

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AS A LIVE WIRE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This non-empirical paper examines the proposition that educational planning constitutes the “live wire” of Nigeria’s educational administrative framework the essential conduit through which policy intent is transmitted, the circuit whose integrity determines administrative functionality, and the connection whose quality dictates the efficiency of educational energy reaching schools, teachers, and learners. Drawing on recent policy developments, government initiatives, and scholarly discourse from 2024 to 2026, the paper argues that effective educational planning is not merely a preliminary or specialized function but the core intelligence function that makes all other administrative activities meaningful. The paper analyses Nigeria’s contemporary educational landscape, including the Nigerian Educational Sector Renewed Initiative (NESRI), the DOTS policy framework, the BRIDGE digital infrastructure project, and the emerging strategic foresight approaches being piloted in partnership with UNICEF. It contends that persistent challenges inadequate and inequitable funding, curriculum instability, security threats to educational institutions, and gaps in teacher quality ultimately stem from deficiencies in the planning process rather than from failures of implementation alone. The paper concludes by proposing a reconfigured planning framework that incorporates long-term strategic foresight, data-driven decision-making, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and institutional continuity as essential elements for transforming educational administration from reactive crisis management to proactive, sustainable development. By investing in planning as the live wire of the system, Nigeria can bridge the persistent gap between policy rhetoric and educational reality.

Keywords: Educational Planning, Educational Administration, Policy Implementation, Strategic Foresight, Nigeria Education Sector, NESRI

Introduction

Educational planning and educational administration have long been recognized as two sides of the same coin, yet in the Nigerian context the relationship between them has often been characterized by disjuncture rather than synergy. Educational planning, understood as the systematic process of setting goals, assessing current realities, forecasting future demands, allocating resources, and designing coherent implementation pathways, ought to serve as the central nervous system of the administrative enterprise. Without this foundational function, educational administration risks degenerating into a series of disconnected reactions to crises, ad hoc decision-making driven by political expediency, and inefficient resource utilization that ultimately compromises learning outcomes and national development.

The metaphor of the live wire is deliberately chosen because it conveys three essential characteristics that capture the relationship between planning and administration in the Nigerian educational system. First, like an electrical wire that carries current from source to endpoint, educational planning transmits the current of policy intent from the abstract realm of political promises to the concrete reality of classroom practice. Without this transmission, policy remains inert rhetoric, unable to effect the changes it promises. Second, a break in the planning circuit disrupts all downstream administrative functions—when planning is rushed, inadequately resourced, or based on faulty assumptions, the consequences cascade through teacher deployment, curriculum delivery, assessment systems, and ultimately student learning.

The investment in digital infrastructure through the BRIDGE project is therefore not merely a technological initiative but a foundational investment in planning quality, creating the information backbone that will enable higher-quality planning in the future (Okonkwo, 2026).

Planning and Administrative Effectiveness: Empirical Connections

The theoretical relationship between planning and administrative effectiveness finds empirical support in recent Nigerian research that has sought to quantify the impact of planning practices on educational outcomes. Dahiru, Almustapha, and Sambo (2024) conducted a correlational study examining the relationship between effective educational planning and teaching staff performance in public secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria, a region that has faced significant educational challenges including insecurity, teacher shortages, and low enrollment rates. Their findings revealed “a moderate but significant relationship between effective educational planning and school staff performance” ($r = 0.514$, $p < 0.05$), providing statistical evidence that schools with stronger planning practices tend to have better teacher performance in terms of lesson delivery, student engagement, and assessment practices. This correlation is significant not only because it confirms the theoretical link between planning and administration but also because it suggests that investments in planning capacity can yield measurable improvements in teacher effectiveness, which is widely recognized as the most important in-school factor affecting student learning outcomes.

