

THE ESTABLISHMENT, MANDATE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE NIGERIA FRENCH LANGUAGE VILLAGE, AJARA- BADAGRY, LAGOS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to give historical account of the Establishment and Mandate of the Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV), Ajara- Badagry, Lagos State. The Nigeria French Language Village was established as result of the general downward trend in global economy in the '80s which was having a steady declining effect on the value of Nigerian currency (the naira) and this made it impossible for Nigerian undergraduates of French studies to attend the mandatory one-year Language Immersion Programme in Francophone African and European countries. The study relied on secondary data. The study shows that NFLV has over the years witnessed tremendous progress in terms of transforming its organizational structure, infrastructural development and the Language Immersion Programme (LIP), the main purpose for the creation of NFLV. Other customized programmes have been created over the years. However, some challenges encountered include poor allocation of fund and grants from the Federal Government of Nigeria and donor agencies as well as the low level of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). It is therefore recommended that the Federal government should ensure adequate funding of the NFLV so that the institution could fulfill its mandate. Also, the Federal Executive Council in conjunction with the law makers should make a law prohibiting all Vice-Chancellors of Universities and Provosts of Colleges of Education who have Departments of French in their institutions, to send their student across the border to francophone countries for LIP. This would help boost the level of the Internally Generated Revenue.

Keywords: *Establishment, Mandate, Organizational Structure, Nigeria French Language Village.*

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in the African continent. The country is surrounded by four (4) francophone countries namely, Niger in the North-West, Cameroon in the East, Chad in the North-East, Benin in the West. Nigeria needs to fraternize with these countries from the economic, political

and social perspectives as to pave the way for national and regional integration which could promote trade, tourism and industry among others. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has its official headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. For discussions on international cooperation to be effective, the knowledge of spoken and written French is a *sine qua non*.

The West African sub-region is comprised 15 countries out of which 9 are French speaking countries with Mauritania being the only non-ECOWAS state as shown in Figure 1 below. This means that Africa is the continent with the highest number of French speaking countries in the world. According to (Sabo, 2010), objectives of regional integration helps to foster unity, understanding and cooperation to achieve specific goals and objectives without barriers. One of the known facts of barriers lingering in ECOWAS is that of the French language. The Federal Government of Nigeria considered it expedient that the learning of French by majority of Nigerians, especially at the administrative and policy-making levels, would ease the problem of barrier of communication with ECOWAS member states. The Federal Government posited that Nigeria would regain her lost glory in the comity of nations considering the learning of French.



Figure 1.0: Map of West Africa
 Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (2012)

The Establishment of the Nigeria French Language Village

Up to the '70s, the Federal Government of Nigeria with the assistance of the French Government took up the responsibility of sponsoring foreign-based programmes. Majority of the students from Universities and Colleges of Education in Nigeria were sent to Language Centres in Francophone countries to study French like in the "Village du Benin" Togo.

However, the general downward trend of the global economy in the '80s led to the devaluation of our currency (the Naira) and lack of financial capacity of parents to sponsor their children to study French. It became therefore difficult to remit money to those foreign institutions for the payment of fees of Nigerian students. Consequently, the then Honorable Minister of Education, Professor Jubril Aminu, set up a task force to work out a domestic alternative to the Year- Abroad programme for undergraduates of French (Government Circular, 1998). The result of series of consultations, action committees and fact-finding tours made by the Task- force gave birth to the Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV, 2005). Professor Babatunde Fafunwa also set up a committee that saw to the implementation of the recommendations of the committee earlier set up by his predecessor. (Government circular, 1990).

The timely intervention of the Federal Government to set up the Nigeria French Language Village in 1991 to provide a simulation for the "French Year-Abroad" programme was the first and most pragmatic as well as the most committed policy of the Federal Government on French. This led to the introduction of the Language Immersion Programme (LIP) in the Nigeria French Language Village, Ajara-Badagry, The Village was established in 1991 by the Federal Government. The LIP serves as a statutory requirement for the award of First Degree in French in Nigerian Universities while the Acculturation Programme is for Colleges of Education students is equally mandatory for the award of Nigerian Certificate in Education.

