

# Funding Strategies for Integrating Ethical and Values Education in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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**Yellowe Annette N. PhD**

Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

[annette.yellowe@gmail.com](mailto:annette.yellowe@gmail.com)

## **Abstract**

This paper examines funding strategies for integrating ethical and values education into public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. With rising concerns about moral decay and the erosion of civic values among youth, the study emphasizes the importance of structured, adequately funded value education as a critical component of national development. The paper reviews core funding mechanisms including government budgetary allocation, TETFund and grant utilization, internally generated revenue, community-based support systems, and donor/philanthropic involvement. It argues that effective ethical instruction requires deliberate investment in teacher training, curriculum enhancement, and learner engagement. The paper concludes that without adequate funding, ethical and values education will remain superficial and inconsistent. It suggests a complex funding approach that combines public investment with community and private sector participation to create morally resilient learners and promote national sustainability.

**Keywords:** Funding Strategies, Values Education, Public Secondary Schools.

## **1. Introduction**

In today's rapidly changing and morally complex society, education must serve not only as a tool for knowledge transmission but also as a platform for instilling ethical values, civic responsibility, and national consciousness. The growing incidence of moral decadence, examination malpractice, cultism, social intolerance, corruption, and disrespect for the rule of law in Nigeria points to a failure in the ethical formation of young citizens (Igbuzor, 2017). As a response, the Nigerian education system, through the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), emphasizes the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. Ethical and values education, therefore, becomes a vital foundation for shaping learners into responsible and morally upright individuals who can contribute meaningfully to sustainable national development. However, the effective integration of ethical and values education in public secondary schools remains hampered by persistent challenges—chief among them being inadequate and unsustainable funding. Schools require financial support to train teachers in moral instruction, develop values-based curriculum materials, organize extracurricular moral programs, and establish platforms that promote civic engagement and character building. Without these, values education often becomes rhetorical, unstructured, and poorly implemented.

Education is universally recognized as a powerful instrument for personal and societal transformation. It equips individuals with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential for personal growth and national development. According to Okoh (2020), education is not only a means of transmitting cognitive content but also a critical process for shaping the moral compass and character of learners. Beyond its role in fostering intellectual competence, education serves as a vehicle for cultivating responsible citizenship, promoting peace, and advancing sustainable development. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education emphasizes the inculcation of the right

type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

Within this broader educational mandate lies the core focus of ethical and values education a dimension of schooling that emphasizes the development of integrity, empathy, respect, fairness, and civic responsibility among learners. Ethical and values education in public secondary schools aims to shape students into morally upright and socially responsible citizens who can contribute meaningfully to national development. As Uche (2021) notes, the decline in ethical standards among youths in Nigeria has sparked renewed interest in the deliberate integration of values-based education across all levels of schooling. In the context of Rivers State, where secondary schools are grappling with issues such as examination malpractice, cultism, and moral decadence, the role of ethical and values education becomes even more imperative. The integration of such education into the school system is not merely a pedagogical adjustment but a strategic response to the growing need for character formation in Nigeria's future leaders.

However, the successful integration of ethical and values education into public secondary schools cannot be achieved in the absence of sustainable funding strategies. Funding refers to the financial resources required to plan, implement, and sustain educational programs. Opara (2022) asserts that inadequate funding remains one of the most critical challenges affecting educational reforms in Nigeria, particularly those related to non-core academic subjects such as values and ethics. Effective funding strategies are therefore essential to facilitate teacher training, develop instructional materials, organize workshops, and embed values education into school curricula and extracurricular programs.

To this end, specific funding strategies have been identified as viable pathways for integrating ethical and values education into public secondary schools in Rivers State. These strategies include government budgetary allocation and policy prioritization, which involves earmarking specific portions of educational budgets to support ethics-related initiatives. Additionally, community-based support systems serve as grassroots mechanisms for mobilizing local resources, parental involvement, and cultural reinforcement of values education. TETFund and other educational grants offer institutional and external sources of financial support for training and curriculum innovation. Furthermore, internally generated revenue (IGR) by schools, through ventures such as school farms or services, provides a school-led mechanism to support value-driven projects. Finally, donor and philanthropic support, including faith-based and private foundations, contributes significantly to funding values education, particularly in underserved or rural communities.