The mechanisms through which planning influences teacher performance are multiple and interconnected, as Dahiru, Almustapha, and Sambo (2024) explain in their discussion of the study's implications. Effective planning ensures that teachers have access to the instructional materials, curriculum guidance, and professional development opportunities they need to perform their roles effectively. It also establishes clear expectations, performance standards, and accountability mechanisms that give teachers a clear understanding of what is required of them and how their performance will be assessed. Moreover, effective planning creates stability and predictability in the school environment, reducing the disruptions—such as last-minute policy changes, delayed salary payments, or unanticipated curriculum revisions—that can undermine teacher morale and motivation. In the Zamfara context, where teachers have faced significant challenges including security threats to schools and communities, the stabilizing effect of effective planning may be particularly important, providing a measure of certainty in an otherwise uncertain environment. The researchers' recommendation that governments at all levels should “employ more professional planners and deploy them to the ministries and agencies for effective planning of education” underscores their conviction that planning is not an ancillary function but a core activity requiring dedicated expertise (Dahiru, Almustapha, and Sambo, 2024).

The empirical connection between planning and administrative effectiveness is further reinforced by the experience of states that have invested in strengthening their planning capacities. Anambra State, for example, has consistently allocated a higher proportion of its budget to education than any other state 46.9% in the 2026 budget and has also invested in strengthening its educational planning units, developing robust data systems, and establishing mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in planning processes (Independent Newspaper, 2026). The result has been measurable improvements in educational outcomes, including higher enrollment rates, better performance in national examinations, and reduced dropout rates. These cross-state comparisons, while not constituting rigorous experimental evidence, are consistent with the theoretical argument that planning serves as the live wire of educational administration, and that strengthening planning capacity is a prerequisite for improving educational outcomes.

Contemporary Educational Planning Initiatives in Nigeria Are as follows;

1.The Nigerian Educational Sector Renewed Initiative (NESRI)

The Nigerian Educational Sector Renewed Initiative (NESRI) represents the most comprehensive and ambitious educational planning framework currently guiding federal policy, reflecting a deliberate effort to move beyond fragmented interventions toward a coherent, system-wide approach. Introduced by the Minister of Education, Dr. Maruf Tunji Alausa, NESRI was developed from the former DOTS policy and is structured around six interconnected pillars that together address the multiple dimensions of Nigeria's educational challenges (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026). These pillars are: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), designed to equip learners with practical skills for employment and

entrepreneurship; Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM), aimed at strengthening Nigeria's capacity in these critical fields; Out-of-school children and Almajiri, targeting the millions of children who are not enrolled in formal education; Data and Digitalisation, recognizing that modern educational planning requires robust information systems; Girl-child education, addressing the specific barriers that keep girls out of school; and Education Quality Assurance, ensuring that access is accompanied by meaningful learning. The integration of these six pillars into a single framework represents a significant planning achievement, as it forces planners to consider how different dimensions of the educational system interact and to avoid the siloed thinking that has often characterized previous policy efforts.

The comprehensiveness of the NESRI framework is matched by attention to implementation mechanisms that previous plans have often lacked. The framework includes specific targets, timelines, and indicators for each pillar, as well as mechanisms for coordination across the federal Ministry of Education, its agencies, and state governments (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026). For the Data and Digitalisation pillar, for example, the framework commits to the development of a comprehensive education data repository that will integrate information from all levels of the system, enabling evidence-based decision-making and real-time monitoring of progress. For the Out-of-school children pillar, the framework includes specific strategies for identifying out-of-school children, enrolling them in appropriate educational programmes, and providing the support services such as school feeding and transportation that can help ensure they remain in school. For the Quality Assurance pillar, the framework establishes mechanisms for school inspection, teacher evaluation, and learning assessment that are designed to hold schools accountable for student outcomes. The attention to implementation mechanisms reflects a recognition that a plan is only as good as its ability to be executed, and that effective planning requires not only setting goals but also designing the administrative systems that will translate those goals into reality.