Furthermore, the pronouncement made by the then Head of State General Sani Abacha, that "French should be the Second Official language in Nigeria", activities of the Nigeria French Language Village began on the site of the former Government Teachers College which was handed over to the Nigeria French Language Village by the Lagos State government under Colonel Raji Razaki in September 1991. The site is located in Ajara, which is about 2Km from Badagry, along the Lagos- Badagry express way. According to Rotimi (ND), the site has an area of 14.152 hectares (Government Circular, 1991; (Guardian, 1996).

Mission and Vision of the Nigeria French Language Village

The NFLV was established with the aim to achieve the following missions and visions as stated in the NFLV “Mission and Vision Statement Booklet, 2016 on page (i) of the Students’ Handbook.

Mission

“To develop an outstanding center of excellence for the study, research and development of French in Nigeria using skilled and innovative personnel and applying appropriate modern technology and teaching methodology to foster a culture of transnational bilingualism for nation building, regional integration as well as international cooperation and understanding” (NFLV Mission and Vision Statement Booklet, 2016)

Vision

“To empower all persons irrespective of age, culture, creed or sex, with appropriate communication skills in the effective use of French language at both professional and inter-personal levels”.

The Mandate of the Nigeria French Language Village

The Nigeria French Language Village is a simulated environment for the teaching and learning of French. The mandate of Nigeria French Language Village encapsulates the following functional objectives, according to the Bill 2021 establishing the Nigeria French Language Village.

- i. To provide domestic alternative to the erstwhile foreign-based year-abroad programme for under-graduates of French in Nigerian tertiary institutions, precisely in universities and in Colleges of Education,
- ii. Service Tertiary institutions in Nigeria with adequate human, material and infrastructural backing for effective teaching, learning as well as conduct of research in French,
- iii. To make the Village, the resource centre for specialized professional services to the public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy,
- iv. To offer specialized courses at various levels in addition to Language Immersion Programmes,
- v. Explore areas of practical application of the French language to the Nigerian situation,
- vi. Promote economic, technical and social integration of the African Continent,

- vii. Provide information and serve as think-tank to Government and other relevant corporate entities on the exploration and exploitation of the French Language in policy formulation and decision-making,
- viii. Co-ordinate activities relating to the teaching and learning of French in Nigeria,
- ix. Collaborate with relevant agencies in the setting and conduct of examinations, preparations of curricula as well as vital documentation on the French Language in Nigeria,
- x. Re-train Teachers of French for the implementation of the policy directive on French in Nigerian Secondary schools.

Besides, the Nigeria French Language Village provides courses of instruction and other facilities for the pursuit of the learning of French in Tertiary institutions. Such special purposes courses currently prepare all categories of learners in the Village to:

- i. speak French fluently,
- ii. acquire proficiency in French,
- iii. acquire competency in the writing of the French language,
- iv. translate from French language into English and vice-versa,
- v. eventually interpret simultaneously and consecutively in French with reference to English.

In this regard, NFLV could further assist to:

- i. develop appropriate curricula to meet the needs of the various private learners and participants in the institutions' programmes,
- ii. provide facilities for the training and re-training of French language Teachers/;
- iii. serve as a centre for the exchange of information and sourcing research in the area of French studies,
- iv. co-ordinate the implementation of policies of the Federal Government as they relate to French as a second official language,
- v. run specialized post-Graduate programmes in French in all areas of National interests (without duplicating existing courses in conventional Universities) (NFLV Mandate, 2016)

Organizational Structure of the Nigeria French Language Village

After its establishment in 1991, the organizational structure of the institution began with the members of management staff which comprised of the

Director/CEO, Registrar and Bursar. Departments were equally created and they include the Directorate, Registry, Bursary, the Academics, Works & Services and Health Services. However, after many years of its existence and with many inputs made by various administrations and members of staff, the organizational structure of NFLV was reformed in line with modern trends in university administration in Nigeria. The current organogram is as presented in Figure 2.

