

PANORAMA

February - June 2023

Magazine

TETFAIR

Developed
Hearing AID
gets
international
Recognition

FG Approves
2023 budget
for Beneficiary
Institutions

**Tertiary
Education
Tax Now 3%**

TETFund
signs MoU
with Campus
France

TETFund, IFC
Collaborate
on Improving
Employability
of Nigerian
Graduates

TETFund,
FARA Partner
on
Agricultural
Innovation
Programme



Innovation 365 Days in Office of Arc. Sonny Echono Empowering
Digital literacy Conferences Employability

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Note	03
Contributors	04

TETFund Constitutes National Contact Point to Actualize AU-EU Partnership on Research and Innovation	08
TETFund Charge Polytechnics on Commercial, Innovative Research	10
Chicason, Positivo BGH Seek Partnership with TETFund	11

TETFund, IFC Collaborate on Improving Employability of Nigerian Graduates	12
Nigeria, Israel to Deepen Partnership on Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Production	14
FG Approves N320 Billion for 2023 Intervention Budget	16
Breakdown of the N320 Billion Intervention Budget for Beneficiary Institutions	19
TETFund Sets New Dawn in France-Nigeria Relations ...signs MoU with Campus France	22
Qoutes	23
Echono: A Disruptor's One-year Scorecard at TETFund	24
SSUCOEN Commends Echono over Role in Educational Development	28
AWAU Seeks Mutual Relationship with TETFund	29
Seven TETFund-sponsored projects Commissioned in Federal College of Education Bichi	32
TETFund, FARA Partner on Agricultural Innovation Programme	37
TETFund Sponsored Researchers Develop Innovations to Re-strategize Public Tertiary Institutions.	38
TETFAIR-Developed "Chord Hearing Device" Gets International Recognition	40
TETFund/SMEDAN partner on Entrepreneurship skills	43
Graduate Unemployment: Benue Government to Partner TETFund on Entrepreneurship Education	44
TETFund Conscious of Role of Technology in Elevating Institutions - Echono	45
TETFund Commissions Projects at Federal Polytechnic, Oko	47

TETFund Zone	48
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Greetings!

We welcome you to the first edition of TETFund Panorama to be published under the new administration of His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR who assumed office on May 29, 2023.

This edition can be described as special as it covers events from the last administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR to the new dispensation.

We, at TETFund, wish to use this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on his assumption of office and pledge unalloyed support towards his vision for greater development of higher education in Nigeria.

As part of TETFund's efforts towards the promotion of Research and Innovation for technological and economic development in Nigeria, the Fund established the National Contact Point (NCP) early in the year to actualize the AU-EU Partnership on Research and Innovation. Details of this can be found in this edition of the magazine.

Still on Research and Innovation, Nigeria and Israel have commenced collaborative moves to deepen partnership in innovation, entrepreneurship and production, with the aim of harnessing Nigeria's huge potentials for its technological development.

Former President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR in April 2023 approved the sum of N320 billion as Intervention Budget of the Fund in 2023. This amount represents the highest in the history of the Fund. The allocation pattern to Beneficiary Institutions as well as the budget breakdown are highlighted for your information.

To boost graduate employability amidst rising National unemployment challenges in Nigeria, TETFund in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation, an arm of the World Bank, undertook a National Employability Benchmarking Programme in Abuja. Find out details of this noble initiative inside this edition.

TETFund's partnership with major international organizations and institutions aimed at enhancing educational, agriculture and other vital sectors of the Nation's economy continued with the signing of Memorandums of Understanding with Campus France and Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). Details of this are presented for your information and reading pleasure.

In the same vein, an innovative product the "Chord Hearing Device" developed under the TETFund Alliance for Innovative Research (TETFAIR) programme got global recognition recently. This is in addition to other innovative products developed by lecturers selected from 18 public tertiary educational institutions under the Research for Impact (R4i) programme.

TETFund's Executive Secretary, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono clocked one year in office in March 2023. Find out in this edition, an independent analyst's review of his scorecard within the period. These and more have been packaged in this edition of TETFund Panorama for your information and delight.



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Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand.

- Chinese Proverb



Conference Attendance



TETFund Constitutes National Contact Point to Actualize AU-EU Partnership on Research and Innovation

Words by Tenidunni Abiru

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has constituted the National Contact Point (NCP) to facilitate dissemination of information on research opportunities.

The constitution of the NCP is part of the Fund's commitment towards implementing the partnership with the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) on Research and Innovation.

Speaking at the launch and presentation of the Nigerian Contact Network and presentation of work programme for 2023-2024 in Abuja recently, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono pledged the Fund's commitment to spearhead the formation of a bilateral agreement on Research and Innovation between Nigeria and the EU under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Arc. Echono noted that being an intervention agency for public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, TETFund has the mandate to facilitate the institutionalization of Research and Development in tertiary institutions to drive development.



While expressing concern that Nigeria has not been able to participate effectively in the EU research funding framework programme until recently, he also disclosed that the Fund has initiated the process to ensure that researchers from Nigerian institutions participate effectively in the EU Research and Innovation framework programme, Horizon Europe.

The Executive Secretary also stated that the Fund would be providing further support to the NCP network to enable it mobilize the Nigerian research community to benefit from the EU programmes.

He noted that in line with its mandate, TETFund has initiated several interventions aimed at resuscitating and encouraging cutting-edge research activities in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, for national development and tackling of global challenges.

Also speaking at the event, Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Mrs. Monilola Udoh, affirmed the Ministry's desire to support the initiative towards promoting Research and Innovation in the country, adding that Nigeria can only move from consumerism by becoming a producing nation; and Science and Technology remains the only way forward.

According to her, the Ministry is doing its part to support Research and Innovation in the country as the strategic branch of government saddled with the responsibility of facilitating the development and deployment of Science, Technology and Innovation to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the country.

Discussions at the event were piloted by the Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mr Alexandre Borges-Gomes, who stated that the Horizon Europe is a Research and Innovation programme implemented by the European Commission under the Global Gateway Initiative.

The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of Research and Innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges.



TETFund Charges Polytechnics on Commercial, Innovative Research

Words by Oluwatosin Isiaq Ishowo

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has implored Polytechnics across the nation to join the drive for quality research proposals capable of translating research findings to innovativeness and commercialization.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono made the call in Abuja during an interactive session with Heads of Polytechnics and Directors of Research of Polytechnics on the National Research Fund (NRF) grant.

Echono while addressing the audience lamented the huge skills gap in critical sector of the nation's economy, stressing that the deficit in skills indicates failure in producing graduates that are fit for specific purposes and needs of Nigerian industries.

According to the TETFund boss, the Fund desires to see increased polytechnics participation in addressing the problems militating against the country's growth and development by proffering solutions that would ease operations in the country.

He stated that no research would be of benefit to Nigeria if the products of research are not translated to impact lives. He expressed the need to transfer knowledge and creative spark into the production of goods and services that could create employment, upscale standard of living and enable growth in all segments of national economy.

He said, "I believe you are aware that there is a compelling need for a shift in focus. We are producing graduates in an economy that is underdeveloped, yet they are unable to find employment. We are having situations where foreign concerns, foreign companies, businesses are relocating from our country under the guise of not having the right manpower to carry out their operations.

"We are having a situation where there is a very high graduate unemployment. It is a huge shortage of skills in critical sectors of our national economy. It means we are not producing graduates that are fit for purpose, that meet the needs of the industry, which are ready to take up responsibility and contribute their quota upon engagement. The other aspect is that we continue to produce manpower that the current structure of our economy can no longer absorb," he said.

Also speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education, Prof. Idris Bugaje lamented that the roles of polytechnics in the country were being neglected, while adding that it is one of the primary reasons why research has not thrived in the country. He advocated that the National Research Fund (NRF) must be redirected, and some amounts allocated for moving research to the next level of commercialization.





Chicason, Positivo BGH Seek Partnership with TETFund

Michael Agu

A Nigerian technology-driven conglomerate, Chicason Group in collaboration with a global technological outfit in Brazil, Positivo BGH is seeking partnership with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) towards creating customized technological products to aid higher education delivery in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. This was made known when the Chairman of Chicason Group, Dr. Alex Okafor led a delegation comprising officials of Positivo BGH on a visit to the Fund.

Making a presentation during the visit, representative of Positivo BGH, Mr. Jonathan Biltencourt, noted that his organization, which is in partnership with Google, Microsoft, and other technology outfits, engages in the production of hardware such as computers, smartphones, tablets, servers, smart home and office devices; as well as educational technologies for schools designed according to users' specifications.

While looking forward to partnering with TETFund, Mr. Biltencourt expressed his company's readiness to produce technologies designed towards meeting the specific needs of higher institutions in Nigeria. In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund,

Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono commended Chicason Group for the initiative which is geared at providing knowledge and enhancing the capacities of students for greater learning outcomes through the introduction of technology and innovations.

Arc. Echono noted that in line with President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment to revamping the education sector and ensure the valuation and upward ranking of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the Fund has secured alliances with some Brazilian institutes to bolster development through research and innovation.

He recalled that not long after he assumed office last year, he "led a delegation of TETFund Management staff to Brazil where they signed an MoU's with associations in charge of the education system in Brazil, and about 44 of those institutions are partnering with the Fund in the area of research and academic staff training".

While encouraging mutual correlation among nations, he noted that both nations have striking similarities as they "have very similar conditions in terms of size, climate, and ecological conditions" adding that "Nigeria enjoys a very positive, very cordial, bilateral relationship with Brazil" as well as "some sixteen collaborations and partnerships with institutions in Brazil".

He however emphasized the need to outline the areas for partnership as he said, "there is also a need for clarity and focus on the specific areas that we want to collaborate or partner".

TETFund, IFC COLLABORATE ON IMPROVING EMPLOYABILITY OF NIGERIAN GRADUATES

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in partnership with International Finance Corporation (IFC) has commenced moves to boost the employability of Nigerian graduates amidst rising national unemployment and global challenges via the National Employability Benchmarking Programme.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono said the move was part of efforts to improve the employability of Nigerian graduates and assist in aligning tertiary education towards market needs.

Speaking in Abuja, the Executive Secretary disclosed that the IFC was deploying its employability tool to evaluate and assess how aligned tertiary institutions are in tune with employability best practice.

