

PANORAMA

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**Education
Minister Salutes
TETFund
Research
Progress**

**TETFund
Contributing to
Tertiary
Institutions'
Stability – Ekpo
Nta**

**United States
Plan Expansion of
Bilateral
Relations with
Nigeria**

**President Tinubu
Reiterates Commitment
to Promotion and
Funding of Research in
Nigeria**

Knowledge -Driven Economy

Innovation

Planning

Research

Digital Literacy

Infrastructure

Partnership

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EDITOR'S NOTE



In this edition, we are excited to showcase TETFund's progress in taking Nigeria to its desired place in Research, Development and Innovation.

The Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman paid a first-time visit to Innov8 Hub Abuja in company of the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono for an on-the-spot inspection of innovative products developed by TETFund-sponsored scholars. Marveled by the level of progress the Fund has made in collaboration with the Research Centre, Prof. Mamman declared plans by the

In the same vein, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has reiterated his desire to boost Research & Development through adequate funding, given its importance to national development. This was made known during his investiture as Grand Patron of the Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS) recently.

It would also interest you to note that a total of five prototype products developed by participants from the Fund's Beneficiary institutions have emerged from the TETFund Research for Impact Cohort 22 (R4i/22) programme held recently at Innov8 Hub Abuja.

TETFund continues to embrace new horizons in its quest to make impactful contributions to Nigeria's developmental efforts in science and research. Recently, the Fund expressed its readiness to partner with King's College London on research and staff training.

Other exciting stories you will find in this edition include the United States of America's (USA) plans to expand bilateral relationships with Nigeria and Africa on Transnational Education; while similar relationship with France has resulted in the sponsorship of 12 Nigerian scholars by TETFund for Ph.D science programmes in France.

Some State Governors were received by TETFund during the quarter. Details of their visits are captured herein.

Other activities featured in this magazine include commendation of TETFund by National Salaries Income and Wages Commission's Chairman, Ekpo Nta; constitution of ad-hoc committees on equipment upgrade, TETFund's collaboration with SMEDAN on development of ICT and utilization of TERAS for easier learning by students, among others.

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EDUCATION MINISTER SALUTES TETFund RESEARCH PROGRESS REVEALS PLAN TO ESTABLISH 24 SKILL CENTRES NATIONWIDE

BY OLUWATOSIN ISHOWO

The Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman has commended the drive of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in research, innovation and development, revealing that the Federal Government planned to establish about 24 Skills Centres across the country.

The commendation was given when the Minister paid an inspection visit to Innova8 Hub Abuja in company of the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono.

During the visit, the Minister was shown round numerous landmark projects by TETFund-sponsored scholars, who have been able to convert ideas into innovations and products.

Some of the innovations displayed during the visit included Drone Technology Communication, Hearing Aid, Printed Circuit Board (PCB), Arduino programming, locally made brake pads among others.

“I am excited with the team work and spirit of innovation I have seen here today. We didn’t know this was here, especially in Abuja, just close to us. I will escalate it to the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology, Ministry of Communication, and others”.

“It is in our plan to provide about 24 Skill Centres in the country, to capture out-of-school children and other adults with missed opportunities and too old to acquire formal education, we should recapture them”.

“This here is a major inspiration, and I really commend TETFund for bringing tertiary institutions together to Innova8 Hub, to convert ideas into products that will be available to Nigerians. I am going to be a chief advocate for this initiative, and escalate it to relevant Ministries and Departments to come here and see what is happening, we can leverage on this,” said Prof. Mamman.



Speaking further on the establishment of skill centres across the country, the Minister said “this move will give our students the needed skills, enable us to train unskilled Nigerians at the grassroots to contribute to the national economy. We will capture young Nigerians, especially those in IDPs, to empower them to have a means of livelihood.”

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono who led the Minister around the facility spoke about the collaboration between tertiary institutions and the informal sector to enhance learning, exchange of knowledge and robust experience, citing the collaboration between Yaba College of Technology and the Computer Village in Lagos, as well as Kaduna Polytechnic and Panteka in Kaduna.



DEDICATION



INNOVATION



GROWTH



RESEARCH



TETFAIR

Federal Government Approves Over N5.1 Billion Research Grants

BY AMOS ANETEKHAI



In continuation of efforts aimed at boosting Research and Development for economic and technological development in Nigeria, the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administration has approved the sum of N5,128,180,623.63 for the funding of 185 successful research proposals under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) National Research Fund (NRF) 2023 Grant Cycle.

The approval was conveyed by the Honourable Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman following the report of the TETFund National Research Fund Screening and Monitoring Committee (NRFS&MC) which recommended the funding of the 185 research proposals after a rigorous screening exercise which commenced in March 2023 with the receipt of 4,287 Concept Notes from prospective applicants.

A breakdown of the approval indicated that the sum of N3,784,635,923.00 was approved for the Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation (SETI) thematic group; N759,875,400.00 for Humanities and Social Science (HSS) while Cross Cutting (CC) received N583,669,300.63 with individual grants ranging between N8 million and over N46 million.

Some of the approved research works according to their thematic groups include:

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (SETI)

- Application of the Hydro-Biogeochemical Framework to Develop a National Rural Water Quality Assurance Plan for Sustainable Water Quality Management in Nigeria
- Development and Use of Doubled Haploid Maize Lines for Improved Maize Yield and Tolerance to Armyworm (*Spodoptera Frugiperda*)
- Development of an Intelligent Multichamber Evaporative Cooling Preservative System for Post-Harvest Storage of Selected Fruits in Nigeria
- Development of Electric Vehicle with Special Tracking Features, etc.

CROSS CUTTING

- **Development of a Cocktail of Novel Thermostable Recombinant Lignin Degrading Enzymes from Lignolytic Bacteria Genome for Biofuel Production from Sugarcane Bagasse**
- **Utilization of Scrap Tires and Plastic Wastes as aggregate Conductive Material for Renewable Energy Storage System**
- **Development of Appropriate Technology for Production of Aluminum Alloy Sacrificial Anodes for Applications in Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry**
- **Development of an Economical Low Voltage Programmable Electroporator and Investigation of Pulse Electric Field for Wound Healing and Cancer Treatment; etc.**

**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

- **Digital Financial Inclusion, Rural Households' Consumption Structure and Well-being in Nigeria**
- **Equity and Inclusion: Creating Access to Library Resources for Students Living with Vision Impairment in e-Learning Environment in Nigerian Universities**
- **Mitigating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Frontline Nigerian Army Personnel using Stress Inoculation Therapy; and others.**

The National Research Fund (NRF) Grant was introduced by TETFund to encourage cutting-edge research which explore research areas relevant to societal needs of Nigeria such as power and energy, health, security, agriculture, employment and wealth creation etc., in line with its mandate.

The intervention received additional impetus under the Renewed Hope Agenda of the present administration as a veritable tool to grow the economy and improve the standards of living of the Nigerian people.

PRESIDENT TINUBU REITERATES COMMITMENT TO PROMOTION AND FUNDING OF RESEARCH IN NIGERIA

By Ijeoma Obiakor



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has reiterated the commitment of his administration towards the promotion and funding of research in Nigeria to attain desired economic and technological development of the country.

President Tinubu gave the commitment recently at the Council Chambers of the State House in Abuja during his investiture as the Grand Patron of the Nigerian Academy of Science (NAS).

The reassurance of the President to promoting and funding Research and Development in Nigeria comes shortly after he approved in January 2024 over N5 billion for the funding of 185 successful research proposals under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) National Research Fund (NRF) programme.

Speaking at the investiture ceremony, President Tinubu expressed appreciation to the leadership of the Academy for the recognition, noting that transformative research plays a significant role in the development of any nation.

"I believe that without great research and development, no nation can develop to achieve its desire", he said.

He assured that his administration would continue to provide necessary support to Research and Development in the country through government policies and programmes, as well as support from relevant government ministries.

In her remarks, the President of the Academy, Prof. Ekanem Braide noted the need for healthy collaboration between government, industries and the community to address national problems.

While commending President Tinubu's administration for recognizing the need for Nigeria to move towards a knowledge economy, she revealed that the Academy was working with the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning on the review of documents that would aid urgent interventions for national development.