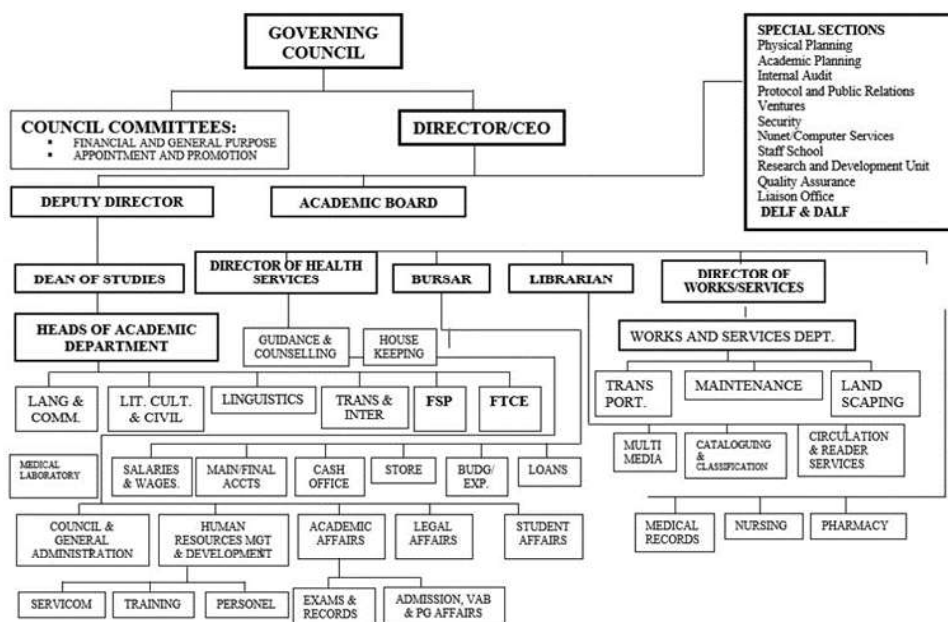


Figure 2: Organizational Structure of the Nigeria French Language Village

The Governing Council

The constitution of members of NFLV governing council i.e. from 1st to 5th Village Governing Council according to NFLV Registry COGA (2021) are as follows:

1. 1st Regular Governing Council

The first Governing Council was inaugurated in 1992 with the following members

- i. Prof. Ayo Banjo - Chairman
- ii. Mrs. A.A Kafaru - Member (International Education, FME)
- iii. Dr. J.B. Ashiko - Member (HOD, French, ABU)
- iv. Prof. Sola Oke - Member (HOD, French, LASU)

- v. Mr. B. Naguara - Member (Deputy Provost, COE, Hong)
- vi. Mr. J.A. Fagbohun - bMember (President, NAFTA)
- vii. Amb. Adamu Bulkachuwa - Member
- viii. Chief (Mrs.) Laide Soyinka - Member (University Librarian, OOU,)
- ix. Prof. S. Ade-Ojo - Member (Director & Chief Executive, NFLV)
- x. Mrs. Temi Sonuga - Secretary (Registrar, NFLV, Badagry)

2. 2nd Regular Governing Council:

The second Regular Governing Council of the Nigeria French Language Village was inaugurated in November, 2005 with the following external members:

- i. Hon. N.U.Roni (North.) - The Chairman
- ii. Alhaji A. Ahmed (North) - Federal Government nominee
- iii. Mrs. H. Adamu (North) - Federal Government nominee
- iv. Chief E. Okoro (East) - Federal Government nominee
- v. Mrs. E. Omole (West) - Federal Government nominee
- vi. Mr. A Agbaoye/ Dr. E. Iyela - NUC Representative
(There is always one representation at a time)
- vii. Mrs. C.C. Uzor - FME Representative

3. 3rd Regular Governing Council:

The third Regular Governing Council of the Nigeria French Language Village was inaugurated in March, 2009. At inception in 2009, Council was made up of six (6) external members and nine (9) internal members. However, with the retirement of Elder Luke W. Kwagga, the FME Rep, the Council was left with five external members. The external members are listed below

- i. Hon. P.E. Orji (East) - The Chairman
 - ii. Prince U.K. Ibiam (East) - Federal Government nominee
 - iii. Alh, M. Waziri (North East) - Federal Government nominee
 - iv. Chief Mrs. R.A. Adiukwu-Bakare (West) -Federal Government nominee
 - v. Elder L.D.W. Kwagga (2009-2010)
 - vi. Mrs. S.O. Onuoha (2010-2011)
 - vii. Dr. (Mrs.) Ukpong (2011)
 - viii. Barr. M.O. Awe
- } FME Representatives
- } - NUC Representative

4. 4th Regular Governing Council

The 4th regular Governing Council inaugural meeting was held on Friday, 13th December 2013. Mrs. Sally Egbogu was nominated by the house, as the Ag. Chairman of Council, as the Chairman-designate, Mr. Emmanuel Edoho Eket died. In 2015 Bar Madugu Bashir was appointed as the substantive Chairman

of the 4th regular Council and he presided over Council meetings of Wednesday 29th April 2015 and Tuesday 19th May 2015 before the Councils of Federal tertiary institutions were dissolved.

- i. Barr. Maidugu Bashir (North) - The Chairman
- ii. Alhaji Abbas Tijanni Hasshim (North) - Federal Government nominee
- iii. Mrs. Sally Egbogu (East) - Federal Government nominee
- iv. Mrs. Rebecca Ogundare (West) - Federal Government nominee
- v. Mr. E.I. Evong/ Mr. Awa Arua - FME Representative
- vi. Barr. M.O. Awe - NUC Representative

5. 5th Regular Governing Council

The 5th regular Governing Council of the Nigeria French Language Village was inaugurated in March 22, 2018. The 5th Regular Governing Council began with Prof Saliba Mukoro as its Chairman but he resigned his appointment on September, 30th 2019. The FME representative also was replaced and a new Director/CEO in the person of Professor R. A. Adebisi assumed duties in the Village and the Congregation also elected a new member.

- i. Prof. Saliba Mukoro - (Chairman but later resigned)
- ii. Prof. Shettima U. Bulakarima - Ag. Chairman
- iii. Prof. Grace Offorma - Member
- iv. Prof. Tunde Fatunde - Member
- v. Prof. Mac. Araromi - Member
- vi. Barr Oluwagbemisola Ajibade - FME Rep 2018-2020
- vii. Mrs. Abosede J. Olayiwola - FME Rep 2020 till date

Statutory members other than those to be appointed by the MDAs and Professional/Stakeholder Organizations as stipulated by the law, include the following.

- i. Director/Chief Executive of the NFLV
- ii. Deputy Director, NFLV
- iii. The Registrar, who shall act as Secretary to the Council.
- iv. One representative of Village Academic Board (Equivalent of Senate)
- v. One representative of the Congregation.
- vi. The Ag. Librarian is in attendance
- vii. The Bursar is in attendance

The governing council members are appointed by the federal government and they are the eye of the Minister of Education who reports directly to President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The duty of the Council is regulatory; to oversee the affairs of the institution under its jurisdiction. The

tenure ranges from two to four years. The management of the Village reports to Council on all matters that relate to the activities of the institution. Appointment and promotions of staff are ratified by the Council on the recommendations of management before they become valid.

The Principal Officers

The principal officers who were the members of Management then were three.

1. Prof. Samuel Adejo - Director/Chief Executive Officer
2. Dr (Mrs) Temi Sonuga - Registrar
3. Mrs. R. A. Akindipe - Senior Accountant/Ag. Bursar

This remained till 2004 when Management was expanded and other administrative structures rejigged. The number of departments at the time were 6 (non academic departments) one academic department and one academic unit. With the expansion initiated by Prof. S.O. Aje, the number of departments became 13 with 6 non academic departments, 7 academic departments and 3 accademic units.

Furthermore, Management was expanded with the inclusion of the following officers.

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Director-General | Prof. S. O. Aje |
| 2. Deputy Director-General | Prof. A. B. Adejumo |
| 3. Registrar | Barr. Remi Fatunwase |
| 4. Bursar | Mrs R. A. Akindipe |
| 5. Director of Works | Eng. F. A. Omotuyi |
| 6. Head of Library | Mr. A. A. Adejo |
| 7. Coordinator of Studies | Dr. Affin Laditan |

Internal members were also represented on council. This was created by Prof. S. O. Aje in 2005. There were two members representing the Village Academic Board (VAB) and one member representing Village in the congregation.