“IFC Vitae is a global first-of-a-kind survey-based diagnostic instrument which assesses, processes, structures and supports employability outcomes for higher education institutions,” he said.

The TETFund boss added that one of the key roles of the Fund was to develop a thriving atmosphere for young Nigerians to be part of the active labour market on graduation.

Decrying statistics on employment and living standard in the country, Echono said “The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has put Nigeria’s unemployment at 33.3%, while youth unemployment in the country is at 42.5% and youth under-employment at 21.0%. Besides, the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index recently released by the Bureau reveals that 133 million Nigerians are poor, living below the poverty line, which implies that 63% of persons living within Nigeria are multidimensionally poor”.

He therefore called for aligning intervention activities in the country towards meeting changing needs and strengthening education delivery to foster entrepreneurship culture; adding that it is one of the best ways of unleashing the enormous youth potential which naturally aids reduction in unemployment and other societal problems.

The International Finance Corporation speaking via its Regional Officer, Mr. Muhammad Aliyu expressed that Nigeria, and many African countries are experiencing a surge in youth population, and as such, stakeholders must strive to equip them with skills to safeguard the future of the continent. Hence, the need to review the national employability benchmark and foster closer collaborations between academia and industries.

Also speaking, Mr. Tomiwa Williams, IFC Investment Officer, reiterated that focusing on tertiary education should be top priority for all crucial actors.



Speaking on unemployment rate in Nigeria and Africa, he hinted that it is difficult to control unemployment, but that outcomes could be enhanced by putting processes in place, and the quality of those processes must be examined. Therefore, measuring the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria is paramount.

The Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rasheed expressed delight that TETFund is moving beyond just providing interventions to provoking serious discussions on education. The Commission's boss was optimistic on the national employability benchmarking programme and its ability to improve the functionality of the education system to suit the needs of the nation.

The National Employability Benchmarking Programme which is coordinated by TETFund with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education, and the National Universities Commission (NUC) aims to foster the mutual aspirations of academia and industries in Nigeria.



NIGERIA, ISRAEL TO DEEPEN PARTNERSHIP ON INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PRODUCTION

Nigeria and Israel have commenced collaborative moves to deepen partnership in innovation, entrepreneurship and production with the aim of harnessing Nigeria's huge potentials for its technological development.

This was disclosed when the Israeli Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mr. Michael Freeman paid a working visit to the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

Speaking during the visit, Ambassador Freeman emphasized Israel's desire to partner with Nigeria in the area of technology and entrepreneurship development, describing Nigeria as a country of huge potentials due to its teeming youth population.

While describing Israel as a leading country in technology and innovation, Ambassador Freeman disclosed that 45 percent of Israel's GDP comes from innovation and entrepreneurship start-ups, as the country's major economic sectors are involved in high technology and industrial manufacturing.

He stated that with Nigeria's huge potentials, if same could be achieved, or even a 30 percent GDP addition to Nigeria coming from technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, it would hasten Nigeria's economic development.

The Israeli Ambassador noted that Nigeria possesses the potential to be a destination for businesses if innovative developments are harnessed, particularly through innovation incubation hubs. This, he said, would provide young Nigerians who have entrepreneurship potentials but lacked expertise an avenue to be mentored and guided in the right direction.

Mr. Freeman also spoke about the Innovation Fellowship for Aspiring Inventors and Researchers (i-Fair) programme, an initiative borne out of the need to raise a generation of innovators, inventors and researchers in Nigeria, especially among the youths.

He explained that the Embassy had worked closely with the Office of the former Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo on the programme, which has spanned across two editions and called for stronger partnership with the Fund in the upcoming Third Edition.

In his remarks, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono expressed appreciation to the Israeli Ambassador for his visit and commitment towards strengthening ties with TETFund in Nigeria's quest for technological and economic development.

While expressing excitement at the numerous benefits derivable from the partnership, he stated that "If innovation and entrepreneurship can provide 45 percent of Israel GDP, one can only imagine what 10 or 20 percent will do to Nigeria's GDP with our population".

According to Echono, there is a global consensus that Nigerians are hardworking and intelligent if provided with the right incentives, and one can envision what can be unlocked through technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

While intimating Mr. Freeman of TETFund's collaboration with Innova8 Hub and other strategic partners, he also hinted on the Fund's drive to domesticate Innovation Hubs in some of Nigeria's tertiary educational institutions.



**I am not afraid of the darkness.
Real death is preferable to a life
without living.**



VASCO DA GAMA



Send a mail to Public Affairs email
for any Enquiries

Federal Government Approves N320 Billion for 2023 Intervention Budget

Words by Oluwatosin Isiaq Ishowo Photography Hyelkuzuku Nggada

The Federal Government has approved the sum of N320 billion for the 2023 Intervention Budget of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

This was disclosed by the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono during the 2023 TETFund Strategic Planning Workshop held at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.

Speaking at the workshop, Arc. Echono stated that the meeting was a platform to receive feedback and evaluate the performances of the Fund and its numerous intervention lines to promote a robust and more effective service delivery from TETFund.

He disclosed that under the budget, which is the biggest in the history of the Fund, Universities would receive N1,154,732,133.00 each; Polytechnics N699,344,867.00 each, and Colleges of Education N800,862,602.00.

Echono said, "I am pleased to inform you the Former President, Muhammadu Buhari approved the 2023 disbursement guidelines in the total sum of N320,345,040,835. Based on this, each university shall get for the Year 2023 intervention cycle the total sum of N1,154,732,133.00. This comprises N954,732,123.00 as Annual Direct Disbursement and N200 Million as Zonal Intervention.

"Each Polytechnic shall get N699,344,867.00, comprising N569,344,807.00 as Annual Direct Disbursement and N130 million as Zonal Intervention; while each College of Education shall get N800,862,602.00 comprising N670,862,602.00 as Annual Direct Disbursement and N130 million as Zonal Intervention," he said.

The TETFund boss emphasized that the disbursement for the year 2023 represents the highest disbursement to each beneficiary institution since the inception of TETFund.

According to him, a total sum of N1.702 trillion has been disbursed to Nigeria's public tertiary institutions between 2015 to date, compared to N1.249 trillion that was disbursed from inception in 1993 till 2014.

He credited the success and improvement in funding to sustained efforts at expanding and increasing efficiency of the Education Tax (EDT) collections.

"The added impetus is the gracious approval of Former President Buhari for an increase in Education Tax from 2.0 per cent to 2.5 percent in 2021," he added.

He, however, appealed to the President to give assent to the Finance Bill 2023, before expiration of his tenure which accommodated increase of the EDT collection to 3 per cent, noting that it would serve as a parting gift to the education sector from the Buhari-led administration.

In his remarks, the Permanent Secretary of Federal Ministry of Education, Mr. David Adejo implored beneficiary institutions to utilize the funds allocated to them judiciously, while commending the dedication of TETFund Management and staff to quality service delivery and purposeful intervention.



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Education makes a people easy to lead but difficult to drive: easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.

-Henry Peter Brougham



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N320 Billion Intervention Budget Fully Allocated to Beneficiary Institutions

Words by Oluwatosin Isiaq Ishowo Photography Hyelkuzuku Nggada

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has stated that the 2023 Intervention Budget of N320 billion recently approved by former President Muhammadu Buhari is fully allocated to Beneficiary Institutions in the 2023 TETFund Intervention Budget.

Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono made this known while giving a breakdown of the budget during a press briefing at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.



The Breakdown of the Intervention Budget

While recalling the 2023 TETFund Strategic Planning Workshop held earlier in Abuja, Arc. Echono explained that the Letters of Allocation presented to Heads of Beneficiary Institutions at the workshop were for projects categorized under a segment of the Fund's Intervention termed "Annual Direct Disbursement".

He further pointed out that under the Annual Direct Disbursement, funds are shared in line with the stipulated ratio in the Establishment Act equally to each tier of tertiary institutions regardless of size or needs and the total amount allocated under the segment in 2023 amounted to N198 billion, representing 62 per cent of the approved N320 billion.

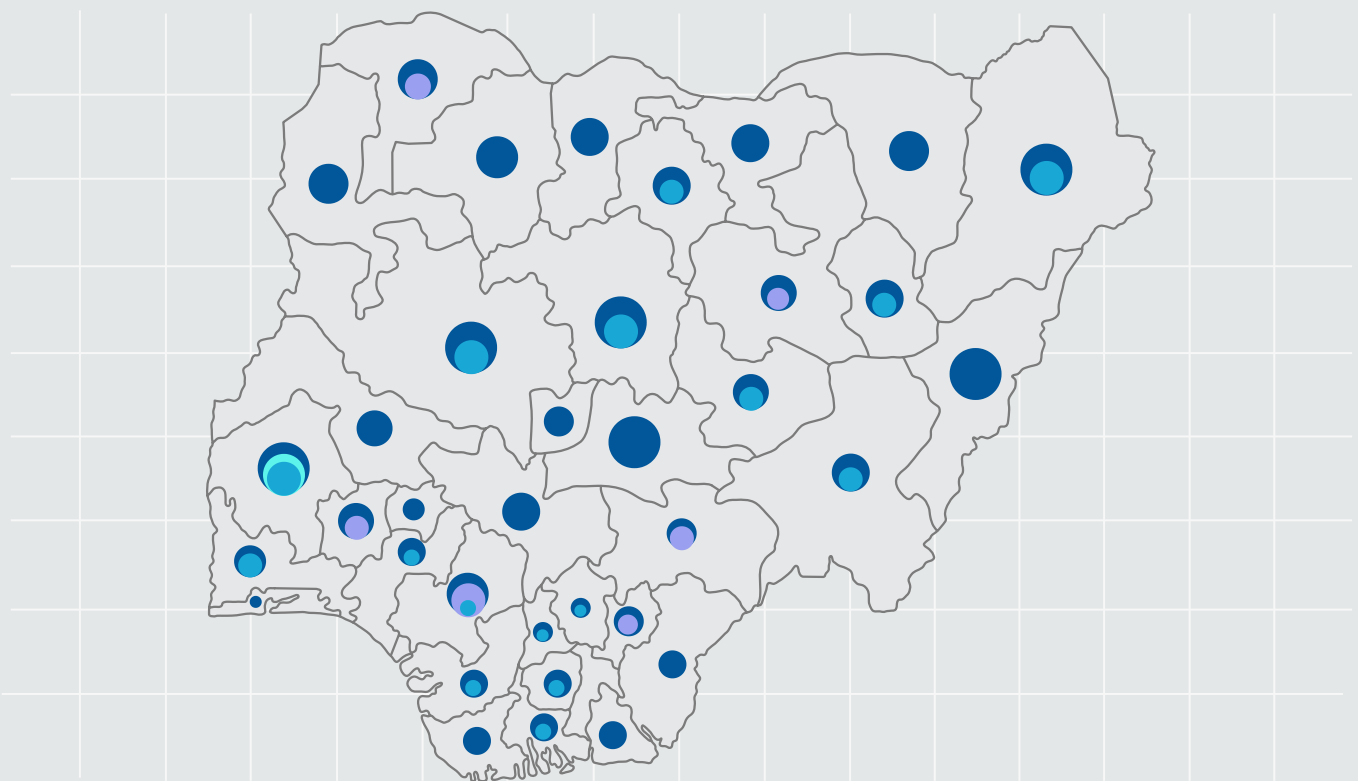
Speaking on other projects to be carried out in 2023 outside the Annual Direct Disbursements, the Executive Secretary announced that the Fund has provided a budget of N30 billion for High Impact Projects in selected institutions across its three tiers of beneficiaries in the six geo-political zones across the country.

The fund which is allocated under TETFund's Special High Impact Intervention indicates that six Universities would get N3 billion each, while N1 billion each would be given to six Polytechnics and six Colleges of Education spread across the geo-political zones.

“For this year, the Special High Impact will be given to six universities, and the six universities are: IBB University, Lapai, Niger State from North Central zone, Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State from North-East, Federal University, Birni-Kebbi from North-West, Imo State University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences from South East, Edo State University in South-South and Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State from South West.

“The beneficiary Polytechnics are Federal Polytechnics, Offa, Kwara; Federal Polytechnic, Gombe; Federal Polytechnic, Kano; Anambra State Polytechnic, Mgbakwu; Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny; and Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology; Igbo-Ora.

“Also, Plateau State College of Education, Gindiri; Federal College of Education, Yola; Federal College of Education, Zaria, Enugu State College of Education, Enugu, Delta State College of Education, Mosogar and Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu” he said.



● Annual Intervention ● Special High Impact ● Diaspora Research Centre ● Micro Teaching laboratories

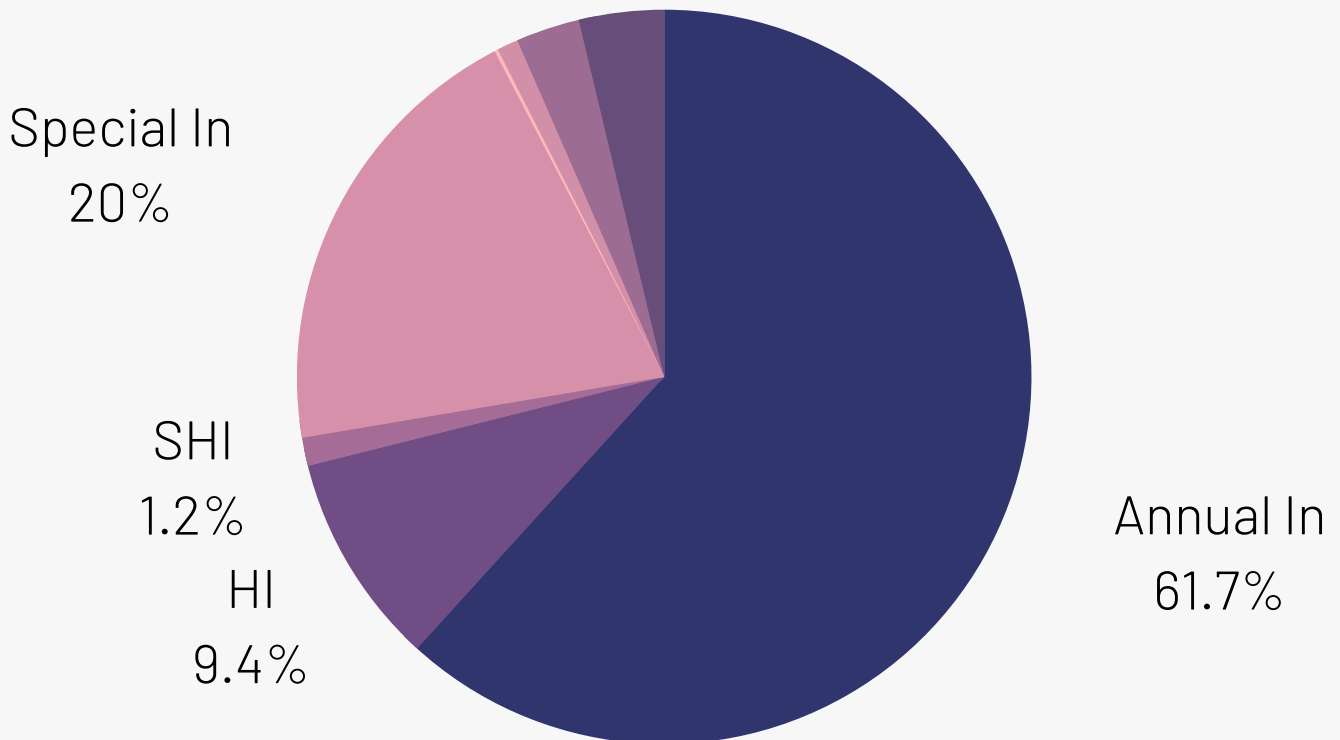
62%	20%	9.4%	3.7%	3.7%	1.2%
Annual Intervention	Special Intervention	High Impact	Distress projects	Other Interventions	S. High Impact

Arc. Echono also stated that 20 per cent of disbursements amounting to N64.2 billion would be utilized for special disbursement; adding that Special Intervention is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees of TETFund for which allocations are zonal based in line with the mandate of the agency.

The Executive Secretary also spoke on other intervention activities earmarked for the year such as establishment of micro-teaching laboratories in some selected Colleges of Education from the six geo-political zones in the country.

Distress projects

3.7%

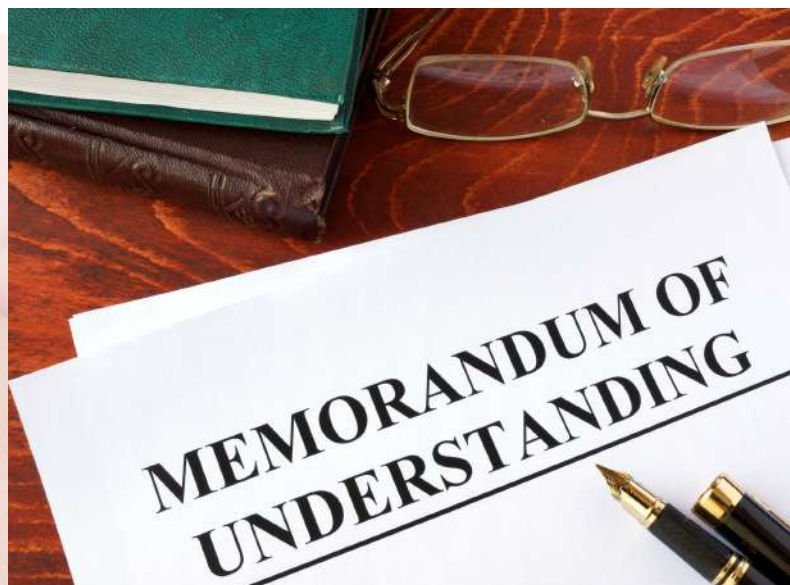


The colleges are Federal College of Education, Otukpo, Benue State; Federal College of Education, Jama'are, Bauchi State; Federal College of Education, Sokoto State; Federal College of Education, Isu, Ebonyi State; Federal College of Education, Ekiadolor, Edo State; and Federal College of Education, Iwo, Osun State. The sum of N500 million is allocated to each of the Colleges.

According to him, other allocations include N2 billion for Teaching Practice exercise in Colleges of Education and N1 billion for the establishment of Diaspora Research Centre, to be sited in University of Ibadan to create a platform for Nigerians home and abroad to exchange ideas and discoveries in innovation, research and development.

Decrying the growing threats to security and free movements in tertiary institutions, especially as they are one of the primary targets for kidnappings, banditry and other known crimes which disrupt academic activities, he disclosed that a total sum of N6 billion has been allocated to institutions in security risk-prone areas.

The TETFund boss also announced that the sum of N12 billion has been allocated for completion of distressed projects; N3 billion for establishment of innovation hubs across the geo-political zones of the country; among others.



TETFund Sets New Dawn in France-Nigeria Relations ...signs MoU with Campus France

Words by Amos Anetekhai

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has set a new dawn in the relationship between Nigeria and France with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Campus France on collaboration in the areas of joint research and promotion of innovation, training of qualified Nigerian academics in French higher educational institutions, scholars/students exchanges and support for French language immersion programme.

The Agreement was signed on behalf of the Fund recently in Paris by the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono while attending an event tagged "Nigeria Days in France" organized by the French Embassy and Campus France to strengthen the bilateral cooperation between Nigeria and France in the fields of higher education and research, which has the full support of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Under the Agreement which was witnessed by the Nigerian Ambassador to France, His Excellency, Kayode Laro and the France Ambassador to Nigeria, Her Excellency Emmanuelle Blatmann, Campus France would assist in facilitating the placement of TETFund scholars in specialized institutions in France at very low tuition; particularly in the areas of Science, Technology and Engineering which are germane to the technological and economic development of Nigeria.

The programme would also expose scholars to world class facilities, encourage collaborations between French and Nigerian scholars in carrying out cutting-edge research and innovation, while also providing opportunities for students and staff exchange.

The Forum, which had Representatives of 29 French Tertiary Institutions and 7 Vice Chancellors of leading universities in Nigeria, explored avenues for linkages, partnerships and the integration of Nigerian and French cultures considering the fact that Nigeria is bordered mainly by francophone countries.

Speaking during the signing of the Memorandum, Arc. Sonny. S.T. Echono expressed delight at the partnership and stated that drawing from the successes recorded in similar partnerships between Campus France and the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), he was confident of the positive outcomes derivable from the agreement, especially given the high global ranking of participating institutions and the cost advantage, compared with similar institutions in the United Kingdom and United States of America.

Campus France is a public institution in France responsible for promoting higher education and implementing international mobility programmes. It operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that of Higher Education and Research in France and maintain close relations with the world of higher education and research through the Campus France Forum which has close to 370 universities and other institutions as members.

Other agencies of the Nigerian government and participants at the “Nigeria Days in France” event include the National Universities Commission (NUC), PTDF, Nigerian Mission to UNESCO, Nigeria French Language Village and Vice-Chancellors of University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Lagos, Bayero University, Kano, University of Jos, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, amongst others.

TRAVEL IS NEVER A MATTER OF MONEY, BUT OF COURAGE.

T.S. ELLIOT

THE BEST EDUCATION YOU
WILL EVER GET IS
TRAVELING. NOTHING
TEACHES YOU MORE THAN
EXPLORING THE WORLD
AND ACCUMULATING
EXPERIENCES.

-MARK PATTERSON



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QUOTES:



“TETFund has become an active Promoter, Supporter and Funder of Skills Acquisition Development in Nigeria” ...

Prof. Idris Bugaje, Executive Secretary, National Board for Technical Education.

“I can start on a note of appreciation to TETFund because, looking at the Nigerian University system, we think that many times, the only hope is on TETFund because we are sure that within a year, we will naturally get some form of intervention from TETFund and that helps us with planning. It helps to keep hope alive”..... **Prof. Adenike Oladeji, Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Akure**



“We have really benefited a lot from TETFund Infrastructure Intervention, and those projects are projects that have significant impact on the delivery of our tripodal mandate, which is teaching, research and community engagement”..... **Prof. Olushola Babatunde Kehinde, Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta**



“TETFund Intervention in Nigeria is something that is great and a big deal because of the enormous impacts the interventions have on the development of tertiary institutions. Talking about human capacity development in tertiary institutions, but for TETFund, I must tell you many lecturers and non-teaching staff will not be able to attain professional growth in their different areas of specialization” **Dr. Rafiu Adekola Shoyele, Provost, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta**



Echono: A Disruptor's One-year Scorecard at TETFund.

"All you need is the plan, the roadmap and the courage to press on to your destination"

-Earl Nightingale (March 12, 1921- March 25, 1989)

For Stakeholders in the Nigerian Education Sector, and even for outsiders looking in, the giant leaps in service delivery to the partners of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) since the assumption of office of Architect Sonny S.T. Echono as the Executive Secretary, 12 months ago, would be undeniable.

TETFund, which will be celebrating its 12th year in 2 months (original Education Tax Fund Act of 1993 was repealed and replaced with Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act in May 2011, by the National Assembly), has succeeded immensely in its objectives through the provision of intervention lines to support physical infrastructure and project upgrade. It has also issued scholarships, and sponsored trainings for tens of thousands of Academic & Non-Teaching Staff, Institution-based research, entrepreneurship and many other transformative initiatives in our public tertiary education domain.

In essence, the contributions of the past Board of Trustees, Management and Staff to the success of the Agency were never in doubt. In fact, the laudable feats being recorded by the current Management and Staff rest on the giant planks erected through the hard work and unwavering commitment of TETFund's past handlers.

Upon resumption on March 21, last year, Architect Echono sued for cooperation of members of staff and charged them to be more committed to smart service delivery. He also urged them to make excellence their watchword in their various endeavours.

Going further, the new steersman shared some of his plans which include the continued support for National Research and Development, honing the Triple Helix Model (alliance between the academia, private sector and government) initiative, rejigging departments by enhancing their capacities for better service delivery, amongst many others.

Right off the bat, and under his leading, TETFund set on a mission of expanding the frontiers of academic partnerships and cooperation with countries and institutions in the United Kingdom, Belgium, other countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas in the fields of Academic Staff and Training, Research and Development, Agriculture, and Information & Communication Technology (ICT).

Playing host to a delegation led by the Deputy British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr Benedict Llewellyn-Jones and the UK Government International Education Champion, Professor (Sir) Steve Smith early in his administration, the Executive Secretary said the exigencies of the current knowledge and technology driven age, has led the focus of the Fund more in the direction of outcome-based education for Nigerian students.

He maintained the organisation is resolute in developing Centres of Excellence, establishing Mega Research Grant Intervention, encouraging Entrepreneurship among others, all in a bid to ensure that Nigeria's tertiary institutions become the drivers of technological advancement, growth and development for the nation at large. Responding, Professor Smith said the United Kingdom was ready to assist in pushing the ambitious plan of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards developing a plan to improve trans-border education on a sustainable basis and for the long term. He affirmed the imperative of expanding learning frontiers wherein, institutions in the United Kingdom would partner with Nigerian Universities in a robust and an all-inclusive educational cooperation.

The Belgian delegation led by the Director of Internalisation, Ghent University, Professor Guido Van Huylenbroeck also spoke on the need for partnering with Nigerian universities on Research and Development as a precursor to identifying problems in the Nigerian academic space with a view towards proffering the right solutions for solving them.

Clearly disturbed by numerous research outputs lying dormant in Nigeria's libraries, and the fact that few existing repositories are not readily accessible to national or global audience, Architect Echono also set up early to inaugurate a Steering and Coordinating Committee on "Thesis Digitisation", led by Professor Yakubu Ochefu, the Secretary-General of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors.

To him, and with the backing of experts, the need for a National Academic Research Repository (NARR) or a National Knowledge Bank (NKB) was compelling in order to find digitised homes for a lot of high quality research papers which had accumulated over the years.

The Executive Secretary wasted no time in embracing an "anti-plagiarism" device developed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors to stem plagiarised research works and promote originality in academic research; describing it as a useful tool in correcting the quality of poor thesis churned out by graduates of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

Inadequate foreign exchange, poor book quality and escalating demand for published works amongst other militating factors have been the bane of the Academia for a good number of years. To tackle this lingering menace, the TETFund Management, through its inventive Higher Education Book Development Project sponsored during the past year, the publications of 60 indigenous textbooks for use in the Nigerian academic community.

Lauding the TETFund initiative, Minister of Education Mallam Adamu, speaking through the Minister of State, Rt. Honourable Goodluck Nanah Opiah stated that the dearth of high standard tertiary level textbooks has reached near endemic proportions and that the quality of the Books' authorship and the local domiciliation of their production will engender the availability of suitable books in varied disciplines, safeguard national pride and also ease pressure on scarce foreign exchange.

Even though he has ensured that intervention lines are promptly made available to Nigeria's public tertiary institutions, and a good number of physical projects, running into hundreds of billions, are being commissioned in droves, across various institutions of higher learning since his assumption of office, the Executive Secretary never hid his passion for the "...institutionalisation of Research & Development (R&D) and ensure that the research outputs from our tertiary institutions are tailored towards solving our societal problems to enhance national development...".

December 14, 2022, remains one of the proud moments for Nigeria, as the Triple Helix Model (defined in the 5th paragraph above), roared to life, with the unveiling of a group of 71 academics (broken into teams), and selected across the nation's tertiary institutions to undertake research in various fields under TETFAIR (TETFund Alliance for Innovative Research). The unique component of the Fair (billed to run for 12 months) is to guide innovation through processing or production, and ensure that finished products are matched with commercial viability.

The 71 egg-heads will be exposed to International Mentorship for capacity enhancement, and would also be taught on techniques of product patenting, in conformity with best global practices.

TETFAIR is set to confront some of the Nigeria's challenges head-on, with home-grown innovations, ventures, job creation and would spur a constant stream of foreign exchange earnings in the near future. (More on much-celebrated TETFAIR can be read in my piece titled "TETFAIR on the Cusp of Changing the Nigerian Story", as published in The Leadership Newspaper of 4th of February, 2023).

Taking its definitive commitment to R&D further, the Fund's sponsored COVID-19 vaccine development, is now set for preclinical trial. The giant feat was achieved by researchers from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, in collaboration with others from the University of Jos; National Research Institute for Chemical Technology (NARICT) Zaria; Nigeria Medical Research Institute (NMRI) Yaba, Lagos; and National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI), Vom, near Jos.

The vaccine development is definitely a game changer given the fact the remarkable achievement was recorded by a consortium of indigenous scientists, who are also currently working on the development of Lassa fever vaccine amongst many others. The fact that Africa imports 99 percent of its vaccines and consumes about 25 percent of global vaccine supply, makes the foreign exchange potential of these soon-to-be locally produced vaccines hugely captivating. And all are TETFund sponsored!

The Agency is also spearheading the formation of a bilateral agreement on research and innovation between Nigeria and the EU, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Perhaps there's nothing more disheartening than watching the number of unemployed graduates grow, year-on-year, with few employment opportunities in sight. Lack of rewarding job engagement has devolved into cataclysmic waves of advance fee fraud, armed robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking, kidnapping and general restiveness among Nigerian youths, today. Yet, a considerable number of graduates being churned out, are either deemed unfit for purpose, or generally unemployable by few organisations that are hiring.

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Recently, TETFund commenced the "Employability Benchmarking Programme" in Nigeria's tertiary institutions in active collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and other partners, as a way of tackling the composite challenges of unemployment (33%); youth unemployment (42.5 %) and youth underemployment (21%), as lately put out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

Architect Echono stated that the programme is geared towards improving graduate employability, and as a corollary, assist higher institutions in making the requisite tweaks in their curriculum, and in alignment with market dictates.

The Employability Programme also has the potential of turning graduates into budding entrepreneurs as those with sellable ideas would be able to take advantage of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN's) Tertiary Institutions Entrepreneurship Scheme (TIES), where they can obtain loans of 5 Million Naira as individuals (sole proprietorship), or up to 25 Million Naira as partners in a business.

The programme dubbed "IFC Vitae", has been deployed to a good number of institutions of higher learning around the world as a way of forging pathways for improving graduate outcomes and instituting goals for graduate employability.