Present at the investiture ceremony were the Chief of Staff to the President, Rt. Hon Femi Gbajabiamila, Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, Minister of Health, Prof. Ali Pate and Minister of Budget and National Planning, Alhaji Abubakar Bagudu.

Also present were the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono, Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Prof. Ishaq Oloyede among others.

"I believe that without great research and development, no nation can develop to achieve its desire" - President Tinubu.

TETFund CONTRIBUTING TO TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS' STABILITY – EKPO NTA

BY MU'AZZAM GARO

The Chairman of the National Salaries, Incomes and Wages Commission (NSIWC), Mr. Ekpo Nta has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for its immense contributions to the development of public tertiary educational institutions in the country, noting that the Fund has brought stability to the institutions with the quality of projects which he described as top-tier.

Mr. Nta made this assertion during a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at TETFund Abuja office recently.

Speaking on the mandate of NSIWC and the purpose of his visit, the Chairman explained that the Commission is not only involved in matters relating to salaries and wages but also mandated to ensure institution of productivity and adaptation processes in the public sector, and this involves carrying out research projects.

He, however, expressed regret that as desirable as research is for effective discharge of the commission's mandate, it is grossly inhibited by lack of funds. He, therefore, stated that the purpose of his visit was to seek the Fund's support in the area of research partnership to enable the Commission meet its desired needs.

The Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono in his response, commended the Chairman for his dedication to the service of

the nation having served the country in various capacity.

He noted that the Fund was open to collaboration with critical stakeholders particularly in the area of research to assist in promoting technological and socio-economic development of the country.

While describing Mr. Nta's job as the Chairman of NSIWC as difficult but vital in the face of the challenges facing workers in the prevailing economy and agitation for salary increase, Arc. Echono urged workers to also contribute their quota to improving the economy.

"When we say, increase our wages, give us a national minimum wage, we also have to look at the ability to pay, and that ability to pay is driven by what each and every one of us is contributing to that aspect," he said.

The Executive Secretary acknowledged and commended staff of the Fund for their commitment to work especially while on monitoring duties to Beneficiary Institutions across the country.

"In terms of productivity, TETFund is proud to say we are justifying every penny that comes to us to take the responsibility that we are given to revitalize and reposition Nigerian tertiary institutions," he said.



**CHAIRMAN,
NATIONAL
SALARIES,
INCOMES
AND WAGES
COMMISSION
PAYS A
COURTESY
CALL TO THE
FUND**



FIVE PROTOTYPES EMERGE FROM TETFund RESEARCH FOR IMPACT (R4I) COHORT 22 CLOSING CEREMONY

BY ISHOWO OLUWATOSIN

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Research for Impact (R4i) initiative carried out in collaboration with Innov8 Hub has resulted in the emergence of five prototype products developed by participants from the Fund's Beneficiary institutions.

Speaking at the closing ceremony of the TETFund Research for Impact Cohort 22 (R4i/22) programme held recently at Innov8 Hub Abuja, the Director of Research and Development/Centres of Excellence of TETFund, Dr. Salisu Girei Bakari who represented the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono noted that countries that have attained development embraced knowledge, hence the need for Nigeria to tap into its enormous human resources and translate into prosperity.

Dr. Bakari affirmed the need for researchers in Nigeria to carry out research for impact and innovation to ameliorate the numerous challenges facing the country.

According to him "We can address poverty by tapping into the skills sector; knowledge available in our tertiary institutions must be translated to goods and services. We have to reassess this trend of declination, our intellectual asset must be dedicated to production, for prosperity sake, we must think and rethink the way we do things,"

While explaining that the R4i programme was designed by TETFund to reshape the landscape of research and innovation in the country, he added that the Fund is investing heavily in redefining research and innovation for the socio-economic and technological development of the country. "We will be establishing 24 hubs/centres; we also have four regional multidisciplinary research laboratories in the pipeline, and each of the laboratories will gulp around N9 billion".

"As you can see, the Fund is investing heavily in the system so we expect reciprocation from the academic community via efficiency and productivity. We have many challenges truly, yet we have great potentials," Dr. Bakari stated as he charged participants at the event which marked the 25th edition of the programme.



THE FIVE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRODUCTS SHOWCASED ARE:

01

The Federal Polytechnic, Ilarode developed "Avishield" which aims to offer proactive approach to prevention of zoonotic diseases, leveraging on biosecurity measures with its advanced engineering design.

02

University of Benin developed "Q-Saver," an app poised to transform Nigeria's logistics industry and solve challenges, possessing sophisticated algorithm that streamlines processes by inputting crucial data, and ensuring seamless coordination.

03

Kogi State Polytechnic designed "Poisona" to efficiently capture cement dust emissions using its innovative media dust catcher and transform them into harmless mist through variable water speed sprayer. This innovation is effectively designed to mitigate the effect of air pollution and prevent adverse effect on climate change.

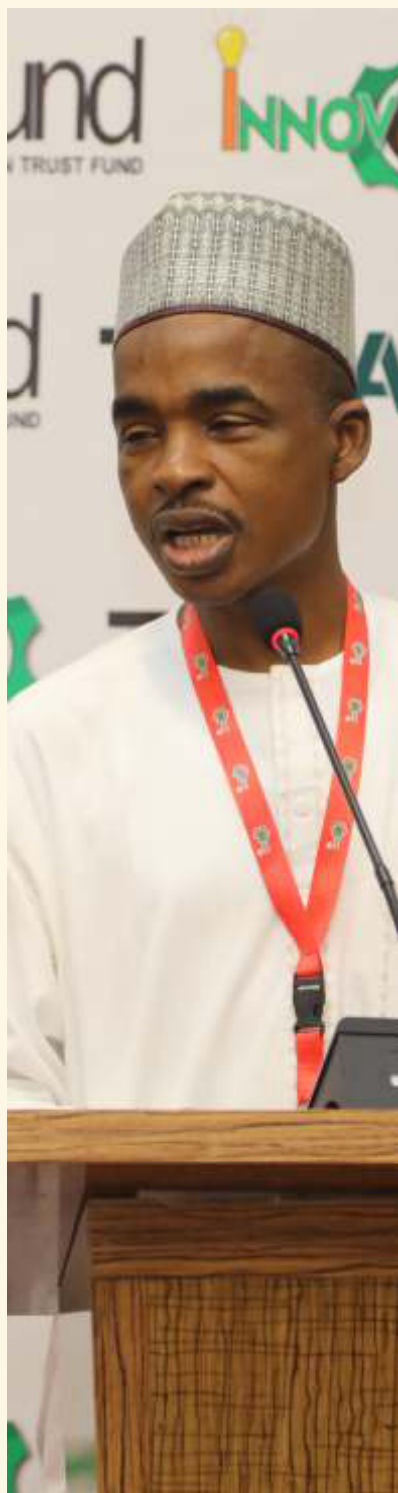
04

Federal University Kashere modelled "Gobara," a neem-based biological pesticide that offers viable and safe alternative for groundnut farmers, enabling them to protect their crops without compromising on health or environmental integrity. This innovation as well assures a boost in yields of groundnut farmers and assist in addressing challenges of food security.

05

Umaru Musa Yar'Adua University developed "e-Feed," an innovative solution aimed at providing tailored dietary guidance and food supplements for the elderly. This ensures elderly people can access a library of formulations and nutritional information, specifically designed to meet their dietary needs.

FIVE PROTOTYPES EMERGE FROM TETFund RESEARCH FOR IMPACT (R4I) COHORT 22 CLOSING CEREMONY





UNITED STATES PLAN EXPANSION OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA

BY OLUWATOSIN ISHOWO

The United States of America has disclosed plans to collaborate more closely with Nigeria towards the expansion of transnational education between both countries and Africa in general.

United States Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Lee Satterfield made this known recently when she led a delegation of US officials on a working visit to the Federal Ministry of Education Abuja, where they met with Nigeria's Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman and the Minister of State, Dr. Yusuf Sununu.

Speaking at the meeting, Satterfield disclosed that her visit to Nigeria was a follow-up to the hosting of African leaders in Washington two years ago by United States President, Mr. Joe Biden.

"This visit is a follow up to President Biden's hosting of African leaders in Washington in 2022. We saw more opportunities for closer collaboration in education and cultural diplomacy. Our Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken has been here twice already, as early as January to show our high-level support of bilateral relationship between our two countries.



