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We also acknowledge the time, effort, and professionalism demonstrated throughout the development of this volume. Your collaboration and responsiveness have been invaluable in bringing this project to fruition.

Thank you for your commitment to knowledge creation and for helping shape a more sustainable future for education in Africa.

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12

ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FG-ASUU AGREEMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study examines the roles of key stakeholders in facilitating the full implementation of the FG-ASUU agreement in Nigerian universities. Stakeholders considered include the Federal Government and its agencies, ASUU as the primary academic labour union, university management and governing councils, regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), students and student associations, as well as civil society organisations and the media. Using a qualitative position paper approach, the study analyses how each stakeholder contributes to policy operationalisation, monitoring, accountability, and dispute prevention. It also highlights the risks associated with inadequate coordination, role conflict, weak accountability structures, and historical mistrust that have previously undermined agreement implementation. Findings indicate that effective implementation requires a coordinated multi-stakeholder strategy where the Federal Government ensures timely and adequate funding and demonstrates sustained political will; ASUU actively monitors compliance and engages in



constructive dialogue; university management and councils operationalise agreement provisions transparently; regulatory bodies provide oversight and enforce accountability; and students and the wider society participate in advocacy, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms. The study concludes that without deliberate engagement and collaboration among all stakeholders, the agreement risks replicating historical patterns of partial implementation and industrial unrest. Consequently, it recommends institutionalised dialogue, strengthened monitoring frameworks, transparency in resource allocation, empowerment of university governance structures, and active stakeholder participation as essential measures to ensure the FG–ASUU agreement achieves its intended objectives of industrial peace, enhanced academic productivity, and sustainable university reform in Nigeria.

Keywords: FG–ASUU Agreement; Stakeholders, Industrial Relations; University Governance; Higher Education Reform; Nigeria

12.0. Introduction

The Nigerian university system occupies a strategic position in national development through its roles in manpower training, research, innovation, and socio-economic transformation. As centres of knowledge production and human capital development, universities depend heavily on stable industrial relations, effective governance structures, and sustained policy support to function optimally. In Nigeria, however, the public university system has been persistently disrupted by recurrent industrial disputes between the Federal Government (FG) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). These disputes, often culminating in prolonged strikes, have negatively affected academic calendars, research productivity, institutional credibility, and public confidence in the higher education sector.

Over the years, the Federal Government and ASUU have entered into several agreements aimed at addressing fundamental challenges confronting Nigerian universities. Such challenges include chronic underfunding, poor staff welfare, erosion of university autonomy, infrastructural decay, weak research capacity, and governance inefficiencies. Notable among these agreements is the 2009 FG–ASUU Memorandum of Action, as well as subsequent renegotiations that sought to revitalise the university system. Despite the comprehensive nature of these agreements, their implementation has remained largely inconsistent, partial, or delayed, leading to repeated breakdowns in trust and renewed cycles of industrial action.



The recently signed FG–ASUU agreement has once again raised expectations of industrial harmony and systemic reform within Nigerian universities. Unlike previous accords, the new agreement introduces more elaborate provisions on salary restructuring, earned academic allowances, research funding mechanisms, pension improvements, and strengthened governance and autonomy frameworks. However, Nigeria’s long-standing history of agreement non-implementation raises critical concerns regarding the feasibility and sustainability of these commitments. Experience has shown that the success or failure of such agreements does not depend solely on their content, but largely on the effectiveness of implementation processes and the roles played by key stakeholders within the higher education ecosystem.

Implementation of the FG–ASUU agreement is a multi-stakeholder process involving a complex network of actors with distinct responsibilities, interests, and levels of influence. These stakeholders include the Federal Government and its ministries, departments, and agencies; ASUU as the primary academic labour union; university governing councils and management; regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC); students and parents; and the wider Nigerian society. Each of these actors plays a critical role in shaping the extent to which agreement provisions are translated from policy documents into practical outcomes within universities.

The Federal Government bears primary responsibility for providing adequate funding, ensuring policy continuity, and demonstrating political will to honour its commitments. ASUU, on the other hand, functions not only as a pressure group but also as a partner in monitoring implementation, mobilising academic staff, and sustaining dialogue. University management and governing councils are responsible for translating national-level agreements into institutional policies, ensuring transparent utilisation of funds, and maintaining internal accountability. Regulatory agencies are expected to provide oversight, quality assurance, and compliance monitoring, while students and the public serve as indirect stakeholders whose academic progress and socio-economic prospects are affected by the success or failure of implementation.