Described as "Marvellous Disruptor in Nigeria's Education Space", "Encyclopedia of University Education in Nigeria", "Apostle of Digital Education in Nigeria" and other sundry monikers by admirers, it is not surprising that President Mohammed Buhari found it worthy to bestow a National honour - Officer of The Order of The Niger (OON), on Architect Sonny S.T. Echono in October last year. The award is a true recognition of his decades of beneficent service to the nation, in diverse Class-A Ministries and Departments of Government, which undoubtedly, has prepared him for his current role.

In the words of renowned author, Horace Jackson Brown Jr (March 14, 1940 - November 30, 2021), "The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today". I believe the Executive Secretary is living this creed, day to day.

With so many outstanding achievements tucked under his belt within a time-frame of one year, it is certain that Nigeria is yet to witness the best of this all-encompassing, well-grounded and brainiac technocrat.

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SSUCOEN COMMENDS ECHONO OVER ROLE IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WORDS BY MICHELLE IMASUEN

The Senior Staff Union of Colleges of Education in Nigeria (SSUCOEN) has commended the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono over his outstanding role in the development of the education sector in Nigeria.

President of the union, Comrade Danladi Ali Msheliza gave the commendation when he led members of his Executives on a courtesy visit to the TETFund boss in Abuja.

Comrade Danladi who recalled Arc. Echono's tenure as Permanent Secretary of Federal Ministry of Education, showered praises on him over his role in the harmonization of the salary structure of staff of Colleges of Education in Nigeria while he served in the Ministry.

He further commended the Executive Secretary for the role he played in the establishment of six new Colleges of Education in the country.

While congratulating him on his appointment as Executive Secretary of TETFund, the SSUCOEN President disclosed that during the Union's last conference, a review of the various interventions received so far from different Colleges of Education was carried out and the Fund was adjudged to have performed excellently.

Comrade Msheliza stated that following the approval by the Head of Service on the reviewed grading structure of administrative, accounting and other staff cadre for implementations of CONTEDESS 15 salary structure in all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria, acquisition of a Masters' degree has become a requirement to move to level 15 which is the peak of their career.

He, therefore, solicited the assistance of the Fund in the training of its members to acquire Masters' degree through the Academic Staff Training and Development (AST&D) programme.

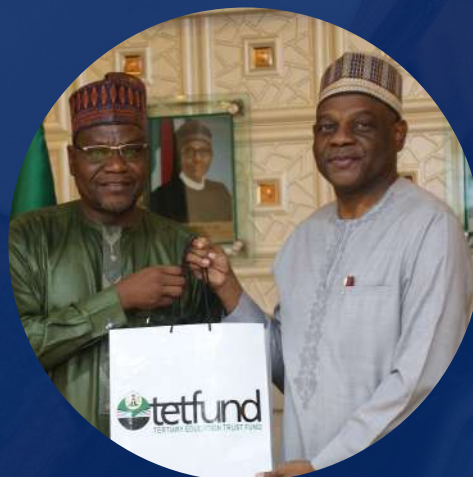
Speaking on the Fund's decision to bring to book individuals who received funds for different programmes but diverted such, the union leader express support for the Fund's actions stating that such individuals must be made to pay for their actions.

Premium

He solicited for support in organizing a group workshop on maintenance of industrial harmony and avoidance of strike actions, stating that it is easier and cheaper to manage peace than conflict.

In his response, the Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to the union for the visit and commended the leadership for its proactive approach towards conflict resolution.

On the Union's request for sponsorship in Masters' degree for its senior cadre of staff, Arc. Echono stated that the Fund would look into the request and make a presentation to the Board of Trustees for necessary consideration.

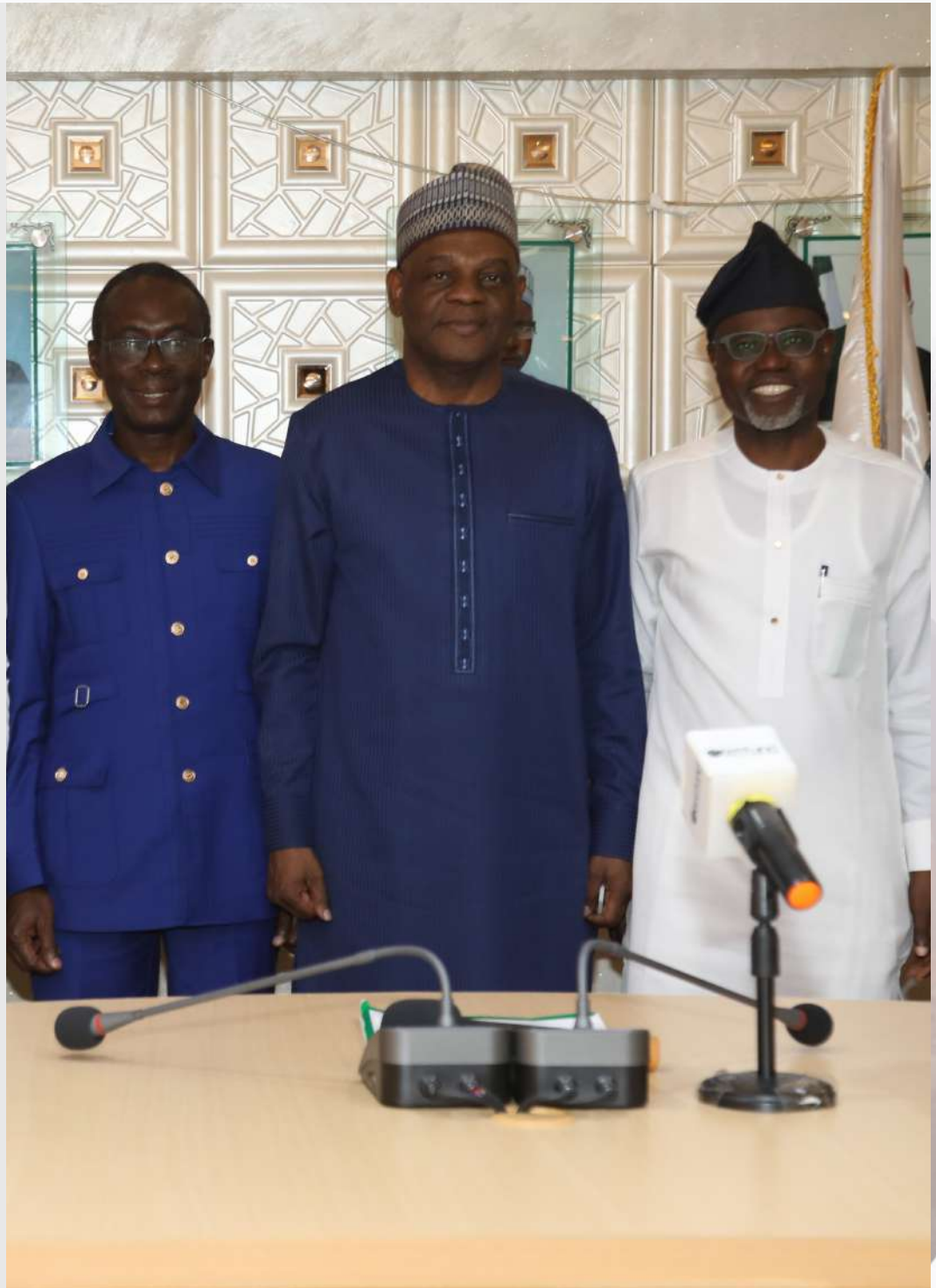


AWAU Seeks Mutual Relationship with TETFund

Words by Tenidunni Abiru

The Association for West African Universities (AWAU) is seeking to establish a mutual relationship with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) towards promoting educational collaboration among institutions in the West African sub-region.

This was made known when the Chairman of the association and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, Prof. Johnson Boampong led his team on a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.



Speaking during the visit, Prof. Boampong commended TETFund for its role in the development of higher education in Nigeria.

He further stated that the purpose of the visit was to discuss issues of mutual interest with the Fund, which include improving education in Nigeria and expanding the Fund's influence through West Africa.

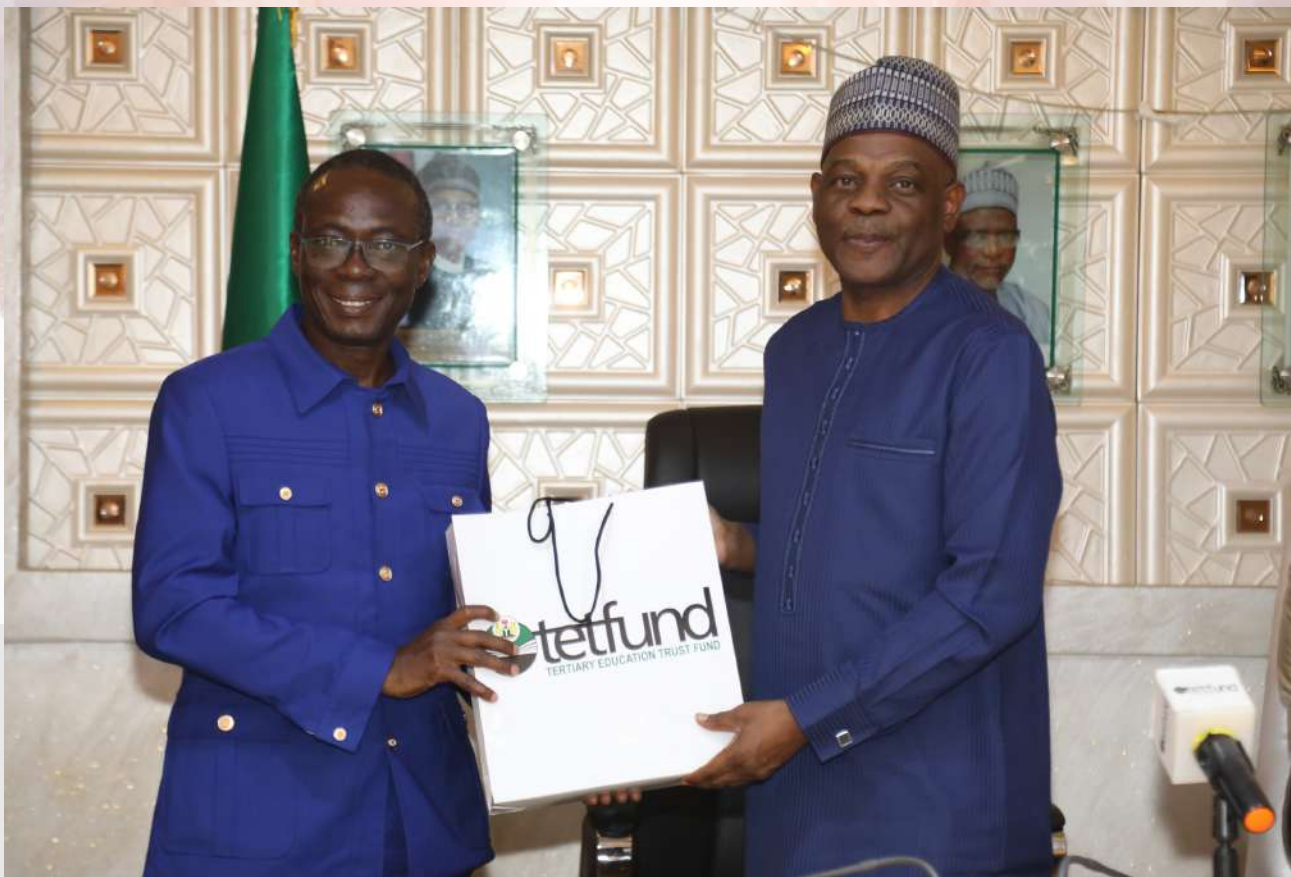
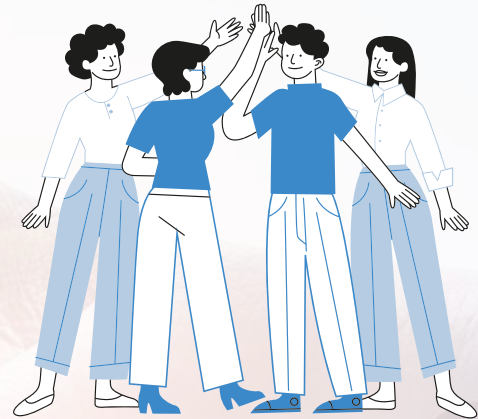
He also sought the support of the Fund to achieve the goals of the association.