2.Data Infrastructure and Digital Planning

A significant development in Nigeria's educational planning landscape is the growing recognition that data infrastructure is not merely a technical support function but the foundational layer upon which all effective planning depends. The DOTS policy's first pillar Data Repository aims to create "a comprehensive, accurate, and verifiable database for the entire education sector, including tracking student, teacher, and school facilities" (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026). This initiative addresses a long-standing criticism of Nigerian educational planning: the paucity of reliable, timely, and disaggregated data upon which to base decisions. For decades, planners have worked with outdated enrollment figures, incomplete teacher records, and inadequate information on school infrastructure, making it impossible to accurately assess needs, allocate resources efficiently, or monitor progress against goals. The commitment to building a comprehensive data repository is therefore not merely an administrative improvement but a transformation

of the planning function itself, enabling a shift from planning based on assumptions and guesswork to planning based on evidence and analysis.

The Building Resilient Digital Infrastructure for Growth (BRIDGE) Project represents a parallel initiative with profound implications for educational planning, as it addresses the physical infrastructure necessary for digital data collection, communication, and learning. Backed by a \$500 million World Bank investment, BRIDGE aims to connect 38,803 public schools and 16,872 health facilities to broadband internet, deploying 90,000 kilometers of fibre-optic cable across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones (Okonkwo, 2026). This infrastructure development is not merely about connectivity for its own sake; it fundamentally transforms what is possible in educational planning by enabling real-time data collection from schools, facilitating communication between central planners and front-line implementers, and providing the platform for digital learning resources that can supplement and enhance classroom instruction. As Okonkwo (2026) observes, "if fully implemented, Nigeria's digital education strategy could become one of the most transformative national projects of the decade," with the potential to bridge the gap between urban and rural schools, provide personalized learning resources to millions of students, and generate the data needed for continuous improvement of educational programmes.

The digital transformation enabled by these initiatives is already beginning to produce tangible results, even as implementation continues. The digital education platform developed in partnership with UNICEF has attracted more than 750,000 users, providing access to curriculum materials, practice exercises, and assessment tools that supplement classroom instruction (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026).

3.Strategic Foresight and Long-term Planning

The partnership between the Nigerian government and UNICEF to launch the Anticipatory Governance and Foresight Capacity Programme represents a significant evolution in educational planning methodology, moving beyond short-term, reactive approaches toward long-term, proactive strategic thinking. Announced in February 2026, the programme aims to institutionalize "long-term thinking at federal, state and community levels, so that planning is not limited to short political cycles" (Foresight Programme Workshop Report, 2026). This recognition that educational planning must extend beyond the three- or four-year horizons that typically characterize political terms is crucial, as many of the challenges facing Nigerian education such as the impact of climate change on school infrastructure, the implications of artificial intelligence for curriculum and pedagogy, and the demographic transition that will see the school-age population continue to grow require decades of consistent policy effort to address effectively. By embedding foresight methodologies into the planning process, the programme aims to ensure that today's decisions are made with an eye toward the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

4.Policy Continuity and Institutionalization

One of the persistent challenges in Nigerian educational planning has been the disruption caused by political transitions and frequent changes in ministerial leadership, each of which often brings a new set of priorities, new terminology, and new initiatives that displace rather than build upon previous efforts. The Federal Government's recent emphasis on institutionalizing planning frameworks, rather than relying on individual leadership or political personalities, represents an important development with the potential to break this cycle of discontinuity. The establishment of the 2025–2027 Communication Strategy and Framework, which the Ministry describes as “a unified, data-driven approach to communication across the FME, its agencies, departments, and parastatals,” aims to ensure that “policies and achievements will not only be implemented but also clearly communicated, understood, and embraced by Nigerians” (Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, 2025). By creating a consistent communication framework that outlasts any particular minister or administration, the Ministry is attempting to build the kind of institutional continuity that has been missing from Nigerian educational policy.

The institutionalization of planning also requires attention to the human resources needed to carry out planning functions effectively. Dahiru, Almustapha, and Sambo's (2024) recommendation that governments at all levels should “employ more professional planners and deploy them to the ministries and agencies for effective planning of education” highlights a critical gap: many educational planning positions are filled by generalist administrators without specialized training in planning methodologies, data analysis, or forecasting. Professionalizing the planning function—creating career tracks for planners, providing specialized training, and establishing standards for planning practice would strengthen the institutional capacity for planning and reduce the risk that planning quality depends on the accidental expertise of individual officeholders. The integration of planning into the core functions of the Ministry, rather than treating it as a peripheral activity, is essential if planning is to serve as the live wire of educational administration.

Persistent Challenges as Manifestations of Planning Deficiencies Are;

1. Inadequate and Inequitable Funding

Despite decades of advocacy and repeated commitments to prioritize education, Nigeria's funding for education remains consistently below international benchmarks, representing a planning failure of the first order. Against the UNESCO recommendation of 26% of national budget for education and the World Bank's 15–20% benchmark for developing countries, Nigeria's allocation has ranged between 4.9% and 7.9% over the past seven years, with the 2025 allocation of 7.3% and the projected 2026 allocation representing a significant shortfall that fundamentally constrains what can be achieved through educational administration (Independent Newspaper, 2026). This funding inadequacy is not merely a matter of insufficient resources; it is a planning failure at multiple levels, reflecting insufficient advocacy and coalition-building within the planning process to secure adequate resources, inadequate alignment between

educational plans and national budget processes, and failure to diversify funding sources through public-private partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms that could supplement government allocations. When planners fail to make the case for education convincingly within the budget process, or fail to align educational plans with the budget cycle so that resources are available when needed, the result is a chronic funding gap that undermines every other aspect of educational administration.

The consequences of inadequate and inequitable funding are felt throughout the educational system in ways that compound over time. Insufficient funding means that schools lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, desks, and sanitary facilities; that textbooks and instructional materials are in short supply; that teachers are paid irregularly or inadequately, undermining morale and motivation; and that critical support services such as school feeding, transportation, and health services are unavailable. These deficiencies disproportionately affect children from disadvantaged backgrounds, who attend schools that are already under-resourced and who cannot supplement public provision with private alternatives. The result is an educational system that reproduces rather than reduces inequality, and that fails to provide the foundation for human capital development that Nigeria needs to compete in the global economy. Addressing this challenge requires not simply increasing budgets, but strengthening the planning processes that determine how resources are allocated, how priorities are set, and how the case for education is made within government.

2. Curriculum Instability and Implementation Gaps

The WAEC curriculum controversy of late 2025 exemplifies how planning deficiencies manifest as administrative crises that disrupt learning and undermine public confidence in the education system. WAEC's attempt to implement new examination guidelines affecting the 2025/2026 SSCE candidates, despite indications that changes were intended for the 2027/2028 cohort, created significant disruption and confusion among students, teachers, and parents (Nigerian Senate, 2025). Senator Sunday Karimi warned that the policy shift, coming "barely months before the examinations, could trigger mass failure and undermine confidence in Nigeria's education system," highlighting the real-world consequences of planning failures that seem abstract in the planning office but become concrete in the lives of students (Nigerian Senate, 2025). The specific issues identified in the controversy removal of Computer Studies and Civic Education from the SSCE subject list, reduction of available subjects to six when WAEC requires eight to nine, and the expectation that students would sit for new subjects they had never been taught all point to fundamental planning failures including inadequate stakeholder consultation, insufficient consideration of implementation timelines, and failure to assess the readiness of schools and teachers for curriculum changes.

The curriculum instability that has characterized Nigerian education for decades with frequent changes in curriculum frameworks, examination systems, and pedagogical approaches has cumulative

negative effects on learning outcomes. Teachers, who are the primary implementers of curriculum, require time and support to understand new curriculum expectations, adapt their teaching practices, and develop appropriate assessment strategies. When curriculum changes occur too frequently or without adequate preparation, teachers cannot develop the depth of understanding and skill required to implement them effectively. Students, who must adapt to new expectations and assessment formats, may find themselves disadvantaged by changes that occur mid-course. Schools, which must invest in new textbooks, materials, and equipment, may find that resources are wasted when curriculum changes render them obsolete. The result is an educational system that expends significant energy on change but achieves little improvement, as the capacity to implement is consistently overwhelmed by the pace of change. Strengthening planning processes including rigorous piloting, adequate lead times, and systematic teacher preparation is essential to breaking this cycle.