One of the most fundamental funding strategies for integrating ethical and values education in public secondary schools is through government budgetary allocation and policy prioritization. The government, through the Ministry of Education at both federal and state levels, plays a crucial role in formulating educational policies and allocating resources that support curriculum implementation. For ethical and values education to thrive, there must be deliberate financial commitments embedded in the education sector budgets. This includes the provision of funds for curriculum development, teacher training on ethics instruction, supply of instructional materials, and supervision of values-based programs. According to Oghenekohwo and Adekola (2020), the lack of explicit budget lines for moral and civic education remains one of the core hindrances to their effective implementation in public schools. When ethical education is included as a funding priority, it signals the government's commitment to national moral development and allows education managers to plan and execute related programs with confidence. Moreover, this form of allocation should be supported by legislative backing to prevent funding discontinuity resulting from changes in administration.

Community-based support systems provide a grassroots-oriented approach to funding ethical and values education. These systems rely on the involvement and contributions of local stakeholders such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs), community development associations, religious leaders, alumni bodies, and traditional rulers. Through financial donations, material contributions, or voluntary services, communities can support activities like ethics clubs, mentorship programs, and value-centered extracurricular events. Ezeokoli and Olumide (2019) argue that community participation enhances the sustainability and contextual relevance of school programs, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. Moreover, when community members are actively involved in shaping and funding

ethical initiatives in schools, students are more likely to internalize those values due to the cultural reinforcement received both at school and at home. This strategy promotes a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the moral upbringing of young people, thus aligning school-based ethical education with community-based value systems.

Another viable strategy for funding ethical and values education is through the utilization of grants from bodies such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and other national or international development agencies. Although TETFund primarily focuses on tertiary institutions, research grants and intervention funds can be leveraged indirectly through research, training, and teacher education programs that filter down to the secondary education level. In addition, other grant-making institutions such as the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) office, and international agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO provide opportunities to fund moral and civic education projects. Akpan and Ekanem (2021) affirm that many school-based programs suffer from underfunding not due to the absence of funds, but due to poor awareness and weak capacity to write grant proposals. Therefore, it is essential for school administrators and education stakeholders to develop proposal-writing skills and establish linkages with these agencies to attract funding for values-based initiatives. When strategically accessed, these grants can fund workshops, training of teachers, and the development of instructional resources for moral education.

Public secondary schools in Rivers State can also fund ethical and values education by leveraging internally generated revenue (IGR) from small-scale income-generating ventures. These may include agricultural projects, production units, printing presses, or vocational centers managed by the school, where a portion of the revenue is allocated to support moral instruction programs. Internally generated funds can be used to sponsor value-based clubs, student-led ethical campaigns, staff capacity development, or inter-school moral education competitions. As noted by Chukwuemeka and Ogunlade (2022), IGR not only supplements government funding but also fosters financial independence and innovation in school administration. However, effective utilization of IGR for values education requires accountability and proper planning to avoid fund mismanagement. With appropriate oversight, schools can integrate ethical education into their operational budget, thus sustaining moral instruction even in the absence of external grants or government subventions.

Donor and philanthropic support remains a significant alternative funding strategy for enhancing ethical and values education. This includes financial and material contributions from non-governmental organizations, religious bodies, corporate foundations, and individual philanthropists who share an interest in promoting moral development among youths. These donors can fund a wide range of activities such as the publication of ethics textbooks, training of ethics educators, support for school-based peace education programs, and the construction of character development centers. According to Adediran and Ijaiya (2020), donor funding is often more flexible and innovative compared to conventional government allocations, making it ideal for piloting new models of values-based learning. Additionally, religious and faith-based institutions have historically played a central role in the moral education of Nigerian students and continue to be relevant partners in financing school-based ethical instruction. However, effective donor engagement requires transparency, regular reporting, and alignment of school programs with donor expectations and goals.

Integrating these funding strategies requires a multi-stakeholder approach that aligns national education policy with local realities, institutional commitment, and community engagement. As Ezeaku (2023) posits, embedding ethical and values education in the secondary school system is both a financial and ideological investment in Nigeria's sustainable national development. Therefore, exploring how these funding strategies can be effectively harnessed in Rivers State is critical to ensuring that ethical instruction is not only included in the curriculum but actively practiced and sustained within the school environment.

Several scholars have highlighted the importance of financial investment in the success of moral and values-based education. For instance, Oghenekohwo and Adekola (2020) argued that without sustained funding and clear budgetary commitments, values education is often marginalized within the broader curriculum implementation process. They emphasize that ethical instruction demands a structured delivery framework, including well-prepared teachers and suitable learning

materials elements that cannot be achieved without targeted financial support. Similarly, Adediran and Ijaiya (2020) emphasize the role of strategic resource mobilization in enhancing values-based education programs, especially through public-private partnerships, donor interventions, and community-based funding initiatives. Their work points to the critical need for diverse and innovative funding sources to sustain values education in resource-constrained educational settings. While these studies have illuminated the importance of funding for ethical and values education, there remains a significant contextual gap in the literature regarding how these strategies are practically deployed in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, few empirical investigations have examined the actual funding mechanisms being adopted, the challenges associated with financing moral education at the secondary school level, or the effectiveness of these strategies in ensuring long-term program sustainability. Moreover, existing studies tend to focus on national-level discussions or tertiary institutions, leaving a knowledge gap in the basic and secondary education subsector. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by investigating funding strategies for integrating ethical and values education in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

