

# Transforming Nigeria's Education: Insights from Indonesia's Policy Reinforcement

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## ABSTRAK

Sistem pendidikan Nigeria masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan, seperti akses yang terbatas, kualitas pendidikan yang rendah, serta ketidaksetaraan dalam hasil belajar. Tantangan tersebut memerlukan reformasi kebijakan yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan dan mencapai tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji potensi transformasi sistem pendidikan Nigeria dengan mengambil pelajaran dari keberhasilan penguatan kebijakan pendidikan di Indonesia. Studi ini menggunakan metode analisis komparatif dengan menelaah elemen-elemen utama kebijakan pendidikan Indonesia, strategi implementasinya, serta dampaknya terhadap hasil pendidikan. Analisis dilakukan dengan mengeksplorasi persamaan dan perbedaan kontekstual antara kedua negara untuk mengidentifikasi praktik terbaik dan pelajaran yang dapat diterapkan di Nigeria. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai sumber, termasuk laporan kebijakan, studi akademik, dan publikasi resmi, yang dianalisis secara kualitatif untuk memberikan wawasan mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebijakan pendidikan Indonesia, seperti program wajib belajar, peningkatan kualitas guru, serta penguatan pendidikan vokasi, telah memberikan dampak positif terhadap akses dan kualitas pendidikan. Praktik-praktik ini dapat diadaptasi ke konteks Nigeria untuk mengatasi tantangan serupa. Namun, implementasi kebijakan di Nigeria memerlukan penyesuaian sesuai dengan kondisi sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya setempat. Sebagai simpulan, studi ini menegaskan bahwa reformasi kebijakan yang terarah dan berkelanjutan dapat membawa perubahan transformatif dalam sistem pendidikan suatu negara.

## ABSTRACT

The Nigerian education system continues to face numerous challenges, including limited access, poor educational quality, and inequalities in learning outcomes. These challenges necessitate effective policy reforms to enhance educational quality and achieve sustainable development goals. This study aims to examine the potential transformation of Nigeria's education system by drawing lessons from the success of educational policy reforms in Indonesia. The study employs a comparative analysis method by examining key elements of Indonesia's educational policies, their implementation strategies, and their impacts on educational outcomes. The analysis explores contextual similarities and differences between the two countries to identify best practices and transferable lessons for Nigeria. Data were gathered from various sources, including policy reports, academic studies, and official publications, and were qualitatively analyzed to provide in-depth insights. The findings reveal that Indonesia's educational policies, such as compulsory education programs, teacher quality improvement initiatives, and the strengthening of vocational education, have positively impacted both access to and quality of education. These practices can be adapted to Nigeria's context to address similar challenges. However, the implementation of such policies in Nigeria requires adjustments to suit the country's unique social, economic, and cultural conditions. In conclusion, this study emphasizes that well-directed and sustainable policy reforms can bring transformative changes to a country's education system.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian education system is presently encountering several hurdles that have obstructed its ability to offer high-quality education to its citizens. These complications vary from insufficient infrastructure to obsolete curricula, causing the Nigerian education system to struggle to keep up with the demands of a rapidly evolving global economy. Furthermore, problems such as inadequate funding, teacher shortages and limited access to modern teaching and learning resources have only worsened the challenges faced by the education sector in the country. Nigeria's education system confronts a prominent obstacle in the form of the arduous task of achieving access and parity. A significant challenge facing Nigeria's education system is the task of achieving access and parity. Consequently, a notable discrepancy in educational opportunities has transpired between urban and rural areas, broadening the divide between the privileged and underprivileged. Another critical challenge lies in the quality of education provided. The curriculum in numerous Nigerian schools is frequently outdated and fails to adequately prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce (Ahmadi & Lukman, 2015; Bandele & Faremi, 2012; Nkechinyere Amadi & Ememe, 2013; Okoye & Arimonu, 2016). Additionally, there seems to be a scarcity of competent and driven instructors, resulting in a deterioration of the overall quality of education that is being provided (Adeosun, 2014; Ojimba, 2012).