"My visit is to highlight the ways we can expand that relationship and build on it, both on cultural diplomacy, creative industry, higher education, and other initiatives. We want to hear more about your vision and the various entities within the educational sector and see where we can partner and do more together," she said.

While welcoming the delegation to Nigeria, Minister of Education, Prof. Tahir Mamman expressed appreciation to the United States government for its interest in expanding transnational education in Nigeria, adding that his ministry has a robust educational vision that would be beneficial to the country.

"The Federal Ministry of Education has a very robust vision that is crucial and significant to Nigerians. Education is a very important element of progress, and any country would embrace partnership on education. We have a President who is passionate about education and wants everything done very quickly," he remarked.

Speaking on the vision of the Ministry, Prof. Mamman noted Nigeria's commitment to reshaping its foundational education. According to him, only 25% of students who attend basic and secondary schools are able to transit to tertiary institutions, lamenting that the remaining 75% are outside of the education and school structure.

"In addressing this, we are focusing on giving those outside of the structure skills to contribute to the economy and gain sustainable livelihood. On out-of-school children, we have established Out-of-school Commission to capture and recapture children back to learning environments. It is essential to address the pool and primary factor breeding out-of-school crisis if we don't want the numbers to keep piling. We are also determined to enhance technology for instructional and curriculum delivery, and train teachers to improve quality and delivery of learning processes.

"Also, we must integrate skills, soft skills that can breed thinkers and creativeness right from elementary level. This will promote interaction and activeness at that level of teaching. We as well plan to look at curriculum at all levels, so that as our people progress across various stages of education, we would have injected employability skills into them, that even when they don't progress to tertiary level, they will be able to survive.

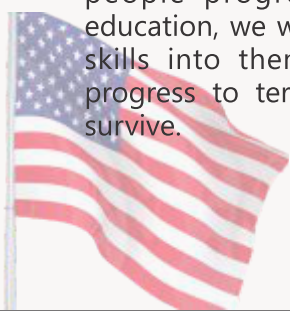
"The Ministry considers it paramount to gather data on the number of children that are out of school in elementary and secondary level, this is of great concern to us. We need to establish a baseline of information to keep track of challenges and progress," Mamman disclosed."

While revealing the nation's drive to contribute globally in research, innovation and development, the Minister assured that his ministry is open to bilateral collaboration and partnership in addressing numerous challenges.

Also speaking at the event, Honourable Minister for State Education, Dr. Tanko Sununu registered the country's openness in collaborating closely in areas of teacher capacity building, training and getting out-of-school children back in school.

While adding that there is also the need to collaborate closely on development of vocation, skills and reducing insecurity in schools, he disclosed that the Ministry and National Universities Commission (NUC) have come up with a policy on transnational education that would be shared with the delegation to create a framework for the collaboration.

Also present at the meeting were the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono and Ag. Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Dr. Chris Maiyaki who registered their agencies' commitment to deepening collaboration on research fellowship, ICT and entrepreneurship.





U.S ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND
CULTURAL AFFAIRS' WORKING
VISIT TO THE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION



TETFund CONSTITUTES AD-HOC COMMITTEES ON EQUIPMENT UPGRADE, CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

BY OLUWATOSIN ISHOWO

As part of efforts towards further strengthening the intervention activities of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), three ad-hoc committees were inaugurated by the Fund.



The Committees are the Ad-hoc Committee on Operationalization of Equipment Upgrade in Workshops and Laboratories for Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (Technical); Ad-hoc Committee on Assessment/Review of TETFund Centres of Excellence and Ad-hoc Committee on Operationalization of Skills Development Special intervention.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony held at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja in March, the Executive Secretary expressed profound appreciation to members of the committees for their acceptance to serve in the national assignment.

While stating that the constitution of the committees underscored the importance the Fund attaches to strengthening its intervention activities towards delivery of its mandate, Arc. Echono noted that members were selected based on individual capacities and belief that they would collectively as a team deliver on the various tasks.

The Executive Secretary remarked that in line with TETFund's commitment to deepening its content-based interventions, concerted efforts were being made to identify more innovative ways of enhancing research capacities of Beneficiary Institutions and promote skills development which is one of the priority areas of government aimed at addressing youth unemployment in the country.

Speaking on the committees and their terms of reference, the Executive Secretary stated that to ensure effective implementation of the upgrade of equipment in workshops and laboratories of universities and colleges of education (technical), the Fund constituted an Ad-hoc Committee chaired by Prof Hayward Babale to advise on the operationalization of the upgrade of the equipment in workshops and laboratories of the institutions.

Part of the terms of reference of the committee, he said, include assessing the state of workshops and laboratories in target institutions including equipment and other facilities in use, determination of requirements for upgrade of equipment in the workshops and laboratories, among others.

The committee on Assessment/Review of TETFund Centres is chaired by Prof. Oyewale Tomori and the terms of reference include assessing performance of existing TETFund Centres of Excellence hosted in universities based on their given mandates and areas of specialization, among others.

For the Committee on Operationalization of Skills Development Special intervention, Prof Idris Bugaje, the Executive Secretary of National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) was appointed as chairman to advise on the modalities for the operationalization of the intervention.



In his response, Executive Secretary of NBTE and Chairman, Committee on Operationalization of Skills Development Special Intervention, Prof Idris Bugaje, commended TETFund for its investments in skills development, indicating that it was the right direction towards job creation in Nigeria.

PHOTOS FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF TETFund AD-HOC COMMITTEES





The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has advised Nigerian students to take advantage of the Tertiary Education Research, Applications, and Services (TERAS) Digital platform designed by TETFund for tertiary educational institutions in the country for easier learning.

Arc. Echono made the call when he received the President of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Comrade Lucky Emonefe and other executives of the association during a courtesy visit to the Fund's Abuja Headquarters recently.

While disclosing that the TERAS initiative was developed by the Fund to address critical challenges faced by students, researchers, and institutions in accessing educational resources and research materials, the Executive Secretary urged Nigerian students to come onboard the platform and take advantage of the various opportunities it provides.

UTILIZE TERAS TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM FOR EASIER LEARNING, ECHONO TELLS NIGERIAN STUDENTS



He explained that the platform provides centralized hubs for tertiary educational services, where tertiary institutions, students and researchers can access world-class educational resources, monitor research for plagiarism, and many other educational activities.

Some of the technologies captured under the platform, he said, include the Beneficiary Identity Management Service (BIMS), Aggregated Research Journals (EBSO), EagleScan for plagiarism, Blackboard Learning Management System among others.

He further disclosed that the Fund was working to provide free internet service for students in both public and private institutions for easy access to educational materials on the internet.

Speaking on accommodation challenges being faced by students in public tertiary educational institutions in the country, the Executive Secretary disclosed that the Fund was embarking on constructing student hostels in 36 tertiary institutions across the country, having realized that a larger percentage of students live off-campus amidst security challenges.

“Many of our students are living outside campus, jumping on okada (motorcycles) in the rain. Some of them cannot even come back for evening lectures because of financial constraints, distance, and security situation of the environment they live in”.

“We want to ensure about 50 to 60% of our students live on campus, and we are not going to build matchbox hostels, but hostels that will attract other students from other parts of the world,” he said.

Arc. Echono explained that contrary to assumptions that TETFund only caters for infrastructure and training of lecturers of tertiary institutions, students remained the topmost priority as these intervention efforts are geared towards provision of quality education, as well as conducive and safe environment for students’ learning.

Responding to NANS request for assistance in the construction of a secretariat, the TETFund boss stated that he would discuss the issue with the Minister of Education.

He assured NANS of the Fund’s continuous support and partnership saying “We will continue to support NANS, partner with NANS because there is no doubt that any policy, programme or project that you want to carry out in the education sector, students must be at the center of it. Higher institutions exist because of students”.

Speaking earlier, NANS President, Comrade Lucky Emonefe applauded the Executive Secretary and management of TETFund for their contribution to the growth and sustenance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, remarking that without the efforts of the Fund, Nigeria tertiary institutions would be nothing to write home about.

He stated that the purpose of the visit was to formally introduce the new leadership of the association to TETFund management and also look into areas of possible collaboration.

While commending the efforts of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for approving the Fund’s 2024 budget as well as the Students’ Loan Bill at the National Assembly, he assured that the association will monitor, supervise, and protect educational infrastructure in educational institutions across the country to complement the efforts of the Federal Government.

