

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, JANUARY 24, 2025

### **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION**

*As an organization deeply committed to the well-being and future of the young generation, IRIAD will continue to advocate for meaningful educational reforms that bring about quality education in Nigeria. We remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting quality education by advocating for increased funding, equitable access, and inclusive policies that address the specific needs of marginalized groups such as girls and children with disabilities.*

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Today, on the International Day of Education 2025, themed ***AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation***, we celebrate education as a foundation of human development and empowerment. This year's theme underscores the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in education. AI has the potential to transform education by automating administrative duties, personalizing instructional materials, and giving students real-time feedback. For example, AI-powered tools such as adaptive learning systems can adapt instruction to meet the needs of each student, allowing them to advance at their own speed. Likewise, resources like automated grading systems reduce the workload of teachers, enabling them to concentrate more on encouraging creativity and critical thinking in the classroom.

This day raises awareness about the barriers millions face in accessing education, particularly marginalized groups such as girls and children with disabilities. It fosters global collaboration, encouraging governments, organizations, and communities to work together on solutions like partnerships to build schools and provide resources to underserved populations. It also drives policy change by advocating for increased education funding and inclusive systems that empower individuals, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality Education.

Nigeria faces a significant educational challenge, with an alarming number of children out of school. As of late 2024, approximately 18.3 million children are reported to be out of school, making it the country with the largest population of out-of-school children globally<sup>1</sup>.

Additionally, the education sector struggles with significant obstacles that hinder effective learning. One of the most pressing issues would be insufficient funding. Nigeria allocated only about 7.3% of its national budget to education, far below the 15-20% recommended by UNESCO. This underfunding results in dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate teaching resources, and low teacher salaries, ultimately impacting the quality of education delivered to students.

Another major challenge would be overcrowded classrooms, where pupil-teacher ratios do not align. In 2018, the Basic Education Commission reported that there were more than 80 pupils for every teacher in Nigeria. This is in contrast to the 35 pupils-to-teacher ratio that UNESCO recommends. Such conditions make it nearly impossible for teachers to provide individualized attention, leading to a decline in student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, many schools lack basic facilities such as clean water, electricity, and functional laboratories, further exacerbating the learning environment.

Despite the challenges, the Nigerian government has taken some steps to improve access to quality education. For example, states like Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, and Kaduna allocated over 26% of their budgets to education in 2025. While these investments demonstrate an increasing acknowledgment of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://businessday.ng/news/article/how-nigerias-18-3m-out-of-school-children-cripple-economy/>

education as a crucial factor in combating poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment, there remains a substantial amount of work to be done. To achieve meaningful progress, it is essential to intensify our efforts and fully address these pressing issues.

As an organization deeply committed to the well-being and future of the young generation, IRIAD will continue to advocate for meaningful educational reforms that bring about quality education in Nigeria by leveraging our expertise in research, policy advocacy, and knowledge dissemination. We remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting quality education by advocating for increased funding, equitable access, and inclusive policies that address the specific needs of marginalized groups such as girls and children with disabilities.

### **Call to Action**

Reflecting on this year's theme and its implications for Nigeria's future, we urge all stakeholders, including government, private sector partners, civil society organizations, and teachers, to take decisive action:

- **Government:** Increase budgetary allocations for education to meet UNESCO's recommended benchmarks. Prioritize investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and AI-driven tools that enhance learning while preserving human agency.
- **Teachers:** Embrace innovative teaching methods that integrate technology responsibly while fostering critical thinking and creativity among students.
- **Private Sector Partners:** Support initiatives that expand access to digital learning resources and provide scholarships for marginalized communities.
- **Communities:** Advocate for accountability in educational governance and support local schools through volunteerism or resource mobilization.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** Advocate for educational reforms to improve access to quality education.

The implications are significant. Each additional year of education can boost an individual's earning potential, lower rates of child marriage, and enhance health outcomes. On a national scale, increased access to education stimulates GDP growth, fortifies economies, and promotes social cohesion.

Let us seize this moment to ensure that every Nigerian child has access to quality education, one that embraces technological advancements without compromising human values. Together, we can build an equitable future where no child is left behind.

*#EducationDay #InternationalEducationDay #EducationForAll #EducationMatters  
#QualityEducation*

### **Signed**

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## **ABOUT IRIAD**

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development** (IRIAD) is an interdisciplinary knowledge and advocacy hub committed and focused on developing a critical understanding of governance processes and regimes from research, documentation, policy engagements, public education and impact advocacy.

**Knowledge| Innovation | Inclusion|  
#Advocacy #Results #Impact  
...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity**