

Brief History

In 2018, the University of Nigeria (UNN) signed a partnership agreement with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). The partnership was then anchored in the Department of Public Administration and Local Government and Professor Chikelue Ofuebe, the then Head of Department, was appointed the Director of UNICEF-supported programmes and projects. One of the core components of UNICEF-supported programmes in UNN is Social Policy. Social Policy programme provides cross-cutting support at federal and state levels for social protection, research and evidence generation on child poverty, support for public investment in children, and decentralization. To this end, UNICEF collaborates with the academia to generate evidence-based knowledge that continues to inform policy dialogues, advocacy efforts, as well as programme redesign, planning and implementation.

The UNICEF and UNN conceived the idea of the exigency and necessity for postgraduate Social Policy programmes in Nigerian Universities, and organized a Consultative Forum for University Policy Makers comprising Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Postgraduate Schools and Deans of Faculties of Social Sciences drawn from twelve universities (two Universities in each geo-political zone of the country), at Nike Lake Resort Hotel, Enugu, from Monday, September 10 to Friday, September 14 2018. The Consultative Forum interrogated the idea and took a stand that each University takes action as deemed fit. The Forum appreciated the identified manpower gap in the country in the area of social policy programming, as only one University in the country was running a professional Master of Social Policy, and agreed that postgraduate degree programmes in Social Policy, namely Postgraduate Diploma (PGD), professional Master in Social Policy (MSP), and Master of Science (M.Sc) in Social Policy, would be a worthwhile idea for the universities and recommended its establishment in the respective institutions as appropriate. In recognition of the urgency and importance of this decision, UNICEF supported the UNN to hold a successful Workshop at Nike Lake Resort Hotel, Enugu, where reputable academics were invited to develop a draft curriculum for postgraduate degree programmes in Social Policy for further necessary action.

As a result, the University of Nigeria formalized the postgraduate degree programmes in Social Policy in the institution, offering Postgraduate Diploma (PGD), professional Master of Social Policy (MSP), and Master of Science in Social Policy (M.Sc). Arising from the successful take-off of the PGD, MSP and M.Sc programmes in Social Policy, the quest for higher knowledge in Social Policy embedded in practice and research motivated UNN to inaugurate a team of University academics, representatives from the National Universities Commission (NUC) and social policy experts to develop a curriculum for Ph.D in Social Policy from 24th to 30th September, 2023 at Nike Lake Resort Hotel, Enugu, Nigeria, with support from UNICEF. With the programme fully developed, The University Senate in its 416th Meeting in October 2003 approved the establishment of the Institute of Social Policy to provide a more focused attention to the running of the social programmes. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Charles Arizechukwu Igwe has graciously appointed Professor Okey Marcellus Ikeanyibe to pioneer the take of the Institute for 2023/2024 Academic session. The UNN is grateful to UNICEF for organizing a series of training programmes for lecturers of the institution in concerted efforts to enhance their knowledge in Social Policy, promoting inclusion and contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.