The meeting also had in audience a member of the Senate Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFund and lawmaker representing Delta North Senatorial District, Senator Ned Nwoko who was at the Fund for a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary.



TETFund/Campus France Partnership: 12 Nigerian Scholars to Undergo PhD Studies in France

By Maria Joseph

The partnership agreement between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Campus France for specialized training of Nigerian scholars in France has started yielding results with the sponsorship of 12 Nigerian lecturers by TETFund to embark on various academic programme in France.

Speaking recently at a pre-departure meeting held for the scholars at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono recalled the signing of the agreement between the Fund and Campus France in 2023 for discounted tuition for the training of lecturers sponsored under the TETFund Scholarship for Academic Staff (TSAS) Programme.

He disclosed that the sum of N63,457,600.40 has been approved for each of the 12 scholars for the three years duration of the programme, amounting to a total of N761,491,924.80, adding that the funds would be disbursed for each beneficiary in line with TETFund's agreement with Campus France.

Stay off any form of unionism; participation in any form of political rally, violence and any activity that could implicate you or put Nigeria in a bad light while in France, as any violation would amount to outright termination of the sponsorship," he said.

"Arc. Echono assured that the Fund has taken necessary steps to address the shortfall arising from the increase in exchange rates that left some scholars stranded in their various institutions of learning.

The Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to Campus France and assured that TETFund was pleased with the bilateral relationship with France in training Nigerian academics and looked forward to more partnerships towards perfecting the mandate and objectives of the Fund.

In her presentation, the manager of Campus France Nigeria, Laura Moras expressed profound joy at the speedy launching of the agreement and assured the Fund of their readiness to welcome and accept the scholars in France.

She added that her presentation was aimed at acquainting the scholars with the "dos and don'ts" of the country and prepare them towards their departure and arrival in France.

Laura advised the scholars to be law abiding and be of good behaviour while in France.

CAMPUS FRANCE TETFund SCHOLARS PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: ECHONO REITERATES NEED FOR SUFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF TVET IN NIGERIA

BY SA'ADATU SALIHU

To address the rising rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria, the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has reiterated the need for sufficient development of the Technical and vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in the country.

Arc. Echono made this call when he received a delegation of the Nigerian Academy of Engineering (NAE) led by Emeritus Prof. Olu Aina in his Abuja office recently.

He expressed appreciation to the delegation for the visit and eulogized the contributions of Prof. Aina to the development of education and service to the country.

Speaking on the need to further promote TVET in the country, the Executive Secretary noted that lack of vocational and technical skills among Nigerian youths have become a basic challenge, not only because the country has the youngest population in the world with an unstable rate of unemployment but also because of slow economic growth.

"We are not doing enough to activate all the numerous potentials and resources that are available to us, and the primary reason for that is because we have not sufficiently developed our TVET sector. I have said it many times that we must come to accept the reality that this economy is not one that can continue to provide the type of employment that we are used to. When the colonial masters came here, their primary goal was administration; and all other things they needed to effectively take control of the land.



"In terms of development, you will have to compete with the intellectual resources that we have; with the skills, your hands, the creativity that you have and how you explore the resource available to you and convert them to value. "Then, you are not just creating wealth, you are improving the livelihood of your people because they can now consume superior goods and services and because you will be able to provide for your family, compete with other countries, export those things that you have comparative advantage and with that, our economy will grow.

"The majority of our youths do not have special skills with which to approach the market, and that is why many of them look up to us. In other countries, 90% of graduates do not even think about government or institutions for jobs. Two years or one year to graduation, they are thinking about career paths; thinking about areas where they will go and explore their talents and so on," he said.

Arc. Echono, therefore, assured the delegation that the Fund is on board with the Academy on the need for development of vocational and technical skills as one of the ways to curb the scourge of youth unemployment in the country.

Speaking earlier, a member of the delegation, Prof. Sam Adefila stated that the purpose of the visit was to seek collaboration with the Fund in technical education and training. "We all have come under the umbrella of the Nigerian Academy of Engineering to seek for the re-establishment of the old relationship and look at areas of collaboration between TETFund and the Academy specifically in technical education and training," he said.

Prof. Adefila noted that NAE was aware of the important role TETFund has played in supporting TVET and the Academy was prepared to further collaborate for the benefit of the country.

I SALUTE THE FORESIGHT FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF TETFund – GOVERNOR MUTFWANG

By Tenidunni Abiru



Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has extolled the foresight for the establishment of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), noting that the Fund has played a significant role in the development of the state-owned tertiary educational institutions as well as federal institutions located in the state.

Governor Mutfwang made this assertion when he paid a courtesy call on the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T. Echono in January at his office in Abuja.

While noting that tertiary education in the country would have been in a sorry state but for the founding of TETFund, the Governor affirmed that Plateau State owned institutions have been great beneficiaries of the Fund.

He stated that the purpose of the visit to TETFund, which was his first to any federal parastatal since confirmation as Governor by the Supreme Court, was to express appreciation to the Management of the Fund for the tremendous support that has been provided the institutions and also seek increased funding for further educational development in the state.

“This is the first federal parastatal I will be visiting after being confirmed as Governor and I am delighted to once again have the freedom to face the issue of governance headlong.

“I chose to come to TETFund because of the importance of this institution to our educational development. I salute the foresight of those that came up with this institution. We say thank you,” he said.

Just as he requested for further support from the Fund, the Governor noted that his administration had also done a little within the seven months of its inauguration to ensure it secured accreditation for its institutions and boost staff morale; while it hoped to do more.

In his remarks during the visit, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono congratulated Governor Mutfwang on his electoral victory at the Supreme Court.

Arc. Echono expressed commitment towards partnering with Plateau State in realizing its vision of transforming education, revealing that the Fund has recorded improvements in project delivery in Beneficiary Institutions in the state.

He further stated that the Fund was poised to boost its interventions in Plateau higher institutions, to ensure that given the State’s prominent status in the North-Central Zone, it continues to support the manpower needs of the country.

Speaking on research, the Executive Secretary revealed that Beneficiary Institutions in Plateau State showed great potentials by being part of winners of the 2023 TETFund National Research Fund (NRF) Grant of over N5.1 billion approved by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in January 2024.

Accordingly, he advised that being a state exceedingly wealthy in natural and agricultural resources, carrying out research tailored towards agricultural products would go a long way in alleviating food insecurity in the country.

BAUCHI STATE GOVERNOR'S VISIT TO TETfund



PLATEAU STATE GOVERNOR VISITS THE FUND

BAUCHI GOVERNOR COMMENDS TETFund FOR INTERVENTION EFFORTS

**...SEEKS SUPPORT FOR NEWLY ESTABLISHED
STATE-OWNED COLLEGE**

BY OLUWATOSIN ISHOWO

Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed has commended the efforts of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in the development of Bauchi State-owned tertiary educational institutions as well as other Beneficiary Institutions in the country.

This was just as he sought support for the newly established Bauchi State College of Education (Technical), which he said was established to train technical manpower in agriculture, oil and gas and other fields needed both in the state and the country in general.

Governor Mohammed spoke when he paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.

According to the Bauchi Governor, the state has been doing a lot to address poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment and improve human capital development, and generate enough manpower that would contribute to the development of the state, the country and the international community.

Canvassing support for the newly established college, Governor Bala said "We need a lot of assistance from you immediately to put our educational sector on the face of prosperity and growth; and we have really established the institutional framework, the policy thrust and the big political will to be able to leapfrog the area of education so that we can produce our own human capital needs and even export labour.

"We want to have technicians, some labour that is required in the field. In the agricultural field, we want people who will be teaching our farmers what to do in terms of what to do during farming season and so on. And so, we need your support because you did not know about the establishment of this new technical institution, but only our state university, our colleges of education and others."

Speaking on reasons for establishing a new institution, the Governor noted that Bauchi State is the gateway to the remaining states in the North, and due to insecurity, the institutions in the state have been overstretched in accommodating knowledge seekers, while adding that



the growing demography also serves as a key factor. Thus, he said the State needed all the help it could get to develop vocation, farming and raise productivity.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono stated that the Fund was proud of Bauchi, being one of the few states that had not abandoned the funding of tertiary institutions totally to TETFund; noting that the State Government had complimented in other ways to ensure that institutions in Bauchi continued to thrive.

Speaking on the newly established college, the Executive Secretary noted that getting teachers in technical subjects at the basic level had been a serious challenge. He, therefore, expressed optimism that technicians that would be produced in the newly established institution would serve Bauchi and other surrounding states in the North.

The TETFund Boss equally advocated for the need to ensure that Agriculture becomes attractive to young people in the country, especially as the world was getting driven towards knowledge economy, and the emerging need to aggressively combat food insecurity and enhance production.

"So, focusing on skills, supporting the very manpower base that we require to grow this economy to activate all our unexplored areas in our economy, particularly agriculture. We are very concerned that in a country like the US, only 5% of their population is engaged in agriculture, yet, they are able to feed not only themselves but export to the whole world. So, we know we don't need 60% of our population engaged in agriculture," he said.

Nigerian Academy of Letters Commends TETFund for Book and Journal Development Support

By Ishowo Oluwatosin

The Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL), a national academy and apex body of arts and literature in Nigeria has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for its support towards the development of higher education books and journals in the country.

The commendation was given by the President of the Academy, Prof. Sola Akinrinade when he led a delegation of newly elected executives of NAL on a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.

The President commended TETFund for its remarkable footprints in the country's tertiary education sphere as well as its support for the Academy, noting that there are areas of collaboration that could be explored between the Academy and the Fund.

While disclosing that the Academy had previously collaborated with the Nigerian Academy of Science to train authors and raise the standard of journals, Prof. Akinrinade identified the Higher Education Book and Journal Development initiative of TETFund as one of the potential areas of collaboration between the Fund and NAL.



The delegation expressed appreciation to the Executive Secretary for the courtesy and support he has always granted the leadership of NAL at different times, noting that the Academy does not take the kind gestures for granted.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the delegation for its visit, as well as offer of collaboration.

The Executive Secretary disclosed that the Fund was at the point of reconstituting some of its committees on book publication and journals, thus open to collaborating with individuals and organizations who share mutual aspirations.

He stated that TETFund would be willing to work with the Academy within the confines of the Fund's Establishment Act.



NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF LETTERS PAYS COURTESY CALL TO TETfund



Let's Collaborate for Improved Economy – Nigerian Economic Society Tells TETFund

By Sa'adatu Salihu

The Nigerian Economic Society (NES) has expressed desire to collaborate with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) towards the economic growth of the country.

The President of NES, Prof. Adeola Adenikinju made this position known when he led executives of the society on a courtesy visit to TETFund in Abuja recently.

Speaking during the visit, Prof. Adenikinju congratulated the management of the Fund for their contributions towards the transformation of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Giving a brief history of the society, the President stated that it was established in 1957, and two years later, it commenced the publication of a journal, the Nigerian Journal of Economic and Civil Service.

He further stated that since its inception, the society has contributed in shaping economic policies in Nigeria, citing its role in the emergence of the National Development Plan of 1972 to 1974, which he described as one of the most accurate development plans in Nigeria.

"Over the years, the NES has played a very important role. Wherever there is a Department of Economic in universities today, our members are there. We are spread across the country and institutions".

"At this time when the Nigerian economy is going through so many challenges, one of the questions that is asked is: where are the economists? But the truth is that we do not have finances. We are willing to partner with TETFund and see areas of collaboration," he said.

Prof. Adenikinju also sought the support of TETFund for its journal and textbooks publications.

In his response, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono thanked the society for its service to the nation.

He stated that the Fund would be ready to collaborate with key actors in the sector with the belief that through such partnerships, Nigeria would overcome its economic challenges.

On the society's request for support in journal and textbooks publication, Arc. Echono stated that the Fund would continue to provide support in its areas of interventions such as journal publication, textbooks, research, and conferences in line with stipulated guidelines and due process.



NIGERIAN ECONOMIC SOCIETY'S VISIT



PRO-CHANCELLORS OF STATE-OWNED VARSITIES ASK TETFund FOR INCLUSION IN DECISION-MAKING

By Sa'adatu Salihu

The Committee of Pro-Chancellors of State-owned Universities in Nigeria has appealed to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for inclusion in decision-making on TETFund related matters that affects their institutions.

The Chairman of the committee, Senator Joshua Lidani made the appeal during a visit by the leadership of the body to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

Speaking during the visit, Senator Lidani commended the Executive Secretary and his team for the transparency in managing the affairs of the Fund, noting that TETFund has contributed immensely to the development of public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria.

He, however, expressed worries over the non-involvement of the committee in taking decisions that affect state-owned universities, as far as TETFund interventions are concerned.

"As Stakeholders in the educational sector, most times the state-owned universities Governing Councils are neglected in decisions that will affect them. So we will like to inform the Executive Secretary that we on our part will like to step in so that we are consulted on decisions relating to the Fund matters. So that decisions that affect the state own universities will be decisions that will be in our best interest," he said.

Expressing his views on TETFund's funding policy for states with two or more state-owned universities, the Chairman said "there is a limitation to the number of institutions that benefit from TETFund and some of these institutions play a big role. Restricting to only a certain number is affecting some of these institutions that play a big role in university administration"



He also pleaded with TETFund to extend its interventions to security as it would help in securing the lives of students and staff of institutions.

In his response, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed appreciation to the leadership of the committee, while also extolling Senator Lidani for the patriotism he exhibited in his service to the nation.

Explaining the reason for TETFund's funding policy for states with two or more state-owned universities, the Executive Secretary stated that the Board of Trustees of the Fund was compelled to impose the restriction, which allowed funding for only one state university annually in states with more than one university, because of the need to conform with the provisions of the law which require that funding should reflect the diversity of the country and done on the basis of equality of states.

On the issue of security, Arc. Echono stated that the Fund has created a special intervention line for security matters and only institutions with peculiar security challenges could apply.

He assured Senator Lidani that the Fund would continue to involve its stakeholders including the committee in formulating policies that would further enhance the activities of the Fund.

COMMITTEE OF PRO-CHANCELLORS OF STATE UNIVERSITIES COURTESY VISIT TO TETFund





TETFund WELCOMES COLLABORATION ON RESEARCH AND QUALITY HEALTH DELIVERY, ECHONO ASSURES KINGS COLLEGE LONDON

BY MARIA JOSEPH

The Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono has expressed the Fund's readiness to explore collaboration with Kings College London on research and staff training towards creation of local contents and provision of modern facilities for quality health delivery in Nigeria.

Arc. Echono made this known recently at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja, when he played host to the Deputy Vice President of the College, Dr. Helen Bailey who earlier informed him of the partnership between King's College London and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)

in establishing a medical school in Abuja.

The Executive Secretary remarked that the Fund was always delighted to collaborate with different bodies in the areas of research and manpower development to address the challenges facing the country.

"It is always a delight to have opportunities to collaborate in various spheres, given our heritage and longtime partnership with the UK".

"In recognition of the huge challenges we face as a country in the area of life sciences, medical sciences and the huge amount of foreign exchange expended annually on medical tourism to so many countries on the globe, we welcome any effort that will create local content and bring in modern facilities to the right faculties to ensure that quality delivery of health care to the people is scaled up," he said.



While noting that Nigeria needed an integrated approach to Medicare and the life sciences, Arc. Echono assured that the Fund was playing a great role in that respect.

Speaking earlier, the Deputy Vice President of King's College London, Dr. Helen Bailey revealed that one of its partners, the King's College Hospital was working with Afreximbank on the establishment of a medical hospital in Abuja.

She noted that a memorandum of agreement was signed with Afreximbank in November to provide a short consultancy project to explore the development of a medical school; a nursing school and a research centre to be co-located with the hospital in Abuja.

While stating that Kings College had one of the biggest partnerships with hospitals in Europe where they undertake educational training in research, Dr. Bailey revealed that the Abuja Medical Centre would cover the issue of brain drain in the country.

She affirmed the College's readiness to collaborate with TETFund and relevant government bodies to achieve the desired goal.

KWASU MANAGEMENT PAYS "THANK YOU" VISIT TO ECHONO ...SEEKS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

By Oluwatosin Ishowo

The Management of Kwara State University (KWASU), Malete has conveyed the appreciation of the university community to the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono for honouring its invitation to serve as Chairman of the university's 10th & 11th Convocation Ceremony, and also for performing the inauguration of some completed TETFund projects during the period.