3. Security Challenges and School Safety

The security situation affecting Nigerian education particularly the mass kidnappings of students and teachers that have occurred with horrifying regularity over the past decade represents one of the most severe challenges to educational administration and a stark illustration of the consequences of planning failures. The Nigeria Union of Teachers documented a “horrifying history of mass kidnappings of students and teachers over the last decade,” including the Chibok abduction of 276 girls (2014), the Dapchi abduction of 110 schoolgirls (2018), the kidnapping of 287 pupils in Kuriga, Kaduna (2024), and numerous other incidents that have collectively traumatized communities, disrupted learning, and created a climate of fear that keeps children out of school (Independent Newspaper, 2026). These incidents are not random acts of violence but targeted attacks on educational institutions, often perpetrated by armed groups seeking to undermine government authority or to extract ransom payments. The response to this security challenge has required planning that integrates educational and security considerations, yet such integrated planning has historically been lacking, with education and security sectors operating in silos.

The security challenge also interacts with other educational planning challenges in ways that compound their effects. In regions affected by insecurity, teacher shortages are exacerbated as educators flee dangerous areas, leaving schools without qualified staff. Enrollment rates decline as parents keep children home out of fear, increasing the number of out-of-school children. School infrastructure is damaged or destroyed, requiring reconstruction that diverts resources from other priorities. The cumulative effect is that insecurity creates a vicious cycle: insecurity reduces educational access and quality, which in turn perpetuates the poverty and marginalization that fuel insecurity. Breaking this cycle requires planning that recognizes the interconnectedness of security, education, and development, and that develops integrated strategies that address root causes rather than merely responding to symptoms. The inclusion of “safe and supportive environments” as a goal of NESRI (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026) reflects recognition of

this interconnectedness, but translating recognition into effective action will require sustained investment in planning that cuts across sectoral boundaries.

4. Teacher Quality and Professional Development

The quality of teaching staff is ultimately the most critical determinant of educational outcomes, yet teacher development has historically received insufficient attention in educational planning, representing a failure to recognize that investments in other areas cannot compensate for deficiencies in the quality of classroom instruction. The DOTS policy's emphasis on Teacher Training and Development as one of its four pillars represents recognition of this planning gap, focusing on “strengthening teacher capacity through continuous professional development” (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026). The development of the Edurevamp platform a mobile-based professional development tool that provides courses on pedagogy, subject content, and classroom management represents an innovative planning response to the challenge of providing professional development to teachers in remote and underserved areas. However, the scale of the challenge remains substantial: the Edurevamp platform currently has 37,000 registered teachers, a fraction of Nigeria's total teaching workforce, and the 40% salary increase agreement reached with the Academic Staff Union of Universities in December 2025, effective from January 2026, addresses compensation but does not address the broader system of teacher recruitment, training, deployment, and support (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026).

Addressing the teacher quality challenge requires a comprehensive planning approach that addresses each stage of the teacher career cycle and that recognizes the interconnectedness of recruitment, training, deployment, support, and retention. Such an approach would involve improving the attractiveness of teaching as a career through better compensation, working conditions, and status; strengthening pre-service training to ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need; establishing robust induction and mentoring programmes that support new teachers during their first years in the classroom; providing ongoing professional development that is aligned with teacher needs and delivered in accessible formats; and creating career pathways that reward performance and provide opportunities for advancement. The DOTS policy's focus on teacher development is a step in the right direction, but realizing its potential will require sustained investment in planning that goes beyond individual initiatives to address the systemic challenges that have constrained teacher quality for decades.