## **2. Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Concept of Funding**

Funding refers to the provision of financial resources necessary to initiate, sustain, and improve the operations, programs, and objectives of an organization or system. In the education sector, funding is the lifeblood that drives teaching, learning, infrastructure development, curriculum implementation, and staff development. It is a vital input without which schools cannot function effectively. According to Adepoju (2018), funding in education encompasses the allocation and utilization of financial resources for salaries, infrastructural development, instructional materials, professional training, school supervision, and co-curricular activities. The adequacy, regularity, and efficient management of these funds largely determine the quality of education delivered.

In public secondary schools, the issue of funding is particularly critical. Governments at federal, state, and local levels are constitutionally responsible for financing education, yet funding gaps remain a recurring challenge. Ogunode and Abubakar (2020) note that budgetary allocations to the education sector in Nigeria are often below the UNESCO recommendation of 15–20% of national budgets, thereby constraining the capacity of schools to deliver holistic education, including value-based programs. As a result, schools struggle with inadequate facilities, unmotivated teachers, and poorly implemented curricular components, including those focused on ethics and moral development.

The concept of education funding also involves understanding its various sources. Akpan and Ekanem (2021) classify education funding sources into internal and external mechanisms. Internal sources include government subventions, school-generated revenues, and contributions from parents and communities. External sources comprise donor support, private foundations, educational grants, and corporate social responsibility interventions. The ability of schools to explore and integrate multiple funding streams determines their capacity to implement enriched programs such as ethical and values education, which often require specialized teaching materials, training workshops, and extracurricular campaigns.

Moreover, funding is not only about the availability of money but also about strategic allocation and efficient utilization. Onyekwelu and Ugwu (2019) argue that some schools receive funding yet fail to direct it toward developmental and moral-oriented activities due to poor leadership or lack of accountability. In this regard, the management of funds becomes equally crucial. A school with a well-defined financial management structure is more likely to invest in meaningful programs that promote character education, tolerance, civic responsibility, and cultural values.

Ethical and values education, in particular, demands a targeted funding approach. Unlike traditional subjects, moral instruction involves continuous engagement with learners through dialogues, clubs, community service, and experiential learning. Ezeokoli and Olumide (2019) posit that integrating ethical education into school programs requires specific funding strategies that go beyond general operational budgets. This includes funding for teacher retraining, development of culturally relevant instructional materials, support for student-led ethical initiatives, and monitoring of values-oriented classroom practices.

Despite the recognized importance of funding, the implementation of values-based education in many public schools in Nigeria remains inconsistent and underfunded. Owan and Ekpe (2020) stress that unless values education is embedded in funding policies, it will remain an abstract ideal, lacking the practical mechanisms for delivery. This calls for innovative and sustainable funding strategies such as public-private partnerships, community-based support systems, donor-funded initiatives, and internally generated revenue (IGR) from school enterprises.

In summary, funding is a critical component of educational success and a necessary enabler for the integration of ethical and values education. It provides the financial foundation for teacher support, instructional development, learner engagement, and the creation of value-enriched school environments. However, to be effective, funding must be adequate, diversified, efficiently managed, and tied to strategic objectives that promote national development through morally grounded education. There is an urgent need for public secondary schools, especially in regions like Rivers State, to adopt multidimensional funding approaches that prioritize moral instruction as a foundation for building responsible and productive citizens.

### **Concept of Ethical and Values Education**

Ethical and values education refers to the deliberate teaching and cultivation of moral principles, civic responsibility, respect for diversity, honesty, tolerance, empathy, and good citizenship among learners. It is a central component of education systems that aim to produce individuals who are not only academically sound but also morally grounded. According to Igbuzor (2017), education without values poses a threat to societal stability and national progress, as it produces intellectuals who lack ethical judgment. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) underscores the need to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of individuals and the Nigerian society. This reflects the country's acknowledgment of the role of values education in achieving sustainable development.

However, while the importance of values education is well recognized, its effective integration into the school curriculum, particularly in public secondary schools, remains a major challenge. Funding constraints have been repeatedly identified as one of the key barriers to successful implementation (Okoh & Adepoju, 2019). Without sustainable financial strategies, schools are unable to conduct moral education programs, train teachers, or develop necessary instructional materials. Hence, sustainable funding mechanisms must be explored to ensure that ethical and values education is not just theoretical but actively practiced in schools across Nigeria, especially in Rivers State.