The Ag. Vice-Chancellor of the university, Prof. Sheikh Jimoh Lukman relayed the message when he led a delegation of KWASU management on a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary at the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja.

While expressing appreciation for the remarkable impact TETFund has made in the university through its support for infrastructural and human development, the Ag. Vice Chancellor stated that the institution still required the support of the Fund in some critical areas such as completion and equipping of its library annex.

Prof. Lukman further stated that with the growing population of the university, there was the need to expand hostel accommodation and capacity. He disclosed that the university have over 30,000 students, but could only accommodate about 2,000 students on campus.

"Ninety percent of the infrastructure and other materials



in our institution were donated by TETFund. Without TETFund, KWASU would have suffered setbacks in delivering academic and instructional processes needed to promote national development," he said.

He intimated the Executive Secretary of the university's desire to name its recently commissioned TETFund - sponsored Senate Building after its former Vice Chancellor, Prof. Muhammed Akanbi for his immense contributions to the development of the university; and sought the appropriateness of doing so from the TETFund Management.

In his response, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono described Kwara State University as a model for sustainable funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and expressed the Fund's readiness to receive feedbacks from stakeholders across board to further strengthen the interventions of the Fund.

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stakeholders across board to further strengthen the interventions of the Fund.

Reacting to the university's request for support on its library annex, the Executive Secretary hinted that he had requested for the proposal of the project and the Fund would fulfil its obligation in equipping and completing the project. On the need for hostel expansion, Echono said "Having about 30,000 students is an indication that you are growing and competing. Therefore, we understand the need to capture a major segment of the population.

"Currently, you are only disposed to accommodating about six percent of your students and the capacity needs to improve. However, just like we have been advocating to other tertiary institutions, we would advise you explore public-private partnership (PPP) in addressing this".

Speaking on the appropriateness of naming the university Senate Building after its late Vice Chancellor, the Executive Secretary clarified that Beneficiary Institutions were at liberty to name TETFund- sponsored project as they deem fit and necessary, as long as TETFund insignia on the structures are maintained.



KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY'S APPRECIATION VISIT TO TETFund



KINGS COLLEGE LONDON DELEGATES' VISIT TO TETFund



The Governor of Katsina State, Dikko Umar Radda has advocated for improved security architecture in tertiary institutions in Katsina State, even as he noted that the Fund has contributed greatly to the development of tertiary institutions in the state.

Governor Radda made the call when he paid a courtesy visit to the Fund's Headquarters in Abuja recently.

In his words, "your presence is everywhere, and even when I engaged our lecturers, they told me what you have been doing in our state in terms of improving capacity through some of your interventions".

"The State and Federal Government are struggling economically at the moment and despite that, we appreciate your support and commitment. However, as you are aware, Katsina is one of the states affected by banditry, other forms of criminality and insecurity. We are here to tap and scout for resources. You have been doing a lot, but we are still appealing for more, especially on the specific area I mentioned earlier".

"We need to intensify security in our tertiary institutions, we need to enhance the security architecture in our tertiary institutions. We also appeal for more support on technology and ICT. On our part, we will always be available and do what is required of us from our end," he added.

In response, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono appreciated the Governor and his team for the visit. He noted that Katsina State has provided leadership for Nigeria at different times, and continued to lead by example in service to the nation.

While informing the Governor of some intervention support the Fund has provided institutions in the state, he stated that the Agency was also in the process of adopting the new University of Transportation in Katsina for enrolment.

Speaking further, Echono stated that "Katsina is at the height of insecurity in our country, and the Fund has already prioritized Katsina State on security infrastructure, as we made provision for that in our 2024 budget, to address and protect students in Katsina and other institutions with similar issue".

"Despite insecurity, education must not stop, we must capture those that are out of school, and expand facilities and policies. We can achieve this by leveraging on technology and embracing the skill sector. Nigeria cannot continue to leverage on its neighbors to get certain things done, when it possesses a vast population of skillful people."

Katsina Governor commends TETFund, Advocates for Improved Security Architecture

By Oluwatosin Ishowo



STATE GOVERNORS' VISIT TO THE FUND



NASARAWA GOVERNOR'S VISIT



KASTINA GOVERNOR'S VISIT



Kwara State Governor Extols TETFund on Interventions ...Seeks Support to Upgrade Three Colleges of Education

BY OTONBARA APREBO

Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State has commended the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for its laudable intervention in public tertiary educational institutions in Kwara State and other parts of the country.

The Governor gave the commendation when he led some serving members of the National Assembly from Kwara State on a courtesy visit to the Funds' Headquarter in Abuja, while also imploring the agency not to rest on its laurels but continue building on the successes recorded to date.



Speaking on the purpose of his visit, the Governor disclosed that the state was in the process of upgrading three of its Colleges of Education to Universities of Education and solicited the support of the Fund for the conversion

He stated that the three colleges are Kwara State College of Education, Oro; Kwara State College of Education (Technical), Lafiagi and Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin.

"This visit is to say you are doing a good job and on behalf of the people and government of Kwara State, we say thank you for the job you have done and we appreciate you.

"But we need more support. We intend to convert all our colleges of education to a university of education and so we need your assistance to do that. It is easy to do that because the structures are there," he stated.



Governor Abdulrasaq also requested for the Fund's assistance to tackle the challenges of insecurity and water sanitation in tertiary institutions in the state.

In response, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono commended Kwara State for the leading role it has played in educational development in Northern Nigeria, which he said, reflected even in the number of institutions in the state.

He assured that the Fund would continue to partner and support the state government even in its plans to convert its colleges of education to universities of education.

Commenting on the Governor's request for support in the area of security, the Executive Secretary revealed that the Fund has been engaging with the Federal Ministry of Education and others to ensure safe education for Nigerian students.

He also revealed that the Fund was already upgrading security infrastructure in its Beneficiary Institutions and looking at all the various areas of security.

"On our end, we introduced a new intervention line last year where we try to upgrade security facilities in our Beneficiary Institutions. We are doing something about it and Kwara will be featured in that equation," he assured.



GOVERNOR ODODO OF KOGI STATE VISITS TETFund



KWARA STATE GOVERNOR VISITS TETFund



Kogi Governor Applauds TETFund

...Seeks Support for Newly Established University

By Ijeoma Obiakor

Kogi State Governor, Alhaji Usman Ododo has applauded the efforts of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in the development of tertiary educational institutions in the State even as he requested for further support for the newly established Kogi State University, Kabba.

Governor Ododo spoke during a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono at TETFund Headquarters in Abuja.

He commended the Fund for its impact on the development of tertiary education in the state. "I must say that TETFund has made remarkable impact in supporting higher institutions in Kogi State, but we will continue to seek your support for intervention in developing critical infrastructure in our tertiary educational institutions to help in advancing our agenda for accelerated human capital development in the state.

He commended the Fund for its impact on the development of tertiary education in the state. "I must say that TETFund has made remarkable impact in supporting higher institutions in Kogi State, but we will continue to seek your support for intervention in developing critical infrastructure in our tertiary educational institutions to help in advancing our agenda for accelerated human capital development in the state.

The Governor noted that to underscore the importance of education and the commitment of the state government to the sector, education was allocated 40 per cent in the state's 2024 budget.

He noted that the state was in need of more interventions for its tertiary educational institutions as he specifically requested for support under the Special High Impact Intervention of TETFund.

In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono commended the Governor for his leadership approach to governance, describing him as a proactive leader who has put himself out for the service of the people of Kogi State.

He assured the Governor that the Fund would do all that is within its mandate to support Kogi State through interventions in tertiary education to enhance the Governor's vision of accelerated human capital development in the state.



>>> **Student Loan Scheme: TETFund, FIRS, Others Meet to Perfect Take-Off** <<<



By Muazzam Garo

Ahead of the launch of the Student Loan Scheme by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a committee comprising the Executive Secretary of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Arc. Sonny Echono, Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mr. Zacch Adedeji and others have met to finalize arrangements for the smooth take-off and sustenance of the programme.

The meeting which took place early February at the TETFund Headquarters in Abuja was called in compliance with President Tinubu's directives to perfect implementation strategies for the scheme which was introduced by his administration to provide easy access to higher education for indigent students through interest-free loans.

