with a renewed focus in polytechnic education.

Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc Sonny Echono made the observation when he received the Governing Council of Federal Polytechnic Wannune, Benue state, who paid him a courtesy visit in his office in Abuja.

He noted that the manpower needed to stimulate growth in the productive sectors such as manufacturing, processing, the extractive industries

and all forms of production are incubated and nurtured mainly from Polytechnics and should remain the primary focus of Polytechnic institutions.

Arc Echono said; "Polytechnics are actually the hub of modern trend in education as education would no longer be just for the purpose of releasing manpower to serve in administrative positions, as initially conceived when the colonial masters came in. This culture has persisted for a very long time; and it is one of the narratives we are trying to change so that our graduates would become creators of wealth by being innovative and creative. These skills and knowledge are best provided by our polytechnics".

To this end, Arc Echono, revealed that, "The deliberate policy of government is to ensure that by next year every state in the country would have had a Polytechnic, since besides Agriculture, education is the second industry".

He applauded the Governing Council the Federal Polytechnic Wannune, which is one of the newest institutions established by Federal Government adding that it is very heartwarming to see that the polytechnic is already making visible progress.

Responding to the Council's request for more funding, the Executive Secretary assured that the Fund would continue to prioritise funding of polytechnics, provided they tow the same line of Government policy of producing graduates who are already equipped with entrepreneurial skills.

In his remarks, the Chairman the Governing Council Barr, El-sudi Ibrahim expressed profound appreciation to the Executive Secretary and the Fund for the numerous interventions that have uplifted the tertiary education institutions, stating that if not for TETFund some Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education would have folded up.

Barr, El-sudi Ibrahim thanked the Executive Secretary for the prompt response in releasing intervention funds to the Federal Polytechnic when it was established, disclosing that a total of N2 billion, N1.4 billion and N3,960 million respectively, have been released to the Polytechnic for various intervention projects.



Excited by the brilliant performance of Nigerian scholars studying under the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS), authorities of the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, is seeking for closer collaboration with the aim of attracting more candidates from Nigeria to the institution through the scheme.

Dean, Engineering and Built environment, Prof. Daniel J. Mashao stated this when a team of TETFund staff led by the Director, Finance and Investment, Dr. (Mrs.) Gloria Olotu visited the Institution on TSAS 2021 Monitoring Exercise to ascertain the progress of the scholars.

He disclosed that the University Management has concluded plans to send a delegation to TETFund, with a view to signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Fund to seek how the partnership would possibly increase the number of scholars admitted into the University.

The Dean noted that the collaboration, when established would be a worthy venture beneficial to the institution, TETFund and Nigerian tertiary education sector.

Meanwhile, the team also proceeded to the University of Western Cape where other scholars are undergoing different courses under the same TETFund intervention programme.

Responding to the issues raised by all the scholars from the two institutions visited, Dr. Mrs. Olotu explained that TETFund is not oblivious of the hitches, such as COVID-19 Pandemic which disrupted academic calendar globally, the exchange rate, delays in the release of tuition fees to the institutions, as well as irregularities in the communication process from their home institutions.

Dr. Olotu noted that some of their complaints could be attributed to ambiguity in admission information provided by some scholars, advising them to ensure transparency in communication with the Fund on their admission status;

Wide Spread Applaud for the TETFund TSAS Programme

WORDS AND
PHOTOGRAPHY

HADIZA A. MAMU

such as type of the programme and the duration to prevent obscurities during processing by the Fund.

She explained that the team has taken proper note of all their complaints and would be presented to the Management of the Fund for necessary action.

Dr. Olotu advised the scholars to exercise patience as their issues would be handled after proper study of the root cause.



Capacity building workshop for colleges of education, southern zone.
Prof. Paulinus Okwelle (white and Black cap), Arc. S.T Echono (Brown Kaftan) and Dr. J.E Anene-Okeakwa (Light Blue dress).

Words
Habiba A. Rabi

Photography
Hyelkuzuku Nggada

A Need for Quality Education in Our Colleges of Education

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has called on lecturers in Nigeria's Colleges of Education (CoE) to embrace new educational methods and Information Communication Technology (ICT) as an essential tool to enable them meet up with the current and emerging realities in the delivery of quality education.

Echono made this known in Lagos during a Capacity Building Workshop for teachers in Colleges of Education.

The TETFund Boss noted that the capacity building workshop was to impress on the provosts and leaders of colleges of education the importance of technology and the role of curriculum development and pedagogy in achieving a more effective and competitive educational system for the country.

The Executive Secretary maintained that teachers must show a high level of professionalism by increasing their knowledge base in technology.

He said, "The world is changing, and the way we used to have a teacher as the only knowledgeable person in the classroom dispensing knowledge to people has changed. Knowledge he noted is now available universally. You can google it or find it on the internet. So, the teacher is increasingly becoming a facilitator".