The Core Departments in the Nigeria French Language Village

i. The Directorate

The Director/Chief Executive is appointed by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He reports directly to the president through the Minister of Education. As the Chief Executive, he oversees the day-to-day running of the instutituion. All the

members of staff report to him through their various Head of Departments. He is the overall chairman of all statutory committees in the institution.

The Directorate was headed by the Pioneer Director Prof. S. A. Adejo after the creation of NFLV in January 1991. His administration spanned for the period of 12 years. As at then, units were created under the Directorate for smooth and effective running of activities. These units, were Audit, Academic Planning and Consultancy Services. The staff primary school created in the year 2000 was done by his administration. With his assumption of office in 2003, the Federal Ministry of Education proposed that for effective administration of government agencies and inter-universities centers, all Directors heading such organizations should be addressed as Director-General and they should head other directors in the organization (Government Circular, 2003). With this, Prof. S.O Aje became the Director-General NFLV for a period of 10 years.

During his administration, a new administrative structure was put in place as could be seen in Figure 2.0. His era equally saw the creation of expanded management, this brought in the Ag. Librarian and the Director of Works to Management. It equally saw the creation of the office of Coordinator of Studies (now the Dean of Studies as in universities) and Coordinator of Students' Affairs (now the Dean of Student Affairs as in universities), Coordinator of NFLV Clinic (now Director of Health Services) and Coordinator of Works and Services (now Director of Works and Services). He equally established the French Village Ventures limited, a limited liability company which houses the French Village International College and other business plan outlines. After a successful completion of his tenure in the year 2013, the mantle of leadership of the NFLV fell on Prof. Rauf Adebisi who became the Director/CEO for the period of 5 years. The administrative and infrastructural development witnessed during his tenure was the creation of the Abuja Liaison Office. Currently, Prof. Babatunde Ayeleru is the Director/CEO of the NFLV. Since his assumption of duty in February 2020 till date, he has been trying all his best to reposition the NFLV in terms of administrative and infrastructural development.

ii. The Registry

The Registrar is appointed by the Governing Council of the NFLV. He is incharge of the general administration of the institution. Apart from the general administration, the Registrar is equally a Principal Officer of the institution and also the Secretary to the Governing Council. The appointment

is for a period of five (5) years in the first instance, and it could be renewed for one (1) year only. The Department kicked off with the following units: Council & General Administration, Personnel, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and House-Keeping. The first Registrar was Dr. (Mrs.) Temi Sonuga. She worked under the Pioneer Director/CEO to ensure that the NFLV had a sound administrative footing. After the completion of her tenure, the Registry Department had a substantive registrar, Barrister Remi Fatunawase under the Administration of Prof. S. O. Aje. It was during the tenure that the Registry Department were expanded to consist of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD), Legal Affairs, Quality Assurance and Servicom, Training and Council Affairs. His tenure spanned to the administration of Prof. Rauf Adebisi. However, after his tenure, Mr. Maurice Michael Uko was appointed as the substantive Registrar from May 2016-2021. His tenure as a Registrar has transformed the administration of the NFLV to a real structure as obtained in the university system.

iii. The Bursary

The Bursar is appointed by the Governing Council of the NFLV and he/she reports all financial matters of the establishment to the Director/Chief Executive. The Bursar is the Chief Finance Officer of the institution and is equally a Principal Officer of the institution. He/she gives a weekly financial report to the Chief Executive Officer of the institution. The Bursar receives all incomes that come to NFLV and reports same to the Director/Chief Executive. The bursar prepares expenditures for the institution and all expenditures to be incurred must be approved by the Director/Chief Executive. The appointment is for a period of five (5) years in the first instance and it could be renewed for one (1) year and no more.