Despite the centrality of stakeholders to policy execution, inadequate coordination, role conflict, weak accountability, and mistrust among stakeholders have historically undermined the implementation of FG–ASUU agreements. Political interference, bureaucratic bottlenecks, governance failures, and lack of transparency have further complicated stakeholder engagement, resulting in fragmented implementation efforts. These challenges underscore the need for a systematic examination of stakeholder roles in order to identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for more effective collaboration. This study therefore focuses on the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of the FG–ASUU agreement in Nigerian universities. Understanding stakeholder



roles is crucial for breaking the cycle of agreement failure, preventing recurrent strikes, and repositioning Nigerian universities for stability, productivity, and global relevance.

12.1. Conceptual Terms

i. Concept of University

A university is a higher education institution established to provide advanced learning, research, and knowledge creation in various academic disciplines. It is characterised by its commitment to teaching, scholarship, and community service, often offering undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional programmes. Universities serve as centres for intellectual development, critical thinking, innovation, and societal transformation. Beyond academic functions, universities play a key role in national development by producing skilled manpower, generating research solutions to societal problems, and promoting cultural and social values. In Nigeria, universities are either federal, state, or private, with governance frameworks designed to balance autonomy, accountability, and government oversight (Ogunode, 2026).

ii. Concept of Union

A union is an organised association of workers formed to protect and promote their collective interests, particularly in relation to employment conditions, welfare, and rights. In the context of higher education, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is the primary union representing academic staff in Nigerian universities. Unions function as collective bargaining agents, negotiating with employers or government authorities on salaries, benefits, working conditions, and institutional policies. They also play a critical role in advocacy, policy influence, industrial action, and maintaining professional standards. Unions are governed by formal structures, democratic procedures, and legal frameworks that empower them to act on behalf of their members (Ogunode, 2026).

iii. Concept of Agreement

An agreement is a formal understanding or contract between two or more parties that outlines rights, obligations, and expectations. In labour relations, an agreement specifies the terms and conditions under which workers and employers interact, including remuneration, working conditions, welfare provisions, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Agreements can be legally binding or based on mutual consent and are often used as tools for conflict prevention, negotiation, and institutional reform. In the Nigerian university context, FG–ASUU agreements define the obligations of both the Federal Government and academic staff unions to ensure fair compensation, academic productivity, infrastructure development, and industrial peace. Effective



implementation of agreements depends on clarity, stakeholder commitment, accountability, and monitoring mechanisms (Ogunode, 2026).

iv. Concept of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organisations that have an interest, influence, or role in a particular system, policy, project, or decision-making process. In the context of organisational and institutional management, stakeholders are those who can affect or are affected by the outcomes of a policy, programme, or activity. They may include internal actors such as employees, managers, and governing bodies, as well as external actors like government agencies, clients, suppliers, unions, civil society, and the general public. Stakeholders are often categorised as primary (directly involved or affected) and secondary (indirectly involved or affected), depending on their level of influence or interest. In higher education, for example, primary stakeholders in policy implementation include government agencies, university management, and academic staff, while secondary stakeholders may include students, parents, media, and civil society organisations. The concept of stakeholders is central to policy and project management because recognising their roles, expectations, and influence ensures more effective planning, decision-making, and implementation. Stakeholder engagement promotes collaboration, accountability, transparency, and sustainable outcomes by aligning the interests of diverse actors toward a common goal.

12.2. Roles of Stakeholders in the Implementation of FG–ASUU New Agreement in Nigerian Universities

The following sections discuss six critical roles of these stakeholders in detail.

▪ Role of the Federal Government

The Federal Government holds primary responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the FG–ASUU agreement. This role includes providing adequate, timely, and sustained funding for salaries, earned academic allowances (EAAs), infrastructure development, research grants, and pension provisions as stipulated in the agreement. Beyond financial commitments, the government is expected to demonstrate consistent political will and policy continuity across administrations. Political stability, transparency in fund allocation, and institutional support mechanisms are essential to prevent delays or partial execution of agreement provisions. The government also has a critical oversight function, ensuring that disbursed resources are appropriately utilised and aligned with the objectives of the agreement.



- **Role of ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities)**

As the primary representative of academic staff, ASUU plays a central role in monitoring the execution of the agreement. The union functions as both an advocate and a watchdog, ensuring that the Federal Government fulfils its obligations. ASUU mobilises staff to support policy compliance, provides feedback on institutional implementation challenges, and engages in constructive dialogue with government authorities. Moreover, ASUU contributes to shaping the institutionalisation of best practices in the utilisation of research funds, the management of academic allowances, and the strengthening of university autonomy. By actively participating in joint monitoring committees and review forums, ASUU helps prevent recurrence of disputes and ensures sustained adherence to agreement terms.

- **Role of University Management and Governing Councils**

University management and governing councils serve as the operational link between national policy directives and institutional realities. Their responsibilities include internalising the provisions of the FG–ASUU agreement within university policies, ensuring transparent and accountable use of allocated funds, and implementing welfare and research support programmes. Governing councils, in particular, are tasked with strategic oversight, ensuring that funds are directed towards priority areas such as academic infrastructure, laboratory and library upgrades, and staff professional development. Management teams also play a critical role in maintaining institutional discipline, promoting efficiency, and addressing internal bottlenecks that could impede implementation.

- **Role of Regulatory Bodies (e.g., National Universities Commission)**

Regulatory agencies such as the National Universities Commission provide oversight, quality assurance, and policy compliance monitoring. Their role includes evaluating whether universities are implementing agreement provisions in line with national standards, ensuring equitable distribution of resources, and providing technical guidance for institutional governance. Regulatory bodies also act as intermediaries, facilitating communication between universities and the Federal Government, resolving conflicts, and recommending corrective measures when non-compliance or mismanagement is identified. By institutionalising standardised monitoring frameworks, regulatory bodies enhance accountability and reduce the risk of misappropriation of funds.



- **Role of Students and Student Associations**

Students, while indirect stakeholders, are profoundly affected by the successful implementation of the FG–ASUU agreement. Their academic progress, access to quality education, and research opportunities are directly influenced by institutional stability and resource availability. Student associations and representative bodies can play supportive roles by advocating for uninterrupted academic activities, providing feedback on institutional service delivery, and promoting awareness of the benefits of full implementation. Additionally, students can act as partners in fostering transparency, reporting institutional inefficiencies, and participating in consultative forums, thereby strengthening accountability mechanisms.

- **Role of the Broader Society and Media**

The general public, civil society organisations, and media institutions form a critical external stakeholder group that influences the success of the FG–ASUU agreement. Public interest and scrutiny create pressure for government accountability and ensure that resources are deployed efficiently. The media plays a dual role by disseminating accurate information regarding agreement implementation, highlighting successes, and exposing delays or misuse of funds. Civil society organisations contribute through policy advocacy, independent monitoring, and public awareness campaigns. Collectively, societal stakeholders act as a check against corruption, political interference, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, reinforcing a culture of transparency and good governance within universities.

12.3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of the FG–ASUU new agreement represents a pivotal moment in the history of Nigerian higher education. This study has demonstrated that the success of the agreement does not rely solely on its formal signing or the comprehensiveness of its provisions, but significantly on the active and coordinated participation of multiple stakeholders. Historical experiences with previous agreements, particularly the 2009 Memorandum of Action, have shown that weak institutional autonomy, political interference, inadequate and irregular funding, governance deficits, and a legacy of mistrust between the Federal Government and ASUU are major impediments to effective policy execution.

The successful implementation of the FG–ASUU new agreement is inherently dependent on the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders within the Nigerian higher education ecosystem. These stakeholders include the Federal Government, ASUU, university management and governing councils, regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC),



students, and the broader society. Each stakeholder plays a distinct and complementary role in ensuring that the agreement is effectively translated from policy provisions into actionable outcomes within universities. Based on the findings and discussions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effective implementation of the FG-ASUU agreement:

- 1) The Federal Government should demonstrate unwavering political commitment to implementing the agreement, regardless of changes in administration or political leadership. Policies supporting higher education funding, staff welfare, and autonomy must be institutionalised to prevent reversal or renegotiation due to political transitions.
- 2) Funding provisions under the agreement, including salaries, allowances, research grants, and infrastructure development, must be fully budgeted, released punctually, and monitored for effective utilisation. The government should establish a dedicated implementation fund with clear disbursement and reporting mechanisms to prevent delays and misallocation of resources.
- 3) Universities should be empowered to manage their internal affairs independently, including staff appointments, financial management, and resource allocation. Governing councils and management teams must operate transparently, guided by clear accountability frameworks, to ensure institutional compliance with agreement provisions.
- 4) A permanent joint monitoring committee comprising representatives of the Federal Government, ASUU, university management, and independent experts should be established. This body would track implementation progress, resolve emerging disputes, and recommend policy adjustments to sustain the agreement over time.
- 5) Regulatory agencies, particularly the National Universities Commission (NUC), should conduct regular audits, compliance checks, and impact assessments to ensure that university resources are properly utilised. Findings should be publicly disseminated to promote transparency and reinforce accountability among stakeholders.
- 6) Measures to rebuild trust between the Federal Government and ASUU are essential. This includes transparent reporting of fund utilisation, timely execution of commitments, and independent verification of compliance. Open channels of communication should be maintained to prevent misunderstandings and reduce the likelihood of industrial disputes.
- 7) Students, parents, and civil society organisations should be sensitised on their roles in supporting the successful implementation of the agreement. Their engagement through feedback mechanisms, advocacy, and public monitoring can strengthen accountability and ensure that universities remain responsive to societal expectations.



- 8) 8. Operational mechanisms for research funding should be strengthened, including clear grant management procedures, monitoring systems, and support for innovation. Universities must be equipped to utilise resources effectively for teaching, research, and community service, thereby enhancing the overall quality and competitiveness of Nigerian higher education.