Speaking while receiving the Executive Chairman of FIRS in company of TETFund management before the committee meeting, the Executive Secretary of the Fund, Arc. Sonny Echono expressed the Fund's appreciation to FIRS for its efforts and innovations, part of which resulted in the remarkable increase in Education Tax collection for 2023.

Arc. Echono stated that the Fund looked forward to greater collaboration with the Service while working mutually towards achieving the President's aspiration for effective funding and sustenance of higher education, as well as the success of the Student Loan Scheme.

"We are looking forward to greater collaboration (with FIRS) so that we can expand incidents and also improve efficiencies in the collection of these taxes; and more importantly, Mr. President is much focused on us being able to utilize these more efficiently to benefit our students and also to ensure steady and sustainable growth in the education sector," he said.

While stating that the primary visit of Mr. Adedeji was on the implementation strategies for the Student Loan Scheme, the Executive Secretary noted that the scheme was beyond just affording Nigerian students the opportunity to access education, as it had a wider implication of addressing national security challenges and supporting economic growth.

He assured that the scheme could commence at any time as mechanism for implementation had been worked out and funding available.

In his remarks, the Executive Chairman of FIRS, Mr. Zacch Adedeji commended Arc. Echono for his commitment to national service, remarking that the Fund was privileged to have the Executive Secretary at its helm of affairs.

"WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO GREATER COLLABORATION (WITH FIRS) SO THAT WE CAN EXPAND INCIDENTS AND ALSO IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES IN THE COLLECTION OF THESE TAXES; AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, MR. PRESIDENT IS MUCH FOCUSED ON US BEING ABLE TO UTILIZE THESE MORE EFFICIENTLY TO BENEFIT OUR STUDENTS AND ALSO TO ENSURE STEADY AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR," - ARC. ECHONO.

➤➤➤ He assured that the FIRS would continue to discharge its statutory responsibilities of assessing and collecting Education Tax for the continuous development of the tertiary education sub-sector and the nation in general.

“Concerning our working relationship, we are at your service. FIRS is there to actually provide that effective and efficient service most especially in assessing, collecting and accounting for all form of taxes, including Education Tax that we collect on your behalf,” he remarked.

"CONCERNING OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP, WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE. FIRS IS THERE TO ACTUALLY PROVIDE THAT EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE MOST ESPECIALLY IN ASSESSING, COLLECTING AND ACCOUNTING FOR ALL FORM OF TAXES, INCLUDING EDUCATION TAX THAT WE COLLECT ON YOUR BEHALF," - FIRS BOSS

Also speaking during the visit, Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the President on Planning and Research, Mr. Dubem Moghalu expressed the desire of President Tinubu's administration to solve critical problems affecting education and also bequeath a legacy of unhindered access to education for all Nigerian students.

“It is Mr. President's ambition, and it is our obligation to help him achieve that ambition to make sure that after this administration, no Nigerian child will ever be denied the opportunity to acquire education and skills simply because their parents cannot afford it,” he said.



FIRS BOSS PAID A WORKING VISIT TO THE FUND



TETFund/SMEDAN IN PARTNERSHIP TALKS TO DEVELOP ICT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

BY MARIA JOSEPH

ICT
VOCATIONAL
CENTRES

PARTNERSHIP

In a bid to create innovative minds for national development, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) are in partnership talks to develop ICT vocational and entrepreneurship centres through the Mind-Shift programme of SMEDAN.

This came to the limelight when the Director-General/Chief Executive Officer of SMEDAN, Mr. Charles Odili paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny Echono recently at the Fund's office in Abuja.

Speaking on the Mind-Shift Entrepreneurship Programme of the agency, Mr. Odili said: "the Mind-shift entrepreneurship programme was designed to enhance the capacity of teachers in entrepreneurship skills who will in turn prepare the pupils and students to convert them into entrepreneurs".

He further revealed that the initiative is driven through the National Schools Entrepreneurship Programme and Tertiary Institutions Entrepreneurship Development Programme, targeting Primary, Secondary and Tertiary institutions

According to him, the objectives of the programme include inculcating the culture of entrepreneurship into students of young age, to stimulate and facilitate the culture of entrepreneurship and community service with a view to assisting students in exhibiting creativity to identify potentials at early stage and to channel the energy of youths to positive and productive ends. He also described the programme as an avenue to changing the mindset of students from consumers to producers, and from employees to job creators

STUDENTS

UNEMPLOYMENT

While expressing concern over the number of graduates produced yearly without employment, he called for proactive action to salvage the issues of unemployment, poverty and economic stagnation in the country.

The SMEDAN Boss proposed partnership with TETFund to build strong ICT hubs and vocational and entrepreneurship centers with robust curriculum and upgraded equipment where students could obtain world-class training and skills of high demand. This, he said, would go a long way in helping youths become self-employed.



In his remarks, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc Sonny Echono welcomed the proposal saying: "this falls right into what the Fund is trying to achieve in the educational sector. At TETFund, we are conscious of changing the mindset of students from wanting to graduate and search for white collar jobs, to having the mindset of innovators, entrepreneurs, job creators, and problem solvers".

Arc. Echono noted that the Fund, in its bid to encourage entrepreneurship has partnered with the National Universities Commission (NUC) to incorporate entrepreneurship programmes in all courses in universities.

He also revealed that the Fund was partnering with other organizations in Nigeria to replicate innovation hubs in tertiary institutions across the country where students are allowed to unleash their potentials and creative talent through production of goods and services.

Arc. Echono assured that the Fund is working tirelessly to ensure that tertiary institutions in Nigeria are upgraded to global standard where students graduate with excellent skills and mindsets.

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SMEDAN BOSS VISITS TETfund



COLLABORATIONS





MALYASIAN AMBASSADORS VISITS TETFund



TETFund Confers Awards on 25 Staff for Meritorious Service

By Sa'adatu Salihu

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has conferred merit awards on 25 members of staff in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the Fund in 2023.

The conferment ceremony which is the second in the series of the TETFund Staff Merit Award instituted in 2022 was held in January at the Fund's Auditorium in Abuja.

A breakdown of the awards indicated that six staff were conferred with awards in the Gold Category, nine in the Silver Category, and 10 in the Bronze Category.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of TETFund, Arc. Sonny S.T Echono congratulated the awardees and also expressed Management's deep appreciation to all staff for their contributions to the Fund's achievements, which he noted were remarkable in 2023.

"The importance of this award is to recognize those whose performance were adjudged to be above the basic minimum and were able to excel and exceed expectations in their respective assignments, and that is why every year we want to pick few staff. This year we have twenty-five of them.

"I have noticed in terms of overall performance, Year 2023 recorded the highest in terms of tax received in education. It also witnessed the highest disbursement; over N400 billion in one year. We are now able to assist various institutions in assessing their funds," he said.

The Executive Secretary encouraged staff to continue to strive for excellence, assuring that Management would continue to refine the award process to make it more effective.

"We expect that the process of recognition for these staff will also spur you to achieve even more. Those who are already winners will want to move to higher levels of performance to sustain their status while others would like to join them. I also promise you that we will continue to refine the process to make it more transparent and more effective," he said.

In his remarks, Director Human Resource and General Administration (HR&GA), who also served as Chairman of the TETFund Staff Merit Award Committee, Mr. Kolapo Okunlola expressed appreciation to the Executive Secretary for institutionalizing the Staff Merit Award.

Mr. Okunlola noted that the objective of the award is to recognize dedication, punctuality, hard work, commitment, contribution, and loyalty of staff of the Fund.

He, therefore, encouraged all staff to always put in their best, assuring that the Fund would continue to recognize exceptional performances and conduct.

Speaking on behalf of the awardees, Mrs. Funto Julius of ICT Department, expressed appreciation to Management and pledged that staff would continue to put more efforts in their duties.