In addition, the issue of funding poses a significant barrier to enhancing the education system in Nigeria. The education sector in the country is severely underfunded, resulting in a lack of resources and infrastructure necessary for delivering high-quality education (Ajagbawa, 2014; Chineta, 2023; Jacob & Josiah, 2021; Muhammad & Kani, 2017). Hence, the nation is currently grappling with overcrowded classrooms, a scarcity of teaching materials, and a general decline in the quality of education. Given these challenges, Nigeria must seek inspiration and guidance from successful education models implemented in other countries. One such model that offers valuable insights is Indonesia's policy reinforcement in the education sector. Indonesia has made significant strides in transforming its education system, particularly in addressing issues of access, quality and funding (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020; Chu-Chang et al., 2013; Herman, 2023). Indonesia's experience can serve as a valuable case study for Nigeria as it seeks to reform its education system. By examining the policies and strategies implemented by Indonesia, Nigeria can gain valuable insights into how to address its education challenges effectively. Indonesia's education system has undergone a remarkable transformation, marked by a series of strategic reforms aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of education. One of the key initiatives was the implementation of the School Operational Assistance program, which aimed to improve the infrastructure and facilities in schools across the country (Manan, 2015; Sari, 2019). This program played a crucial role in addressing the issue of inadequate infrastructure, a challenge that is also prevalent in Nigeria's education system.

Furthermore, Indonesia focused on enhancing teacher quality and professional development through targeted training programs and improved incentives (Irmayani et al., 2018; Kusumawardhani, 2017; Sulisworo et al., 2016; I. G. A. L. P. Utami, 2015). This emphasis on empowering and equipping teachers with the necessary skills and resources has been instrumental in elevating the overall quality of education in the country. Another noteworthy aspect of Indonesia's education policy reinforcement is the emphasis on curriculum reform and the promotion of vocational and technical education (Ayub, 2017; Nurtanto et al., 2021; Ramadhan & Ramdani, 2014; Sensenig, 2012). By aligning the curriculum with the demands of the job market and offering diverse pathways for students to pursue, Indonesia has successfully catered to the varied needs and aspirations of its student population (Schleicher, 2015; Umami, 2018). The experiences of Indonesia in transforming its education system offer valuable insights for Nigeria as it seeks to address its education challenges. By critically examining the strategies and approaches that have proven effective in Indonesia, Nigeria can gain a deeper understanding of the potential pathways towards meaningful reform in its education sector. One of the primary lessons for Nigeria lies in the prioritization of infrastructure development and effective resource allocation.

Indonesia's School Operational Assistance program serves as a compelling example of how targeted investment in infrastructure can significantly improve the learning environment for students and the working conditions for teachers (Pramana et al., 2021). Indonesia's focus on enhancing teacher quality through training programs and improved incentives serves as a crucial pointer for Nigeria. By investing in the professional development of teachers and providing them with the necessary support and resources, Nigeria can elevate the standard of teaching and learning in its schools. The emphasis on curriculum reform and the promotion of vocational and technical education in Indonesia presents an important paradigm for Nigeria to consider. By aligning the curriculum with the evolving needs of the job market and offering diverse educational pathways, Nigeria can better equip its students for success in a rapidly changing economy. This study aims to examine the potential transformation of Nigeria's education system by drawing lessons from the success of educational policy reforms in Indonesia.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a comparative analysis method by examining the main elements of Indonesian education policy, its implementation strategies, and its impact on education outcomes. The analysis is conducted by exploring the contextual similarities and differences between the two countries to identify best practices and lessons that can be applied in Nigeria. In this context, this study seeks to compare education policy in Indonesia with education conditions in other countries, especially Nigeria, to assess the important elements of Indonesian education policy, its implementation strategies, and its impact on outcomes. This comparative method aims to explore the similarities and differences in the educational context between the two countries, hoping to find best practices implemented in Indonesia that may be applied in Nigeria to improve the quality of education there. This study identifies several key elements of Indonesian education policy, which can cover various aspects, such as education curriculum, education infrastructure, teaching methods, training for educators, evaluation systems, and the role of government in supporting the education sector. Data were collected from various sources, including policy reports, academic studies, and official publications, which were analyzed qualitatively to provide in-depth insights. In obtaining relevant and in-depth data, this study used various sources of information, including policy reports from the Indonesian government, published academic studies, and other official publications that can provide a more detailed picture of the implemented education policies. In addition, a qualitative approach was used to analyze the data. This means that researchers do not only look at data in numbers or statistics but rather emphasize a deep understanding of the context and impacts caused by the policy. Through qualitative analysis, researchers can explore how the education policy is perceived by related parties, such as teachers, students, parents, and the community, and how the policy interacts with social, economic, and cultural factors in Indonesia.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

First, strengthening Indonesian education policy. The state of education in Nigeria has long been a source of concern, with challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, outdated curriculum, and limited access to quality education plaguing the system. As the country seeks to address these issues and improve the overall quality of education, there is much to be learned from the experiences of other nations that have successfully implemented policy changes and reforms in their education systems. One such nation is Indonesia, which has undergone significant policy reinforcement in its education sector, yielding valuable insights that could inform Nigeria's efforts to transform its educational landscape. Before delving into the specifics of Indonesia's recent education policy reinforcement, it is essential to understand the state of the country's education system before the implementation of these reforms. Indonesia, like Nigeria, faced a myriad of challenges in its education sector. The system was characterized by overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a lack of modern educational resources. Additionally, disparities in access to education between urban and rural areas further exacerbated the existing inequalities within the system.

Despite these challenges, Indonesia recognized the critical importance of education in driving socio-economic development and sought to address these issues through targeted policy interventions. In response to the pressing need for comprehensive education reform, Indonesia embarked on a series of policy changes aimed at overhauling its education system. These reforms were designed to address the aforementioned challenges and improve the overall quality and accessibility of education across the country. One of the key initiatives introduced was the implementation of a more inclusive and equitable education system. This involved efforts to bridge the urban-rural education divide by prioritizing resource allocation to underserved areas and communities. Additionally, measures were taken to enhance the quality of teaching by investing in teacher training and professional development programs. By improving the skills and capabilities of educators, Indonesia aimed to elevate the standard of instruction and learning outcomes for students.

Furthermore, the reforms also focused on modernizing the curriculum to align with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). This entailed the integration of digital technologies and innovative teaching methodologies to enhance the learning experience and equip students with relevant skills for the future. Embracing a more holistic approach to education, Indonesia emphasized the importance of fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities among students, moving away from rote memorization and traditional pedagogical practices (Hapsarini et al., 2023; Siahaan et al., 2022). Moreover, Indonesia's education policy reinforced the significance of vocational and technical education, recognizing the value of equipping students with practical skills that are directly

applicable to the workforce. By offering diverse pathways for students to pursue their interests and talents, the reforms sought to cater to the evolving needs of the labour market and empower individuals with the tools to succeed in various professional domains. The policy changes and reforms implemented in Indonesia's education system offer valuable insights for Nigeria as it seeks to revitalize its educational landscape. By drawing lessons from Indonesia's experiences, Nigeria can identify strategies and best practices that align with its unique context and leverage them to drive meaningful and sustainable improvements in its education sector. As Nigeria endeavours to transform its education system, the lessons from Indonesia's policy reinforcement serve as a source of inspiration and guidance in the pursuit of educational excellence and equity. As Nigeria grapples with the challenges of an underperforming education system, it is imperative to seek inspiration from successful models around the world. Indonesia's remarkable strides in education policy reinforcement offer valuable insights that can potentially guide Nigeria towards a transformative journey in its educational landscape.