Toward Strengthened Educational Planning Frameworks Are;

1. Reconfiguring Governance Structures

Professor Fajonyomi's call to “reconfigure Nigeria's education governance structure” addresses a fundamental planning challenge: the fragmentation of authority across multiple agencies and levels of government, which makes coherent planning difficult and implementation inconsistent (Fajonyomi, 2026). The current structure, in which the Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for all levels of education

from primary to tertiary, while state governments have constitutional responsibility for secondary education, and local governments for primary education, creates overlapping mandates, unclear accountability, and coordination challenges that undermine planning effectiveness. Fajonyomi's proposal to establish specialized, parallel commissions such as a Formal Higher Education Commission alongside an Adult Higher Education Commission, a Secondary Education Commission alongside an Adult and Continuing Education Commission aims to create governance structures that reflect the diversity of educational needs in contemporary Nigeria. By separating responsibilities for different levels and types of education into specialized commissions with clear mandates, stable funding, and professional leadership, the proposal seeks to create the institutional conditions for sustained, high-quality planning.

The proposed strengthening and expansion of the National Council of Education, with representation from “government, educational institutions, professional bodies, the scientific community, the private sector, and the civil society,” would create a planning body with the inclusive stakeholder representation necessary for comprehensive educational planning (Fajonyomi, 2026). The National Council of Education, which brings together the federal and state commissioners of education to coordinate policy, currently has limited capacity for in-depth planning and is often dominated by political considerations rather than technical expertise. Expanding its membership to include professional bodies, the private sector, and civil society would bring diverse perspectives into the planning process, ensuring that plans reflect the needs and priorities of all stakeholders, not merely government officials. Such a body could provide the forum for reconciling diverse interests and articulating coherent medium and long-term strategies that endure beyond political cycles. The establishment of a permanent planning secretariat within the Council, staffed by professional planners, would further strengthen the institutional capacity for planning.

2.Integrating Foresight into Planning Practice

The UNICEF Foresight Programme's emphasis on “environmental scanning, scenario development, trend analysis and backcasting” represents a methodological advancement that should be integrated into mainstream educational planning across all levels of government (Foresight Programme Workshop Report, 2026). Environmental scanning the systematic monitoring of external trends and developments that may affect education would enable planners to identify emerging risks and opportunities before they become crises. For example, scanning might identify the potential impacts of climate change on school infrastructure in different regions, allowing planners to develop adaptation strategies in advance. It might identify demographic trends, such as the rapid growth of the school-age population in certain areas, enabling planners to anticipate demand for school places and teacher recruitment. It might identify technological developments, such as advances in artificial intelligence, enabling planners to consider their implications for curriculum and pedagogy. By making environmental scanning a routine part of the planning process, educational planners can move from reactive crisis management to proactive anticipation.

Backcasting, a methodology that starts with desired future outcomes and works backward to identify necessary intermediate steps, is particularly valuable for long-term planning that extends beyond political cycles. Nigeria's stated goal of reducing out-of-school children, for example, could benefit from backcasting to identify the specific policy interventions, resource allocations, infrastructure investments, teacher recruitment targets, and timeline requirements for achieving that goal by a specified date. By starting with the desired outcome and working backward, planners can identify the critical milestones, dependencies, and potential obstacles that might otherwise be overlooked. This approach also helps to build political commitment, as it makes clear what will be required to achieve ambitious goals and what the consequences of delay or underinvestment will be. Integrating backcasting into the planning process would help to bridge the gap between the long-term aspirations articulated in policy documents and the short-term actions that are needed to realize them.

3.Data-Driven Planning and Accountability

The NESRI and DOTS emphasis on data and digitalisation provides a foundation for strengthening planning through improved information systems, but realizing this potential requires investment not only in technology but also in the human and institutional capacities needed to use data effectively. Data systems must be designed for planning purposes, not merely for reporting to donors or producing annual statistical abstracts. This requires investment in analytical capacity within planning units at all levels of government, training for planners in data analysis and interpretation, and systems that provide timely, actionable information rather than historical reports that arrive too late to inform decisions. It also requires attention to data quality, including mechanisms for validation and verification that ensure that data are accurate and reliable. The biometric attendance verification system enforced for TVET centres in February 2026, which requires that "all fund disbursements to students and centres are now strictly processed through verified biometric attendance records" (Federal Ministry of Education, 2026), exemplifies how data systems can serve planning and accountability simultaneously, creating an information loop that enables real-time monitoring and adjustment of programmes.