Also speaking at the meeting, the Secretary-General of AWAU and Vice Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Prof. Wahab Egbewole stated that the association intends to establish capacity building centres to be domiciled in institutions across West Africa for use as capacity training sites for academic staff throughout the sub-region.

He, therefore, requested the Fund's support just as he added that the project would go a long way in building and equipping academic staff with necessary skills to pursue excellence in tertiary institutions in West Africa.

In his response, Arc. Sonny S.T Echono expressed appreciation to the leadership of the association for the visit and also commended AWAU's efforts at improving the quality of higher education in West Africa.

While pointing out the low ranking of tertiary institutions in Nigeria in the global ranking scheme, the Executive Secretary stated that the Fund would work within its mandate towards deepening partnership with the association as a means of increasing the ranking of Nigerian Universities and impacting institutions in West Africa.





**Explore TEFund's Revised
Intervention Guideline 2023**

SEVEN TETFUND-SPONSORED PROJECTS COMMISSIONED IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION BICHI

Seven projects sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have been commissioned at the Federal College of Education (FCE) Bichi, Kano State to further boost teaching and learning in the institution.

The commissioning was performed by former Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriation, now Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin.

Speaking at the commissioning, Senator Barau who was represented by Prof. Mohammad Ibn Abdullah of Bayero University, Kano expressed confidence that the projects would further improve teaching and learning, as well as redefine academic standards in the College.

He implored the institution to make maximum utilization of the facilities for the improvement of educational and vocational development of the students of the Institution.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of National Commission for Colleges of Education, NCCE, Prof. Paulinus Okwelle urged TETFund to create an intervention line that will provide security architecture for these legacy projects of the Fund in the College and other tertiary institutions.

The NCCE boss who was represented by the Chairman, Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education in Nigeria and Provost of Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Prof. Faruq Rashid said the education sector in the country still requires more commitment and determination, notwithstanding that tertiary education in the country owes TETFund commendation for providing resources that significantly addresses problems facing the sector.

In his address, Provost of the College, Prof. Bashir Muhammad expressed that the commissioning of the project would further boost educational activities in the college while disclosing that the institution now has additional 58 classrooms (50 to 200 capacity), 18 theatres/conference halls, 125 offices and 172 toilets.

Also speaking at the event, Executive Secretary of TETFund Arc. Sonny Echono said the Federal Government has committed over N6 billion to the provision of infrastructure and teaching aids at the College.

The TETFund boss who was represented by the Zonal Coordinator of TETFund (North-West), Hajia Bilkisu Zangon-Daura disclosed that the seven projects commissioned amounted to N2.1 billion.

According to the Coordinator "The Federal Government, through TETFund has made huge investments in the provision of requisite infrastructure to aid teaching, learning and research in the nation's public tertiary institutions spread all over the country.

"This institution has been a major beneficiary of such huge investments since 2011. From 2011 to date, TETFund has allocated over ₦6.8billion to the College with over 90% of this fully disbursed.

This translates to the provision of a fully furnished and equipped College Library, 10 No. Academic buildings and Administrative buildings (all fully furnished), 4 No. Lecture theatre buildings with a combined capacity of over 2,000 students,

over 50 No. Lecture rooms to cater for about 1,500 students, more than 50 No. Staff Offices, 6 No. Laboratories, 6 No. Workshops, male and female Students Hostels, numerous rehabilitation works all worth over ₦5 billion.

“Then there’s also the provision of teaching aids, computers, equipment, furniture, solar street-lighting, books and library materials worth over ₦1 billion. At this juncture, it has to be said that the College has done remarkably well as it has not relented in its pursuit for improved quality of education through the provision of state of the arts enabling environment for teaching and learning,” Hajia Zangon-Daura stated.



ECHONO CHARGES POLYTECHNICS ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

WORDS BY SANDRA EMMANUEL



The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S. T. Echono has asked Rectors of polytechnics to explore innovative approaches to skills development and as well devise effective solutions that would enhance the quality and relevance of technical education in their institutions.

He gave the charge while speaking at a workshop on skills development organized by TETFund in conjunction with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for Rectors and Directors of Skills of public polytechnics at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

"Today, we recognize the significant strides made by TETFund and NBTE in promoting skills development in our beneficiary polytechnics.

"Our unwavering commitment to advancing technical and vocational education has paved the way for countless success stories, empowering individuals and transforming communities across our great nation.

"The purpose of this sensitization workshop is to discuss and enlighten participants on two key areas: One is the skills agenda and occupational areas as a panacea for gainful employment of graduates and the second is the formalization of the informal skills sector," he said.

Also speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of NBTE, Prof. Idris Bugaje commended TETFund for organizing the workshop, noting that the Fund has been an active promoter of skills development in the country.

"While calling on Rectors of polytechnics to key into the formalization of the informal sector using technology, the NBTE boss stated that the N130 million given to polytechnics in the 2023 intervention line would not be used for building projects but for upgrade of facilities for skills training.

In his presentation, TETFund Director of Physical Infrastructure, Malam Buhari Mikailu stated that the intervention was to consolidate the efforts of NBTE in increasing the capacities of polytechnics to deliver on their mandates.

He said the intervention was mostly used to support institutions to meet basic requirements for accreditation.

"Funds are allocated in line with the provision of the Establishment Act and guided towards addressing critical and essential needs of the beneficiary institutions for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards in the tertiary educational institutions.

"NBTE have been at the fore front in championing the need to have skills in the educational system in Nigeria.

"It is in response to this, that the Fund prioritized the 2023 Zonal Allocation to polytechnics to be geared towards reinvigorating skills acquisition in the polytechnics across the country.

"Therefore, the sum of N130,000,000.00 only allocated to each polytechnic has the main focus of procurement, installation, testing, training and commissioning of relevant training materials," he said.

TETFund, FARA Partner on Agricultural Innovation Programme

Words by Amos Anetekhai
Photography by Philips Adebayo

As part of efforts towards facilitating rapid agricultural development in the country, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in partnership with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) established the Agricultural Research and Innovation Fellowship for Africa (ARIFA) innovation platform in Nigeria.

This partnership came to fruition when the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono received a contingent of ARIFA Fellows who successfully completed their programmes in Brazil at a three-day training organized by FARA in Abuja.

The ARIFA innovation platform is the capacity development component of FARA's Holistic Empowerment for Livelihoods Programme (HELP), aimed at producing a new generation of fit-for-purpose workforce to re-engineer African agri-food sector to provide the change factor for rapid agricultural transformation in the next 10 years, using the Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approach.

Six institutions have been selected by TETFund in the first phase for the establishment of the innovation platforms and they are Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi; University of Benin, Benin; University of Lagos, Lagos; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike; University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri and University of Jos, Jos.

Speaking at the event, Arc. Sonny Echono revealed that TETFund has supported over 120 scholars nominated by its beneficiary institutions, adding that the pre-admission process of the second phase of the programme has commenced, with the Fund committed to supporting another 500 set of Fellows.

The Executive Secretary expressed confidence that TETFund's intervention in the ARIFA initiative would impact positively on faculties and departments in beneficiary institutions, thereby resulting in the delivery of science-led solutions for improved livelihoods.

While welcoming the first contingent of ARIFA Fellows, Arc. Echono reiterated the commitment of the Fund towards sustaining the momentum of the programme, considering the visible impact being experienced as a result of injecting new fellows into the educational sector.

"As you all know, agriculture is a critical sector in Nigeria. We must continue to invest in Research and Innovation to ensure sustainable growth and development. The ARIFA fellowship represents a strategic stride in this respect and we are excited to have these highly trained fellows join us in this endeavour," he said.

In his remarks, the Executive Director of FARA, Dr. Yemi Akinbamiyo expressed appreciation to TETFund for its support for the FARA-ARIFA initiative, noting that the launch of the programme in Nigeria was the beginning of the realization of ARIFA training in Brazil.





**I CANNOT TEACH ANYBODY ANYTHING; I CAN ONLY
MAKE THEM THINK. - SOCRATES**



TETFund Commissions Projects worth N1 Billion in Ekiti Institutions

Words by Amos Anetekhai
Photography by Kayode Amoko

In continuation of the unveiling of iconic projects funded by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to aid teaching and learning in public tertiary institutions across the country, the Fund has commissioned projects worth about N1billion in three universities in Ekiti State.