One of the pivotal initiatives undertaken by Indonesia to bolster its education system was the significant increase in budget allocation (Afkar et al., 2020). This strategic move enabled the government to address critical areas such as infrastructure development, teacher training programs and educational resource provisions. In Nigeria, a similar approach could catalyze driving substantial improvements in the quality and accessibility of education across the nation. Indonesia's emphasis on enhancing the quality of its educators through comprehensive training programs has yielded commendable results. By prioritizing professional development and pedagogical excellence, the Indonesian education system has witnessed a marked enhancement in teaching standards, ultimately benefiting the learning outcomes of students. For Nigeria, prioritizing the continuous training and support of teachers can be pivotal in nurturing a skilled and motivated cadre of educators who can propel the country towards educational excellence. A crucial facet of Indonesia's education policy reinforcement was the concerted focus on infrastructure development. The creation of modern, well-equipped learning spaces has not only facilitated improved academic delivery but has also contributed to fostering a conducive and inspiring environment for students. As Nigeria grapples with infrastructural deficits in its educational institutions, drawing from Indonesia's success can provide a roadmap for creating learning environments that stimulate curiosity, innovation, and holistic development. Indonesia's unwavering commitment to education policy reinforcement has borne fruit in the form of tangible improvements in its education system. From enhanced student performance to increased enrollment rates, the positive outcomes stand as a testament to the effectiveness of the implemented initiatives. By leveraging these successes as a source of inspiration, Nigeria can chart a course towards replicating and adapting strategies that align with its unique socio-cultural context. Furthermore, Indonesia's journey offers a compelling narrative of the power of collaboration and innovation in driving educational reform. By fostering partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academia and the private sector, Indonesia has been able to harness a wealth of expertise and resources to fortify its education sector. Nigeria can draw from this example by fostering a culture of collaboration and embracing innovative approaches that transcend traditional paradigms.

Second, Lessons for Nigeria. Education is the cornerstone of national development, serving as the bedrock upon which a prosperous and sustainable society is built. In recent years, Nigeria has been striving to revamp its education system to meet the challenges of the 21st century, drawing inspiration from successful models around the world. One such model that has garnered significant attention is Indonesia's education system, which has undergone substantial policy reinforcement in the past few decades. By comparing and contrasting the education systems of Nigeria and Indonesia, valuable insights can be gleaned to inform the ongoing efforts to transform Nigeria's education landscape. Nigeria and Indonesia, two populous and diverse nations, share common challenges in their education systems, including issues related to access, quality and relevance. Both countries have made significant strides in expanding access to education, yet they continue to grapple with disparities in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, the quality of education and its alignment with the needs of the labour market remain pressing concerns. In this context, Indonesia's experiences in policy reinforcement offer pertinent lessons for Nigeria.

Indonesia has made trivial strides in the field of curriculum development, especially in the area of curriculum creation and application. The nation has implemented measures to update its curriculum, with a particular emphasis on improving students' analytical thinking skills, encouraging innovation, and fostering digital literacy. This adjustment is a reply to the progressing demands of the global economy. In contrast, Nigeria has encountered challenges in maintaining the relevance of its curriculum. Criticism has been directed towards Nigeria's curriculum for its failure to adequately prepare learners for the workforce and its disconnect from real-world demands. Nigeria stands to benefit from embracing a more dynamic and responsive approach to curriculum development, drawing lessons from Indonesia's experience. This does not warrant a reassessment of the courses provided, the teaching methods used, and the incorporation of

technology in the classroom. Additionally, enhancing closer industry-educational collaboration and curriculum alignment with market demands can help increase the employability of Nigerian graduates.

Another area of convergence between Nigeria and Indonesia lies in the realm of teacher development and capacity building. In both countries, the quality of teaching has a direct bearing on the overall quality of education. Indonesia's concerted efforts to improve the recruitment, training, and professional development of teachers have yielded positive outcomes, contributing to a more effective and motivated teaching workforce. By contrast, Nigeria has faced persistent challenges in ensuring the continuous professional growth of its educators, leading to variations in teaching quality across different regions. Emulating Indonesia's approach to teacher development, Nigeria can prioritize ongoing training, mentorship programs and performance incentives to enhance the capabilities and morale of its teachers. Investing in the recruitment of high-quality educators and providing them with the necessary support and resources can catalyze improvements in student learning outcomes and overall educational attainment. Furthermore, Indonesia's successful experiences in decentralizing decision-making processes in education governance can offer valuable insights for Nigeria. By granting greater autonomy to local authorities and educational institutions, Indonesia has fostered innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced at the grassroots level. In contrast, Nigeria's centralized education governance structure has been criticized for its limited adaptability to local contexts and its potential to impede efficient resource allocation and policy implementation.