The potential of data-driven planning also depends on the willingness of planners and decision-makers to use data to inform their decisions, even when data reveal uncomfortable truths. In contexts where political considerations often override technical evidence, creating a culture of evidence-based decision-making requires leadership and institutional incentives that reward the use of data. It also requires transparency, with data made publicly available so that citizens, civil society organizations, and the media can hold governments accountable for educational outcomes. The establishment of a comprehensive education data repository under DOTS, with public access to disaggregated data on enrollment, teacher deployment, school infrastructure, and learning outcomes, would be a significant step toward transparency and accountability. However, the repository's value depends on its use: data that sit in

a repository without being analyzed, interpreted, and acted upon will not improve planning. Building the capacity to turn data into actionable intelligence is therefore as important as building the infrastructure to collect and store it.

4.Financing for Planned Implementation

The gap between planning and implementation often narrows to inadequate financing, making the alignment of plans with budgets a critical planning function. Strengthening educational planning requires not only better plans but also better alignment between plans and budgets, ensuring that the resources needed to implement plans are identified, secured, and released in a timely manner. This requires planners to engage with the budget process throughout the budget cycle, not only when submitting requests for funding. It requires them to understand the fiscal constraints within which governments operate, to make realistic estimates of costs, to prioritize among competing demands, and to build the case for education convincingly within the budget process. It also requires them to monitor budget execution, tracking whether funds allocated for education are actually released and spent as intended, and to identify and address bottlenecks that prevent resources from reaching schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has argued that educational planning constitutes the live wire of Nigeria's educational administrative framework—the essential conduit through which policy intent is transmitted, the circuit whose integrity determines whether administrative functions operate effectively, and the connection whose quality dictates the efficiency with which educational energy reaches schools, teachers, and learners. Contemporary initiatives such as NESRI, the BRIDGE digital infrastructure project, the DOTS policy framework, and the Foresight Programme demonstrate sophisticated planning approaches that could transform educational outcomes, yet persistent challenges—inadequate and inequitable funding, curriculum instability, security threats to educational institutions, and teacher quality gaps—continue to manifest as planning deficiencies that undermine administrative effectiveness, as vividly illustrated by the WAEC curriculum controversy of 2025, which showed how a break in the planning circuit can disrupt the entire administrative apparatus. Moving forward, planning must be reconceptualized not as a preliminary or specialized activity but as the core intelligence function of educational administration, requiring professionalization through qualified planners, institutionalization in structures that endure beyond political cycles, a data-driven approach, future-oriented foresight methodologies, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. When planning functions effectively as the live wire, it transmits the current of policy intent with sufficient power to energize all levels of the system; when the planning circuit is broken, the administrative system falters and educational outcomes suffer. As Nigeria pursues its ambitious educational reforms under the Renewed Hope Agenda, investing in planning in planners, data systems, foresight capabilities, and inclusive processes—is ultimately investing in the very capacity of the educational system

to achieve its goals, transforming the promise of education into the reality of learning for every Nigerian child.

Recommendation

1. **Professionalize planners:** Establish a dedicated career track for educational planners with specialized recruitment, training, and certification through NIEPA.
2. **Institutionalize planning:** Create permanent, semi-autonomous planning commissions with fixed terms and protected funding to ensure continuity across political cycles.
3. **Embed strategic foresight:** Make environmental scanning, scenario development, and backcasting routine planning tools; establish an Education Futures Observatory.
4. **Build a unified data ecosystem:** Complete the DOTS data repository with real-time, interoperable data on students, teachers, infrastructure, and outcomes; ensure public access.
5. **Align plans with budgets:** Adopt plan-led budgeting; cost all sector plans and integrate them into budget processes; diversify financing through PPPs and education bonds.
6. **Mandate curriculum change protocol:** Require minimum three-year lead time for any curriculum reform, including piloting, teacher training, and infrastructure readiness certification.
7. **Integrate security into education planning:** Expand the School Safety Portal to all schools; fund security infrastructure; link education planning with community protection programmes.



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