NAMES OF WINNERS AND CATEGORIES

GOLD CATEGORY

AUWAL IBRAHIM	FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS
FUNSHO OLUGBODE	FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS
OLUWAFUNTO JULIUS	ICT
BENJAMIN UGWU	ICT
ISAH ABDULHAKIM NASIR	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
AMOS ANETEKHAI	PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SILVER CATEGORY

COMFORT UKIM	PUBLIC AFFAIRS
ADAMS ECHONO	REVENUE AND INVESTMENTS
FAHD AHMED	INTERNAL AUDIT
MUSTAPHA WAZIRI	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
IDRIS ABDULLAHI	HUMAN RESOURCE AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
UMAR GWADABE ALIYU	REVENUE AND INVESTMENTS
GIFT EBEI ELIOT	PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
EGBE ABIGAIL KELECHI	FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS
IRIABIJE KATE	FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

NAMES OF WINNERS AND CATEGORIES

BRONZE CATEGORY

MAXWELL HOSEA	NORTH-CENTRAL ZONE
ANENIH JOY ONYINYE	R&D/CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE
ADEROJU SHITTA	PUBLIC AFFAIRS
ATIKU M. IBRAHIM	ACADEMIC STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
NAFIU TANKO SULE	NORTH CENTRAL
OHIOZUA GRACE	INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT
DEBORAH BEDWOM	LEGAL UNIT
KHALIFA BELLO	ACADEMIC STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
YUNUSU RILWANU	PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
ABDULRAZAK AHMED	PUBLIC AFFAIRS



TETFund STAFF AWARD

STAKEHOLDERS COLUMN



• MY R4I EXPERIENCE

• MY TETFAIR JOURNEY

MY R4I EXPERIENCE

The drive to the Hub was a bit longer than I thought. As the fully air-conditioned bus gracefully glided into Innov8 Hub, the palpable aura of suspense and anticipation among the participants chosen for the Research for Impact workshop—marking the sixteenth cohort—was evident. I was beaming with expectation, particularly following the abrupt trip from the South-South region of Nigeria.

Alongside other academics, I daintily glided into the Innov8 Hub complex. The security check was thorough, the Hub had an aura of order, an understated elegance, and an atmosphere of competence.

In a short while, we all had our professional-looking tags beautifully draped around our necks.

As I walked into the main auditorium, my face was hit by a sudden but invigorating chill. It brought a sense of professionalism that I have always loved about International Information Technology work spaces. As a passionate scientist and writer, I absorbed every detail: the MC was professional, the sound production was top-notch, and the hall was innovatively decorated.

The speeches were nicely articulated. Mr. Edward Singhaty, in his opening remarks, encouraged participants not only to think as educators but also to aspire to become innovators. The first session was a stellar presentation by Dr. Obichi. Not only was he skillful, but he also seized every opportunity to whet our appetites.

My inquisitive mind was still digesting the entire new experience.

The grand tour was so extraordinary that it could easily fill an entire book. To be honest, my initial reaction was, 'Where has this place been, or rather, how is it that I have never heard about it before?' I traversed the space with the enthusiasm of a teenager embarking on her first overseas expedition. I asked questions, took photos and absorbed every experience.

Throughout our communication with the facilitators, their contagious excitement and motivation was admirable. I particularly cherished the lecture on Emotional Intelligence by Engr. Betty Ugonna, who artfully intertwined real-life scenarios with vivid, lesson-packed stories. 'Our feelings and emotions give meaning to our lives and guide our actions,' she emphasized. I related with every sentence she made, especially being the only female faculty member in the midst of 30 men and more so, the Head of Department back in my University. Following this session, I made a conscious effort to send 'Thank You' messages to my faculty members back at my university. Please don't misunderstand me; I am naturally a very grateful person. However, her words lingered, prompting me to show much more appreciation for the sacrifices and support I have received from my incredibly friendly colleagues. Naturally, I also sent 'love notes' to my immediate family members—I had become more emotionally intelligent.

The pitch lessons were an eye opener to me— it isn't enough to be a world-class inventor; our research output needs to be marketable and to achieve that, we need to know how to advertise. The facilitator simplified the process so professionally— I already see myself preparing my students for pitching their works.

Again, I wish I knew these earlier. Did I mention that we had practical pitch sessions with the sensational communications department and that I was selected to pitch for my team. All my years of public speaking lessons on 'English with Lucy' seem to be paying off. Apart from my visit to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the USA about five years ago, this will remain one of the most memorable experiences in my academic career. I will get patents, I will create wealth from my research, and I will become an Innovator. I think I can also speak for other participants. We will innovatively change the landscape of our Universities and Nigeria ultimately.



Idongesit Efaemiode Eteng (PhD)
University of Calabar

MY TETFAIR JOURNEY

My TETFAIR journey commenced when a team of researchers from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, conceived the idea of utilising basalt-based composite material for the production of vehicle brake pads. In the operation of vehicles, few components carry as much significance and importance as the brake pad.



Brake pad production in Nigeria languishes as industrialists heavily rely on importing raw materials for production. Statistics revealed by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) disclosed that an average of 18.5 million brake pads were imported into Nigeria from 2000 to 2011. The consequences are profound, as manufacturers have succumbed to the burden of exorbitant import costs.

Despite the immense potential within this industry, my team faced an uneven playing field where our idea couldn't progress because we lacked the necessary technical guidance and entrepreneurial mentorship. The dynamics changed when we heard about TETFAIR. We applied to TETFAIR with a mission to explore locally sourced alternative materials for brake pad production, focusing on Basalt, which is abundant in Jos, Plateau State. We were selected to participate and our exciting TETFAIR journey of translating our idea into innovation and solution began at Innov8 Hub.

During the Market Validation phase of TETFAIR, my team received positive feedback from 3 prominent transportation companies in Nigeria. The consensus was resounding, confirming that there is a huge demand for locally-produced brake pads that can favourably compete with imported brake pads which are mostly of low quality.

Working in synergy with mentors and experts of TETFAIR, we traversed the needed processes and procedures of product development, prototyping and venture creation that led our product into becoming a viable solution for the Nigerian automobile industry, that is simultaneously becoming a venture that creates employment and boosts the nation's economy.

In conclusion, my TETFAIR journey has instigated a paradigm-shift in my career; from being just an academic to an innovator, a venture creator and a patent holder. This initiative couldn't have come at a better time, for the nation, the academia and the industry. At TETFAIR, we experienced first hand how the deployment of expertise, technology, and entrepreneurial mentorship was precisely what we needed to actualise the dream of manufacturing brake pads with locally sourced materials, poised to match global benchmarks.

My heartfelt gratitude to TETFund and Innov8 Hub for championing this cause. The prospects and potentials within TETFAIR are massive, and if sustained, the outcome will be national development to unimaginable heights.

Peter Gai

**Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University,
Bauchi Team 16 (Bepetoba Super Stopper
Brake Pads)**

**READ THE CLUES AT THE SIDE TO FIGURE OUT
THE ANSWERS**

P	L	A	N	N	N	I	N	G	N	T	T	M	E	N	E	I	S
R	I	P	D	O	L	L	M	E	N	P	T	M	D	N	Y	I	O
O	E	F	A	I	A	B	I	D	D	S	U	P	U	O	G	N	L
J	R	D	D	R	V	E	N	E	R	E	T	O	C	E	O	T	A
E	A	N	R	A	T	K	S	V	A	G	A	A	A	O	L	E	R
C	C	U	E	C	O	N	O	N	O	M	Y	E	T	M	O	R	A
T	Y	F	F	L	S	O	E	A	B	E	G	Y	I	F	N	V	H
S	Y	D	E	O	A	W	R	R	R	B	L	A	C	K	H	E	C
O	A	V	W	W	I	L	A	U	S	V	A	K	N	N	C	N	R
R	T	H	N	Z	G	E	K	B	C	H	T	S	A	A	E	T	A
Y	I	U	S	T	B	D	A	N	Y	T	I	A	L	T	T	I	E
R	G	B	R	E	A	G	N	R	H	L	G	P	S	A	T	O	S
A	I	S	I	X	E	E	Y	H	H	N	I	R	R	Y	A	N	E
R	D	N	X	A	E	E	O	H	A	B	D	C	E	N	R	N	R

PLANNING

PARTNERSHIP

PROJECTS

LITERACY

KNOWLEDGE

ECONOMY

BLACK

BOARD

INTERVENTION

TEASER

1. I AM TAKEN FROM A MINE AND SHUT UP IN A WOODEN CASE, FROM WHICH I AM NEVER RELEASED, AND YET I AM USED BY ALMOST EVERYBODY

2. WHAT IS HERDER TO CATCH THE FASTER YOU RUN?