As Nigeria seeks to revitalize its education system, it can draw valuable insights from the experiences of other countries that have successfully implemented policy reforms. Indonesia, in particular, has made significant strides in improving its education sector through strategic policy initiatives and a strong emphasis on stakeholder collaboration. By examining Indonesia's approach, Nigeria can identify specific reforms and best practices that could be adapted to its context, ultimately paving the way for a more effective and inclusive education system. One of the key areas where Nigeria can learn from Indonesia is in the realm of specific policy initiatives and reforms. Indonesia's commitment to education was exemplified by its implementation of the School Operational Assistance program which provided financial support to public schools based on the number of students enrolled. This incentivized schools to attract and retain students, ultimately improving access to quality education. Additionally, Indonesia's efforts to decentralize its education system, giving more autonomy to local governments and schools, contributed to greater flexibility and responsiveness to local needs. Nigeria could explore similar decentralization efforts to empower its states and local communities to address specific challenges and opportunities within their education systems.

Furthermore, Indonesia's focus on teacher professional development and capacity building has been instrumental in improving the quality of education. Nigeria can benefit from adopting similar initiatives to enhance the skills and expertise of its educators, ultimately raising the standard of teaching across the country. Beyond specific policy initiatives, Nigeria can also gain valuable insights from Indonesia's emphasis on political will and stakeholder collaboration in driving successful education reforms. Indonesia's commitment to education was evident through sustained investment and prioritization of the sector, demonstrating the crucial role of political leadership in effecting change. Moreover, Indonesia's approach to engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, fostered a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives and expertise contributed to the success of education reforms. Nigeria can leverage this lesson by fostering partnerships and dialogue among various stakeholders to ensure that reforms are inclusive, responsive and sustainable. In considering Indonesia's experiences, Nigeria stands to benefit from a strategic and holistic approach to education reform. By examining specific policy initiatives such as the School Operational Assistance program and the decentralization of the education system, Nigeria can identify actionable strategies to enhance access, quality, and relevance of education across the country. Furthermore, Nigeria can draw inspiration from Indonesia's emphasis on political will and stakeholder collaboration, recognizing the pivotal role of leadership and partnership in driving meaningful change. As Nigeria navigates its education transformation journey, these lessons from Indonesia can serve as a guiding light, offering valuable insights and best practices to inform the country's reform efforts.

Third, Implementing Change in Nigeria's Education System. Nigeria's educational system has long needed improvement. The nation's education system has had difficulty giving learners a high-quality education due to several issues, including missing facilities, poor teacher preparation programs, and tight financial constraints. There is, nevertheless, promise as Nigeria attempts to absorb lessons from Indonesia's effective policy enforcement. Nigeria may significantly enhance its educational system by incorporating Indonesia's strategies into its own. In recent times, Indonesia has experienced a notable metamorphosis of its educational system, leading to notable advancements in the nation's ability to provide its populace with high-quality education. The government's dedication to enforcing policies, which has included taking a

comprehensive approach to tackling the different issues the education sector faces, has been essential to this accomplishment. Indonesia has found that concentrating on the construction of infrastructure is one of its most effective policies. The government realized how important it is to have well-equipped schools to give learners a comfortable learning environment. By investing in the construction and renovation of schools, Indonesia was able to improve access to education and create spaces that fostered learning and growth.

To raise the standard of education, Indonesia gave priority to teacher training in addition to infrastructural development. Since teachers are the backbone of the educational system, the government has developed extensive training programs to give them the abilities and know-how to impart knowledge and skills efficiently. The quality of education in Indonesia has significantly improved as a result of the emphasis on professional development since qualified and empowered educators are better able to develop each student's potential. Additionally, Indonesia raised the amount of money allotted to education in its budget, realizing the crucial role that sufficient funding plays in bringing about significant change. By making educational investments, the government demonstrated that it was committed to putting human capital development first and laying the groundwork for a society that is both prosperous and just. There are important lessons to be learned from Indonesia's educational strategy as Nigeria attempts to revamp its system. It may be possible to make noticeable advancements in the standard of education throughout Nigeria by applying the effective tactics used by Indonesia.

Nigeria has to make filling in the infrastructure gaps its top priority. Basic facilities including electricity, running water, and functional classrooms are absent from many of the nation's schools. Nigeria may establish a favourable learning environment that encourages student involvement and academic performance by investing in infrastructural development. Another important area Nigeria should prioritize is teacher training investments. Since teachers are the backbone of the educational system, it is crucial to provide them with the tools they need to improve student results. Nigeria can improve overall educational quality and raise the bar for teachers by putting in place extensive professional development programs. Lastly, to bring about significant change, funding for education must be increased. Nigeria has to make education a top priority when making financial decisions because it knows that spending money on education will pay off in the long run by producing a workforce that is both talented and productive and will also contribute to a wealthier society.

## Discussion

By examining the cultural and contextual variations in the execution of reforms and anticipating possible obstacles, Nigeria can revamp its educational system by taking cues from Indonesia's effective policy reinforcement in the field of education. By incorporating local cultural elements into the curriculum and investing in infrastructure and technology, Nigeria can create a more inclusive and effective education system that meets the needs of its diverse population. Engaging stakeholders and fostering a sense of ownership will be crucial in overcoming resistance to change and ensuring the successful implementation of reforms (Obiakor & Adeniran, 2020; Omilani et al., 2019). When the proper plans are put in place, Nigeria can look to Indonesia for inspiration and direction on its path to improve education. It is imperative to take into account the cultural and contextual distinctions between Indonesia and Nigeria while proposing changes to the country's educational system. Similar difficulties in incorporating many cultural viewpoints into its educational system have been faced by Indonesia, an archipelago of varied islands with a rich tapestry of customs and civilizations. Nigeria, a nation with over 250 ethnic groups, many different languages, and diverse cultural customs, can learn a lot from this experience. The Indonesian government has realized that to give learners a more relevant and meaningful education, it is critical to include aspects of the local culture in the curriculum (Herminingrum & Junining, 2016; Samri et al., 2020; Suardana et al., 2018; Tohri et al., 2022). Students with diverse cultural origins now feel more included and a part of the school community thanks to this approach (Agusman et al., 2018; Hadiano et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2018). This strategy can help Nigeria by ensuring that its educational reforms consider the cultural variety of the nation. Nigeria may develop a more inclusive and culturally sensitive educational system by incorporating regional knowledge, languages and customs into the curriculum.

Implementing education reforms in Nigeria will undoubtedly come with its own set of challenges. The absence of sufficient resources and infrastructure, especially in rural and underprivileged areas, is one of the main problems. Similar issues were encountered by Indonesia, which overcame them by making strategic investments in technology and infrastructure and by utilizing public-private partnerships to increase access to high-quality education (Tanang et al., 2014; E. Utami, 2020; Yustika et al., 2019). Nigeria should prioritize infrastructure development and make technology investments to close the digital divide, just like Indonesia has done. Nigeria can raise funds to upgrade educational facilities, give instructors access to digital resources, and retrain educators in contemporary pedagogy by collaborating with the commercial

sector and foreign organizations. Opposition to reform from different education system stakeholders is another possible problem. As demonstrated by Indonesia's experience, gaining support for reforms requires interacting with stakeholders, such as educators, parents, and community leaders. Nigeria might adopt a similar strategy by including interested parties in the reform process, encouraging accountability and ownership and confronting issues head-on through candid discussion and open communication.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Nigeria can glean valuable insights from Indonesia's successful education policy reinforcement to transform its education. The key insights from Indonesia's experience highlight the potential for Nigeria to enhance its education sector and drive sustainable development and inclusive growth. The decentralization of Indonesia's education system, empowering local governments and communities to play a more active role in shaping education policies and initiatives, presents an opportunity for Nigeria to strengthen grassroots involvement and ownership in education reform. This bottom-up approach can foster tailored solutions that address the unique challenges faced by different regions within Nigeria, driving localized impact and sustainable progress. As Nigeria stands at a critical juncture in its quest for socio-economic advancement, policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize education reform as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development.

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