He stated that "We need to change the orientation of our teachers at this level. If you don't train the teachers themselves who are now expected to lead this change in Pedagogy, in Curriculum delivery, then you're missing it. Except we attract the best brains and retain them in the teaching profession, we would have been doing grave injustice to the future generation of our citizens", he added. Echono further reiterated the Fund's commitment to providing more resources to the development and improvement of quality education delivery in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

"The President has approved the major policy blueprint that will see the repositioning of teachers in our country, and we are sensitizing the beneficiaries as well as those who must carry the message forward. We in TETFund have an additional responsibility of ensuring that we commit more resources to teaching practice and other forms of improvement for teachers as directed by the president," he explained.

In his remark, the Executive Secretary of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Professor Paulinus Chijioke Okwelle, emphasized the need for curriculum development in the way that what is offered is in tandem with the needs of the society.

He was of the opinion that "the curricular should be revisited and updated so that what is offered in the universities or colleges of education is actually according to the need of the society."

The capacity building workshop, with the theme 'Enhancing Pedagogical Skills and Curriculum Development for Quality Education Delivery in Nigeria Colleges of Education' also had in attendance the Vice Chairman, Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education, Dr. J.E Anene-Okeakwa and Provosts of Colleges of Education in the Southern zone.

Birthdays This Quarter

APRIL



A. A. Ishaku
1st



A. Nazifi
1st



A. Asemokhai
1st



J. Hayatu
3rd



I. A. Nashir
3rd



Y. A. Buhari
4th



A. Magaji
5th



S. Emannuel
4th



C. M. Ezechukwu
5th



A. H. Bunza
6th



M. O.
Abraham
9th



S. P. Adewa
10th

Birthdays This Quarter

APRIL



M. K. Ali-Jos
10th



S. A. Dikko
11th



E. F. Idowu
13th



H. Nggada
14th



F. I. Shehu
14th



G. Davou
14th



Z. Suleiman
15th



O. F. Aprebo
16th



I. Gayus
17th



K. D. Adeboye
17th



M. S. Ishaq
18th



B. Lawan
19th

Birthdays This Quarter

APRIL



G. O. Alakia
20th



M. C. Agu
21st



C. G. Amadi
22nd



G. Hassan
22nd



F. M. Tongo
23rd



I. S.
Muhammed
24th



A. T. Inoma
25th



M. O. Fajonyomi
26th



J. O. Anekwe
27th



F. A Buhari
27th



T. Abbas
28th



H. H. Modibbo
29th

Birthdays This Quarter

MAY



A. Tanko
1st



C. C. Onu
1st



I. U. Abdullahi
2nd



B. F. Fasuyi
2nd



A. B. Imam
3rd



A. Garba
4th



I. Salisu
4th



M. W. Mukhtar
4th



O. S. Bolou
5th



O. K. Kassey
6th



A. W. Mustapha
7th

Birthdays This Quarter

MAY



I. M. Halliru
7th



M. Mudi
9th



M. B. Tijjani
11th



O. A. Idiaro
11th



O. A.
Fasanya
11th



M. K. Lawal
13th



M. Umar
13th



A. G. Na' Abba
14th



I. J.
Onwuegbuchule
15th



A. O. Alade
16th



U. F. Babagida
16th



O. O.
Ozo-Eson
18th

Birthdays This Quarter

MAY



O. C. Okenna
19th



O. S. Salau
20th



B. A. Aminu
20th



H. A. Aduku
22nd



M. A. Sadiq
22nd



S. O. Alimi
24th



J. B. Magaji
25th



D. M. Abbas
25th



R. T. Ribadu
27th



M. O. Imasuen
28th



B. N. Okeke
29th



G. E. Olotu
30th

Birthdays This Quarter

JUNE



S. Abdulraheem
1st



E. N. Okolo
5th



E. N. Asukwo
6th



N. Iroha-Kalu
8th



S. I. Magaji
8th



M. Z. Salisu
9th



M. C. Okwuegbu
10th



B. S. Aminu
12th



H. A. Aminu
13th



F. E. Achine
14th



A. B. Oniyangi
14th



A. Yakubu
15th

Birthdays This Quarter

JUNE



E. L. Chidoks
16th



E. Aumade
17th



N. N. Callistus
18th



M. Y. Maikudi
19th



E. L. Teerah
20th



M. M. Adamu
21st



S. T. Anas
21st



O. P. Oshehor
22nd



F. A. Sani
22nd



K. Shaibu
23rd



F. E. Edward
23rd



W. H. Bayero
23rd

Birthdays This Quarter

JUNE



N. M. Sani
27th



A. Abayomi
28th



O. O. Agunloye
30th



O. L. Ohue
30th

Photography
Musa. M. Musa