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Concluding Synthesis

The second edition of *Sustainable Education in Africa* advances the discourse on educational transformation by offering a deeper, more nuanced interrogation of the structural, technological, and socio-economic forces shaping education systems across Nigeria and the African continent. Building upon the foundations established in the first edition, this volume expands its analytical scope to incorporate emerging paradigms such as digital ecosystems, artificial intelligence–driven educational planning, climate-responsive education, and the evolving nexus between education, economic resilience, and sustainable development.

A cross-chapter synthesis reveals that sustainable education in Africa is no longer a singular policy objective but a dynamic, multi-layered process requiring systemic alignment across governance, infrastructure, pedagogy, and innovation ecosystems. The contributions collectively underscore that while technological advancements—particularly in digital learning platforms, data analytics, and artificial intelligence—offer unprecedented opportunities to enhance access, efficiency, and quality, their transformative potential remains contingent upon enabling environments characterized by robust infrastructure, policy coherence, institutional capacity, and equitable resource distribution.

The volume further highlights the persistence of entrenched structural challenges, including chronic underfunding, socio-economic inequalities, policy inconsistencies, insecurity, and weak institutional frameworks. These constraints continue to limit the scalability and sustainability of educational reforms. Notably, the second edition places greater emphasis on the interconnectedness of these challenges, illustrating how deficits in governance, economic stability, and social inclusion directly impact educational outcomes.

Importantly, this edition reframes education as a strategic driver of national competitiveness, innovation, and social cohesion within a rapidly changing global landscape. It reinforces the imperative for education systems to move beyond traditional models toward adaptive, inclusive, and future-oriented frameworks that are responsive to both global trends and localized realities.

Ultimately, this volume contributes to advancing scholarly and policy-oriented conversations by offering integrated insights that bridge theory, practice, and innovation. It serves as a critical resource for stakeholders seeking to navigate the complexities of educational transformation while fostering systems that are resilient, inclusive, and aligned with sustainable development imperatives.

Implications for Practice

Drawing from the expanded insights of this second edition, the following strategic implications are proposed for policymakers, educational leaders, practitioners, and development partners:

Policy Innovation and Systems Thinking:

Governments should adopt adaptive, data-driven policy frameworks that integrate sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusivity into long-term national development strategies. Emphasis should be placed on policy continuity, monitoring mechanisms, and cross-sectoral coordination.

Digital Transformation and Emerging Technologies:

There is an urgent need to scale investments in digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence applications, and smart learning environments. Educational systems must harness technology not only for access but also for personalized learning, predictive planning, and administrative efficiency.

Sustainable Financing Models:

Beyond traditional funding mechanisms, innovative financing approaches—including public-private partnerships, education bonds, and international development funding—should be explored to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience of education systems.

Capacity Development for the Future Workforce:

Continuous professional development must evolve to include digital competencies, interdisciplinary teaching approaches, and innovation-driven pedagogy. Educators should be equipped to prepare learners for emerging global labor markets.

Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice:

Policies and interventions must go beyond access to address systemic inequalities affecting marginalized groups, including gender disparities, rural-urban divides, and learners with special needs. Inclusive education should be embedded as a core principle rather than a peripheral objective.

Research, Data, and Evidence-Based Practice:

Institutions should strengthen research capacity and promote the use of real-time data analytics to inform decision-making, policy formulation, and educational innovation.

Strengthening Institutional Resilience:

Education systems must be designed to withstand disruptions such as economic shocks, pandemics, and conflicts by incorporating flexible delivery models, blended learning systems, and crisis-responsive policies.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:

Sustainable transformation requires coordinated engagement among governments, academia, industry, civil society, and international organizations to leverage expertise, resources, and innovation.

Editors' Note

The editors are pleased to present the second edition of *Sustainable Education in Africa*, which reflects an expanded and enriched body of knowledge responding to the evolving complexities of education systems within the continent.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the contributing authors whose scholarly contributions demonstrate exceptional rigor, depth, and forward-thinking perspectives. Their work not only builds upon the foundations of the first edition but also introduces new dimensions that address contemporary challenges and emerging opportunities in education.

We also acknowledge the invaluable role of peer reviewers, editorial board members, and institutional collaborators whose commitment to academic excellence has ensured the credibility, relevance, and quality of this publication. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping this volume into a comprehensive and impactful resource.

This second edition is conceived as more than an academic compilation; it is a strategic platform for advancing dialogue, informing policy, and inspiring innovation in education across Africa. It reflects our collective commitment to fostering educational systems that are inclusive, resilient, and aligned with sustainable development goals.

It is our expectation that this volume will serve as a catalyst for further research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and transformative action, ultimately contributing to the continuous evolution of education systems across the continent.