The Bursary was headed by Mrs. Roda Akindipe-Falade, who was appointed as a Senior Accountant/Ag. Bursar. She rose through the ranks to the position of a substantive Bursar in 2001, and the tenure ended on 15th March 2011. The department initially started with three (3) units, Salaries & Wages, Cash Office, Stores. However, as a result of expansion of the department, other units were later created. The mantle of leadership in the Bursary Department was taken over by Mr. John Obiahu first on acting capacity from 16th March 2010 to 30th September 2011. During his tenure which spanned for the period of 6 years, the Bursary Department witnessed great transformation. Furthermore, after his successful completion of the tenure, Mr. M. O. Odetola who succeeded him as Deputy/Acting Bursar was later appointed as the substantive Bursar of NFLV in the year 2018 to date.

iv. The Library Department

The Librarian is appointed by the Governing Council of the Nigeria French Language Village. He is incharge of the general administratrion of the NFLV's library. The Librarian is equally a Principal Officer of the institution and also answerable to the Director/Chief Executive Officer and the Governing Council. The appointment of the Librarian is for a period of five (5) years in the first instance and could be renewed for one (1) year and no more.

The Library Department was established in 1992 as a unit under the then Academic Department of the NFLV. After its establishment, the French Government, through its embassy in Nigeria, sent some personnel from France to run the library with some Nigerians. According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the French Government and the Nigerian Government in 1992, the French Government was to send learning resources and teaching equipment including French Experts in various fields. This led to the sending of co-operant (youth corpers/ Peace Corps) to work in the French Village Library. These Experts then included Monsieurs Flavien, Jerome and Michel in the years 1992, 1993 and 1994 respectively. Educational institutions and agencies in France also sent print and non-print resources to the library. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) equally donated volumes of encyclopaedia to the Library. The library became a full-fledged department in 2003. Before then, it was a unit under the then Academic Department.

Furthermore, the French Government donated print (books) and non-print (audio-visual) resources to the library. In addition to the donation from the French Government, the Nigerian-Government through the National Universities Commission (NUC) then gave fund allocation through the Education Trust Fund (ETF) now Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to procure books and other learning resources. As could be seen in the Nigeria French Village internal memo (2003) presented in figure 2.0, the Library Department reports directly to the Director-General as done in the universities where the librarian reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The library units are Cataloguing and Classification, Circulation and the Multi-media. It equally has the Bindery and Reference Sections. The Library Department had since then been headed by Dr. A. A. Adejo, who is the current acting librarian. The Llibrary is a prototype of what is obtainable in special libraries in France. Its collections are arranged serially according to all aspects of human endeavours. They are catalogued and classified using the Dewy Decimal Classification

(DDC) Scheme for easy access according to the following Group/Subject Headings (Bethery, 2005).

v. Health Services Department

The Director of Health Services Department is appointed by the Governing Council. He/She reports all health matters for both staff and students in the establishment to the Director/Chief Executive. He/she is the Chief Medical Officer of the institution. The appointment is for a period of five (5) years in the first instance and could be renewed for one (1) year and no more. The Health Services Department was set up in 1991 as a Village Clinic. Medical Personnel were appointed from outside the Village on part-time basis. The late Dr. Ogunbanke served as a part-time medical doctor. The appointment of Dr. K.O. Bolarinwa as the Village Clinic Medical Officer in 1994. Other Health Personnel included nurses, health technologists, laboratory technicians, wardens and other health workers. During the period, a Locum-Pharmacist was recruited on temporary basis to take care of the pharmacy unit. In 2007, a Village Pharmacist was employed so that the Village clinic could run fully like a health centre in a tertiary institution. The pharmacist left and was replaced by another one in 2015.

The infrastructural development under Professor S. O. Aje saw the construction of a new structure that houses the Health Services Department. As a result of this expansion and for effective service delivery, the Department has the following units: Pharmacy, Medical records, Medical Laboratory, Nursing, Public health and National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). We have two wards for male and female patients. With this development, the nomenclature of the Head of Department has been changed from Medical Officer to Director of Health Services with Dr. K.O. Bolarinwa as the Director of Health Services. After his tenure, Dr. C. Okupe was appointed as the current Ag. Director of Health Services. The Health Services Department serves as a Medical Centre for the Village staff, students and the entire community within its environment.

vi. Works And Services Department

The Director of Works and Services Department is appointed by the Governing Council of the Nigeria French Language Village and he/she reports all municipal matters in the institution directly to the Director/Chief Executive. The Director of Works and Services is appointed for a period of five (5) years in the first instance and the appointment could be renewed for one (1) year and no more. He/she oversees the maintenance, electrical and mechanical units

of the Department, in addition to being the Project Supervisor of all contracts executed on physical environment of the institution.