The institutions are Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti where the Faculty of Social Sciences Twin Lecture Theatre and Medical Ward for the University Health Centre worth N306 million were commissioned; Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti delivered a Vocational Education Workshop valued at N318 million, was inaugurated, and the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, where a lecture theatre for the Faculty of Science worth N369 million was also unveiled.

The inauguration of the projects was performed by the immediate past Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Otunba Niyi Adebayo, who represented former President Muhammadu Buhari.

Otunba Adebayo commended the efforts of management of TETFund in effectively discharging its mandate for the continuous development of public tertiary educational institutions in the country, noting that education remains one of the critical indices for socio-economic development in any country.

The former Minister noted that apart from the Federal Government's investments in physical infrastructure in the institutions, it has also through TETFund invested hugely in human capacity development of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the institutions.

"It is on record that through the support of the Federal Government, TETFund has performed exceptionally in the provision of physical infrastructure, support for academic staff training and development, book publication, ICT, Research and Development among others in public tertiary educational institutions across the country," he said.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T Echono who was represented by TETFund's Director of Monitoring and Evaluation, Arc. Babatunde Olajide commended the management of the three institutions for ensuring quality delivery of the projects and for sticking substantially to the terms of delivery approved by the Fund

He noted that the commissioning exercises were pointers to "efficient management, prudence and success in the execution and delivery of projects funded from public funds allocated by the Federal Government through TETFund for the provision of requisite infrastructure to aid teaching, learning and research, in line with the mandate of the Fund".





TETFund Sponsored Researchers Develop Innovations to Re-strategize Public Tertiary Institutions.

Words by Maria Joseph
Photography by Micheal Agu

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esearchers from different public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria have developed innovations to address major areas of challenge in the country such as poverty and quality education.

These innovations were developed by lecturers selected from 18 Public Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria under the Research for Impact (R4i) programme initiated by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in collaboration with Innov8 Hub.

The lecturers who were divided into four teams developed prototypes of their innovative solutions to meet specific societal challenges in the country.

Prototypes developed included a smart grain storage system using an approach that prevents pest infestation of stored grains, while keeping them safe for consumption; a Float House named “Gimbaliya,” constructed using low-density material that floats on water; an Automated Ultrasonic Solar-Powered Sprayer and broad-spectrum bio-pesticides for control of pests in an eco-friendly manner, named “E-Access”, and a mobile application that caters for lecturers who develop lecture materials, and students in need of lecture materials.

Speaking at the end of the two weeks training held at Innov8 Hub in Abuja, Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono described the initiative as

part of TETFund’s strategy to reposition public tertiary institutions as a catalyst for National rebirth to a knowledge economy for socio economic development.

Arc. Echono stated that education is the critical ingredient for nation-building and a beacon for the sustainable existence of society and the panacea for the survival of humanity.

He urged the participants to add their wealth of knowledge from the workshop to contribute to the economic growth through research and the be change agents in their various institutions, making the right contributions to see that education becomes impactful, stimulate knowledge sharing, understanding, collaboration and growth as well as set personal goals.

The Executive Secretary further said the initiative is a logical response to solve societal problems, to address the challenges currently faced in the country in terms of generating revenue, as the country is going through very difficult times, with one of the highest population growth rates in the world and the projections of doubling in few years.

He noted that it was the right time to prepare the population and provide necessary tools for survival and compete in order to avoid future challenges.



He reiterated TETFund’s commitment to continue to support researchers and promote the commercialization of viable Research and Development (R&D) results for the benefit of the researchers.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Facilitator for R4I workshop, Dr Obichi Obiajunwa stated that innovation is the lifeblood of progress for any nation and the driving force that propels societies forward, enabling them to tackle complex challenges and create a better world.

Dr. Obichi urged the participants to impart the knowledge learnt to students in their respective institutions to foster sustainable development in Nigeria, adding that they play a crucial role in shaping the minds of future generations, and their ability to infuse innovation into their teaching and research will have a profound impact in the development of the nation.

In Obichi’s words, “The knowledge and skills you have acquired in this workshop will not only enhance your individual abilities but also enrich the academic landscape of your respective Universities’.

“The prototypes that you have developed throughout this workshop are a testament to your creativity and problem-solving prowess. Each idea represents a spark of inspirational potential solution to a pressing societal issue.

“These prototypes have the power to transform lives, to drive sustainable development, and to contribute to the well-being of our communities”.

He applauded TETFund for its invaluable support and guidance in fostering innovation and research excellence in the country.





TETFAIR-Developed “Chord Hearing Device” Gets International Recognition

Words by Amos Anetekhai
Photography by Kayode Amoko

Innovative products developed under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Alliance for Innovative Research (TETFAIR) programme have started getting global attention as the “Chord Hearing Device” developed by a team under the TETFAIR initiative recently got opportunity for exhibition at the prestigious Sheba ARC (Accelerate, Redesign, Collaborate) Global Entrepreneurship Programme.

The Chord Hearing Device is an innovative, affordable, and self-programmable hearing aid developed by Dr. Adebolajo Adeyemo and his team (Team 12) comprising Associate Professor Bolanle Oladejo and Dr. Oluwasola Adeniji, all from the University of Ibadan.

The Team was selected to participate in TETFAIR based on its idea for a solution to the challenge of affordable and accessible hearing aid devices in Nigeria. Since the inception of TETFAIR, with the support of innovation, technology and venture creation experts, the team has made significant progress with the completion of the development of the first prototype, which is now being tested with users, as part of the proof-of-concept phase of TETFAIR.

Dr. Adeyemo represented the team at the ARC Programme, where for 12 weeks, 29 startups from Israel, USA, Germany, Japan, Colombia, Nigeria, South Africa and Australia worked on finding solutions to pressing healthcare challenges.



Based on the viability of his idea and good impression, Dr. Adeyemo was selected among 11 healthcare researchers from five continents to present their innovation to investors and experts at the final event of the Sheba ARC Global Entrepreneurship programme, held in Israel. Eventually, his innovation and pitch led him to also being selected among the 3 startups that presented their innovations at the ARC Global Summit in Tel Aviv on 14th June 2023.

The TETFAIR journey of Dr. Adeyemo and his team is still ongoing and in the coming months, based on feedback from the user tests, the prototype will be refined and the product development will continue with the support of TETFAIR experts at Innov8 Hub, Abuja.

The Chord Hearing Aid will be presented at TETFAIR's final showcase event at Innov8 Hub, Abuja, among other innovative solutions developed by members of the Nigerian academia. TETFund through the TETFAIR initiative, continues to support and guide members of the Nigerian academia through the critical journey of translating researches into innovation, solution and enterprise.

Nigerian Academy of Letters Seeks TETFund's Partnership

The Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL) is requesting for partnership with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to enable the Academy to meet its mandate of providing leadership, policy and resources to enhance quality scholarship in Nigeria. Speaking during a visit to the Fund, NAL President, Professor Duro Oni commended the impact of the Fund's intervention programmes and projects to tertiary education and national development in Nigeria.

He said: "On behalf of the Executive Committee, Fellows, and Members, we bring you warm greetings from the Nigerian Academy of Letters. We also express our appreciation and commendation for the impact of TETFund's tertiary education intervention programmes and projects".



Established in 1974, NAL is an autonomous, scholarly, and non-political state institution for advancing scholarship and public interest in the humanities at the highest level in Nigeria. Members of the Academy are professors of not less than five years and Fellows are nominated from the rank of professors of not less than ten years standing.

"While the Academy has recorded significant achievements since its foundation, we believe TETFund, as a significant body established to promote tertiary education development, is a potential veritable partner whose support could positively impact the ability of NAL to deliver on its mandate.

"In view of the above, we are writing to request TETFund's support for the Nigerian Academy of Letters. We are convinced that a significant Institutional Development Support grant from TETFund would help reposition the Academy to serve tertiary education and the nation better. The grant would go towards infrastructure development for the National Secretariat at the University of Ibadan and Liaison Office at the University of Lagos, establishing the Academy's presence at the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), facilitating Library and ICT development and purchase of utility vehicle(s). All these would strengthen the Academy's capacity to play its expected role in Nigeria's higher education development."



In his response, Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny. S.T Echono expressed appreciation to the leadership of the Academy for the visit.

He said: "We always feel very encouraged when we see accomplished scholars, distinguished Nigerians who have dedicated their lives contributing to the development of this country. So, I must sincerely welcome you sir and I thank you for your service to our country and also your commitment to the development of education in the country."

"There are some restrictions in our current Act that our interventions are limited to only universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, but with institutions like yours, I believe that there should be a consensus that enables us to assist such organizations," he added.



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What sculpture is to a block of
marble, education is to the human
soul.

- Joseph Addison



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TETFund/SMEDAN partner to Deepen Entrepreneurship Skills in Tertiary Institutions



Words by Maria Joseph

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) have commenced talks towards collaborating to deepen entrepreneurship skills in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria, to accelerate the Fund's drive for graduate employability.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary, TETFund, Director-General of SMEDAN, Dr. Olawale Tunde Fasanya stated that collaboration between both agencies would help to deepen the scope of the entrepreneurship skills initiative embarked upon by SMEDAN under its "Mindshift" programme.

The 'Mindshift' programme, he explained, is aimed at changing perception and mindset of students in universities and secondary schools by inculcating in them entrepreneurship knowledge and skills that will make them employers of labour on graduation.

Dr. Fasanya disclosed that the purpose of the visit was to seek the Fund's support in broadening the scope of SMEDAN's entrepreneurship initiative in tertiary institutions under its Tertiary Institution Entrepreneurship Development Programme, aimed at training lecturers who would in turn train their students in entrepreneurship skills. He stated that the agency also intends to increase the number of lecturers to train, as well as build hubs in the institutions.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono commended the Management of SMEDAN for the laudable initiative and expressed TETFund's willingness to collaborate with the Agency, particularly in the aspect of staff training to harness potential in higher educational institutions.

While describing the vision as a welcome development, Arc. Echono noted that it would be of advantage to the Fund and the tertiary educational system in terms of revenue generation through Education Tax collection.