At the inception of the Nigeria French Language Village, Works and Services Department was headed by a Technical Officer, Mr. Bouhary. As at then, the Works and Services Department had few units which were not well pronounced. However, in 1999, Engr. Festus Omotuyi was appointed as Chief Engineer and he went through mills to become first as Coordinator of Works and Services Department. In order to expand Works and Services Department, other units such as Electrical, Maintenance, Parks and Gardens, Refrigerator and Air Conditioning and Plumbing were created. However, the change of nomenclature of the Director to Director- General by the Federal Ministry of Education, also led to the change of nomenclature of the Coordinator of Works and Services Department to Director of Works and Services Department; hence, Engr. Festus Omotuyi became the first pioneer Director of Works and Services Department of the Nigeria French Language Village Badagry in the year 2005. As a Director, he worked assiduously so as to ensure that the infrastructural development in the Nigeria French Language Village was put in a proper shape. However, after his tenure which spanned for a period of about 15 years, Architect Rotimi was appointed to lead the Department though on an acting capacity as Director of Works by the Management

Statistics of the Human Resources Management and Development

The Nigeria French Language Village was commissioned on 16th December, 1991 with a workforce of one hundred and forty-two (142) which comprised of Senior and Junior Staff members as academic and non-teaching. Over the years, the number of personnel continues to increase and as of today, the NFLV staff numerical strength stands at two hundred and fifty-nine (259).

Academic Department

The Academic Department was created under Prof. S. A. Ade Ojo immediately after the establishment of the NFLV with the then Dr Ezeani (now Prof. Eziani) as its pioneer Head of Department. Subsequently Professors Ukoyen, Elaho, T. Ajiboye and Oke became Head of Department when they came for their sabbatical leave respectively between 1993 and 1996. After their departure, Dr. Adejumo now Prof. Adejumo became the Head of Academic Department and after the completion of his tenure, in 1998, the Department witnessed the election of Head of Academic Department (HAD) then, Dr. K. A. Folorunsho (now Prof. Folorunsho first won and was appointed from 1997-1999, thereafter Dr. C. I. Ihom won as the HAD from 1999-2001.

Mr. J. O. K. Alabi became the last Head of the Academic Department in 2003. During the period of its creation, the Academic Department began with only the Library and Audio-Visual unit. Departments and units were created for effective dissemination of information and performance of work as shown in the internal memo presented below which was circulated to the Heads of Departments by the Acting Registrar as at that time. The Academic Department which used to have two units namely the Library and the Audio-Visual, metamorphosed into six departments namely the Department of Language and Communication (L&C), The Department of French for Special Purpose (FSP) formally Consultancy Services, the Department of Translation and Interpretation, the Department Literature, Culture & Civilization, the Department of Linguistics and the Department of French Teachers Continuing Education/NCE.

The era equally saw in 2004, the creation of the office of Deputy Director-General, the Coordinating Academic Board (CAB) which met monthly to deliberate on academic matters as done in Faculty Boards in universities. In 2005, the Village Academic Board (VAB) (Senate equivalent in University) was established. The office of the Coordinator of Studies (COS) Dean of Faculty Board equivalent as in universities) was also established in 2004. (NFLV internal Memo, 2004). The administration of Professor Lateef Babatunde Ayeleru saw the changing of nomenclatures of Coordinator of Studies (COS) and Coordinator of Student Affairs (COSA) to Dean of Studies and Dean of Students' Affairs, respectively.

Students' Population

With the full establishment of the NFLV in 1991, the Language Immersion Programme (LIP) started on 6th January 1992 (Student Handbook, 2018). The NFLV had witnessed influx of students over the years from various Universities and Colleges of Education within Nigeria. The population of Universities and Colleges of Education students that have enrolled for LIP since the inception of the NFLV shows that a total number of 17,333 students from various universities in Nigeria enrolled for LIP in NFLV over the years with a total number of 4,326 male students and 13,007 female students. Also a total number of 23,219 students from various Colleges of Education have enrolled in the acculturation programme over the years with a total number of 6,086 male students and 17,133 female students. *Source: NFLV Academic Planning Office, (2020)*

Challenges of the Nigeria French Language Village

i. Funding and Grants from the Nigeria Federal Government and Donor Agencies

The major problem of the NFLV is funding and grants from donor agencies. Initially, the village used to get intervention funding from the Federal government intervention programme such as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETfund). This intervention fund was used to procure books for the Village Library, teaching and research equipment as well as capital projects. However, over the years, the government delisted the NFLV from enjoying this fund. According to TETfund, NFLV and all Inter-University Centers are not on their current mandate (TETfund Mandate, 2010). Furthermore, donor agencies such as institutions in France and other European countries including the French Government which used to assist the Village in the area of documentation and personnel had suspended their aid due to economic reasons.

ii. Limited Space

Initially, the current site was giving to the Federal Government for the establishment of the NFLV by the Lagos State government. The space has since been built-up. The permanent site being proposed for the NFLV has not been properly documented. This means NFLV is in dire need of space for expansion.

iii. Infrastructural Deficit

The current infrastructures are overstressed and dilapidated. Allocation of funds such as capital grants which used to be enough is now paltry. The renovation of existing infrastructures became a herculean task.

iv. Low Level of Internally Generated Revenue

Internal Generated Revenue of the Village been reduced due to Government policies. Institutions of higher learning sending their students to the NFLV often divert their students to francophone countries because of the gratification that they usually get from such sister institutions across the border. The products of these mushroom institutions are hardly good for the Nigerian educational system and labour market. Since fewer students are patronizing the NFLV, the revenue therein generated is grossly inadequate for sustenance.

Conclusion

This study gives a brief historical detail of the establishment and mandate of NFLV, Badagry Lagos. Since its inception in 1991, NFLV has been successful in terms of achieving its mission and vision. It has really served as a domestic alternative to erstwhile foreign-based-year-abroad programme for the Nigerian undergraduates in universities and colleges of education. Its organizational structure has undergone many transformations with the creation of more academic departments, in addition to the ones that were in existence from inception. Even units under some departments have now been elevated to full-fledged departments.

Apart from the LIP for Nigerian undergraduates which was the sole purpose for establishing the NFLV, the Institution has over the years established training and customized programmes such as Pre-Degree Diploma Programme, Certificate Programmes, Evening and Weekend Programmes, Professional Programmes and Summer Holyday Camps. All these programmes are to empower all persons irrespective of age, culture, creed or sex, with appropriate communication skills in the effective use of French at both professional and inter-personal levels. As for the infrastructural development, the NFLV can now boast of great deal of development in infrastructures. Similarly, over the years, NFLV has recorded increase in the number of members of staff and great number of students from Nigerian universities and colleges of education who register for the LIP. This shows that NFLV is still on the right course of fulfilling the mandate for its establishment. However, there are still some challenges such as poor allocation of funds and grants from the Federal Government and donor agencies and limited available free space.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of our study.

1. The Federal Government should ensure that adequate fund is allocated to the NFLV so that it could fulfill its mandate as regards provision of infrastructures for the LIP.
2. The Federal Government should also mandate TETFund to re-enlist the NFLV to its circle so that it could benefit from the Federal Government intervention programmes.

3. The Federal Government should further assist the NFLV to develop the permanent site so as to curb the challenges of limited space in the present temporary site.
4. The Federal Executive Council (FEC) in conjunction with the legislators both in the red and green chambers should make a law prohibiting all Vice-chancellors of universities and Provosts of colleges of education, who have French Departments in their institutions from sending their students across the border to francophone countries for the LIP. Such a decision would help boost the Internally Generated Revenue for the NFLV.
5. The FEC and Legislators are equally enjoined to expedite action in upgrading the NFLV which is currently an Inter-University centre into a full-fledged university for proper collaboration with other universities in the Francophone and European countries.

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