"The more enterprises are established across the nation, the higher the revenue generated and the better the Fund is able to serve the beneficiary institutions," he said.



The Executive Secretary reiterated that the Fund was looking at entrepreneurship beyond vocational approach and business establishments but to that of critical thinking, risk taking, incubation of ideas, research, creation of ideas and services for productivity and profit.

He described the idea as critical to the nation's aspirations especially for employment and wealth creation, as it would bridge the existing employment gap.



Words by Oluwatosin Isiaq Ishowo

GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT: BENUE GOVERNMENT TO PARTNER TETFund ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Benue State Government has expressed determination to accord entrepreneurship education top priority as part of efforts towards reducing the menace of graduate unemployment in the state.

The State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia made this known recently during a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono in his office in Abuja.

Speaking during the visit, Governor Alia expressed worries over the high level of graduate unemployment in the country and stated that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education were critical to solving the problem.

While expressing solidarity and support for the Fund's giant strides in education, he conveyed his desire to collaborate with TETFund in driving Benue's aspiration on education and skill acquisition to the next level and equip the young population of the state with skills that allow them to actively participate in efforts towards repositioning the state and national economy.

Rev. Fr. Alia also registered Benue's people appreciation to the Fund over its immense contribution to the development of education in the state.

"We are here on solidarity visit with my brother, the Executive Secretary of TETFund. I'm honoured to be here having understood how much he has been doing, promoting education nationwide and improving on the teaching and learning infrastructure as well as making the educational wheel of the nation to run and running smoothly".

"Benue state is also a beneficiary of the projects from you and the good people of the state have conveyed our appreciation to your establishment," he said

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the Governor for his visit.

While describing him as a man called by God to serve the people of Benue State, the Executive Secretary pledged to support his administration within the ambit of the TETFund Act to resuscitate tertiary education in the state.



Arc. Echono expressed that the former President Muhammadu Buhari approved the increment of Education Tax from 2.5 to 3 per cent; a development that promises to boost resources that would be dedicated to the continuous development of tertiary education in the country.

He expressed confidence that as a lover of education, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu would also deploy more efforts and resources to building the capacities of the young population in the country.

Photography by Otonbara Aprebo

TETFund Conscious of Role of Technology in Elevating Institutions – Echono

Words by Amos Anetekhai



The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono has expressed the consciousness of the Fund about the role of technology in elevating educational institutions, hence its commitment towards promoting and supporting digital literacy and technological integration in public tertiary educational institutions in the country.

Arc. Echono stated this recently in Lagos while delivering the Convocation Lecture titled “Higher Education in a Digital Age” at the 26th convocation ceremony of Lagos State University (LASU).

While noting that “the emerging massive, unprecedented and irreversible digital transformation taking place in the world” has necessitated workforces of tertiary institutions and their graduates to acquire new skill and technologies to accelerate their social and economic development, the Executive Secretary stated that the Fund has developed various digital literacy initiatives for its beneficiary institutions.

These initiatives, he said, included support for ICT related procurements requested by Beneficiary Institutions, digital literacy and capacity development for staff of Beneficiary Institutions with over 19,000 persons trained and certified as at Year 2020, support for e-journals subscription for research and teaching, establishment of a Digitization Project Steering Committee, among others.

While pointing out that the use of ICT would assist more people have access to education among other possibilities, the TETFund boss added that graduates currently need a mix of skills more than in the past, most of which depend on digital literacy.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the occasion and Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Prof. Abubakar Rasheed commended the Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello for her efforts in making LASU one of the most sought-after educational institutions in Nigeria. He noted that out of the 71 undergraduate courses run by the university, 69 were accredited by NUC, a development he said was outstanding.

In her welcome address, Prof. Ibiyemi Olatunji Bello expressed appreciation to Arc. Sonny Echono and Prof. Abubakar Rasheed for honouring the university’s invitation, stating that she considered it an honour to have both of them in attendance at the event.

As part of activities marking the convocation ceremony, two TETFund-sponsored projects were commissioned in the university by the Executive Secretary of NUC, Prof. Abubakar Rasheed shortly before the convocation lecture. They are the Faculty of Art and Faculty of Communication and Media Studies Buildings.

ECHONO CHARGES POLYTECHNICS ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

WORDS BY SANDRA EMMANUEL



The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny S. T. Echono has asked Rectors of polytechnics to explore innovative approaches to skills development and as well devise effective solutions that would enhance the quality and relevance of technical education in their institutions.

He gave the charge while speaking at a workshop on skills development organized by TETFund in conjunction with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for Rectors and Directors of Skills of public polytechnics at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

"Today, we recognize the significant strides made by TETFund and NBTE in promoting skills development in our beneficiary polytechnics.

"Our unwavering commitment to advancing technical and vocational education has paved the way for countless success stories, empowering individuals and transforming communities across our great nation.

"The purpose of this sensitization workshop is to discuss and enlighten participants on two key areas: One is the skills agenda and occupational areas as a panacea for gainful employment of graduates and the second is the formalization of the informal skills sector," he said.

Also speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of NBTE, Prof. Idris Bugaje commended TETFund for organizing the workshop, noting that the Fund has been an active promoter of skills development in the country.

"While calling on Rectors of polytechnics to key into the formalization of the informal sector using technology, the NBTE boss stated that the N130 million given to polytechnics in the 2023 intervention line would not be used for building projects but for upgrade of facilities for skills training.

In his presentation, TETFund Director of Physical Infrastructure, Malam Buhari Mikailu stated that the intervention was to consolidate the efforts of NBTE in increasing the capacities of polytechnics to deliver on their mandates.

He said the intervention was mostly used to support institutions to meet basic requirements for accreditation.

"Funds are allocated in line with the provision of the Establishment Act and guided towards addressing critical and essential needs of the beneficiary institutions for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards in the tertiary educational institutions.

"NBTE have been at the fore front in championing the need to have skills in the educational system in Nigeria.

"It is in response to this, that the Fund prioritized the 2023 Zonal Allocation to polytechnics to be geared towards reinvigorating skills acquisition in the polytechnics across the country.

"Therefore, the sum of N130,000,000.00 only allocated to each polytechnic has the main focus of procurement, installation, testing, training and commissioning of relevant training materials," he said.



TETFund Commissions Projects at Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Former Minister of State for Education, Rt. Hon. Goodluck Nanah Opiah has commissioned projects executed by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) at Federal Polytechnic, Oko,

The projects commissioned were Chemical Engineering Laboratory, Multipurpose Hall, ICT Main Building, School of Renewable Energy Building and Agricultural Technology Engineering Building.

Speaking at the event, the former Minister expressed confidence that the projects would greatly enhance teaching and learning in the institution, thus, improving the standard of education.

Rt. Hon. Opiah noted that TETFund has performed exceptionally in the execution of its mandate as many public tertiary institutions can indeed boast of superb physical infrastructure, support for academic staff training, and other intervention provided by the Fund.

WORDS BY TENIDUNNI ABIRU

He added that "the Fund has sponsored 101 lecturers from this Polytechnic for Ph.D. degrees in both foreign and local institutions totaling the sum of N487,527,656.10; 60 and for Master Degrees in both foreign and local institutions totaling the sum of N293,102,460.00".

According to him, "90 staff have also been sponsored to attend both foreign and local conferences totaling the sum of N111,471,159.50".

He, therefore, urged the Polytechnic to take full advantage of the facilities and make good use of them for the purpose of the educational and vocational development of the students.

In her remarks, the Rector, Engr. Dr Francisca Unoma Nwafulugo expressed profound gratitude to TETFund, saying that she was immensely joyful to have these projects completed and commissioned during her tenure. As she said, "commissioning of the buildings is in line with my vision of administration to bequeath enviable infrastructure development to the institution".

She went on to add that it is her firm desire and the administrative quest to see to it that the institution produces top-quality graduates. According to her, the institution has done and is doing everything in its power to eliminate the vices that have presented hindrances to this quest.

TETFund Zone

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UNIVERSITY
 TECHNOLOGY
 EMPLOYABILITY
 TETFAIR
 VACCINE
 ABUJA
 PUBLIC
 SERVANT
 TRUST



Courtesy Visits



u n



Official functions

TETFund Zone

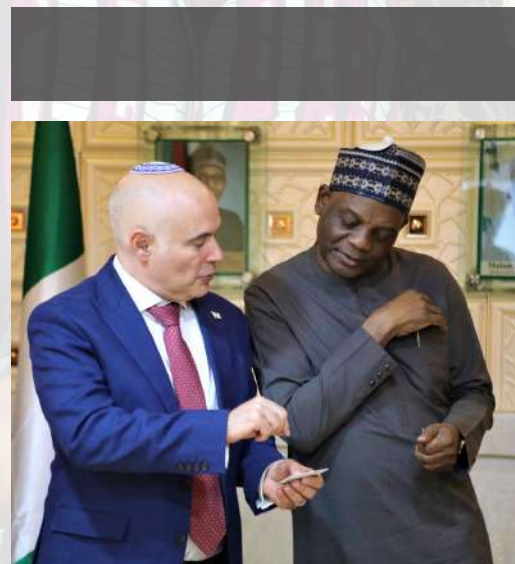


Have you ever played Wordle? Scan the QR code and test your brain



Hints:

1. What does TETFund call those who receive Allocation letter?
2. What word used to describe an organisation founded for educational purpose?
3. Who is the person with senior managerial responsibility in TETFund ?
4. What is a compulsory contribution to state revenue?
5. How do you bring a newly completed project into working condition?
6. Which document records the terms of a contract? (One was recently signed in France)
7. What Magazine are you reading?



Courtesy Visits



Lagos State University (Ojo Campus).



Federal Polytechnic, Oko



Lagos State University (Ojo Campus).



Lagos State University (Ojo Campus).



Federal University Ekiti



Ekiti State University



Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Commissioning



Ekiti State University



Lagos State University (Ojo Campus).



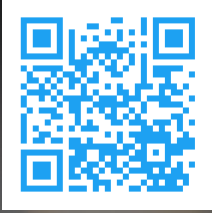
ARFIA Fellowship Ceremony

PANORAMA

CELEBRATES
WOMEN IN
TETFund

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY
MARCH 8, 2023





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