### **Government Budgetary Allocation and Policy Prioritization**

One of the most direct ways of funding ethical and values education is through government budgetary allocation and policy prioritization. Public funding forms the backbone of basic and secondary education in Nigeria, and without proper allocation, most school programs suffer. According to Oghenekohwo and Adekola (2020), the allocation of education budgets in Nigeria tends to focus heavily on infrastructure and salaries, with little attention paid to programmatic components like ethics education. Values-based programs require dedicated financial resources for curriculum design, teacher re-training, learner-centered activities, and monitoring and evaluation. Where government policies and budget frameworks fail to explicitly mention values education, implementation becomes inconsistent or non-existent.

Policy prioritization is equally critical. As noted by Arikewuyo and Ahmed (2021), when ethical and values education is embedded in national or state policy documents—such as education sector plans, budget circulars, and teacher education frameworks—it becomes easier to secure consistent funding. In Rivers State, there is a need to strengthen policy instruments that recognize the role of moral instruction in public education and allocate sufficient funds for its development. Without financial backing, policies on values education remain mere intentions.

### **Community-Based Support Systems**

Another sustainable strategy for funding values education is the active involvement of the community. Schools do not operate in isolation; they are part of the larger society, and their success often depends on support from parents, local leaders, and community-based organizations. Community-based support systems involve collective financial and material contributions from

stakeholders such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs), alumni associations, religious leaders, town unions, and local government authorities. Ezeokoli and Olumide (2019) observe that schools that have strong ties with their host communities are more likely to succeed in implementing moral education programs because the values taught in school are reinforced at home and in the larger society.

This strategy allows schools to access funding for values-related projects such as ethics clubs, civic engagement workshops, anti-cultism campaigns, and inter-school debates on moral topics. More importantly, community participation fosters a sense of ownership and accountability. As Owan and Ekpe (2020) argue, moral instruction becomes more meaningful when it is shaped by the community's cultural and religious context. Therefore, schools in Rivers State should intensify engagement with local stakeholders to generate funds and support for values education.

### **TETFund and Educational Grants Utilization**

Utilization of external grants and funding from institutional bodies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) also presents an important strategy for financing ethical and values education. Although TETFund primarily targets tertiary institutions, its indirect influence is evident through its support for teacher training, educational research, and curriculum development. Akpan and Ekanem (2021) argue that secondary schools can benefit from TETFund-sponsored programs by collaborating with colleges of education and faculties of education in universities that organize ethics-related seminars and workshops. In addition to TETFund, grants from international organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and ActionAid can support school-level initiatives that promote peace education, civic responsibility, and human rights awareness. These organizations often fund values-based educational interventions, especially in underserved and post-conflict areas. However, the capacity to access and manage such grants remains a challenge for many public school administrators. As asserted by Agbo and Nwoke (2022), there is an urgent need for capacity building in proposal writing, grant reporting, and financial management within the secondary education system. Schools in Rivers State must be proactive in identifying funding windows, preparing grant applications, and using the resources effectively to promote ethics and values in the classroom.

### **Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) by Schools**

Schools can also mobilize resources internally through internally generated revenue (IGR) to support ethical and values education. IGR refers to funds raised by the schools themselves through school farms, vocational training centers, rental of school facilities, or other income-generating ventures. In the face of dwindling government funding, IGR has emerged as a critical supplementary source of funding. According to Chukwuemeka and Ogunlade (2022), when schools manage IGR effectively, they gain a level of financial autonomy that allows them to fund value-adding programs that may otherwise be neglected. For example, revenue from school-based enterprises can be used to support school-wide values campaigns, establish character clubs, invite guest speakers on moral topics, or organize inter-school ethical competitions. However, this requires sound financial planning and accountability measures to ensure that funds are not diverted or misused. In addition, the success of IGR depends on the entrepreneurial mindset of school administrators and the support of the school management board. In Rivers State, promoting a culture of financial innovation in public schools could significantly enhance the integration of ethical education.

### **Donor and Philanthropic Support**

The role of donors and philanthropic organizations in funding ethical and values education is increasingly being recognized as essential, especially in low-resource settings. Philanthropists, religious institutions, corporate bodies, and non-governmental organizations can provide vital support for moral education initiatives in schools. Such support may come in the form of cash donations, sponsorship of teacher training, provision of learning materials, construction of value-themed learning spaces, or technical assistance in curriculum development. Adediran and Ijaiya (2020) highlight that faith-based organizations have historically played a major role in education in Nigeria, and they remain committed to promoting moral instruction as part of holistic child development.

Donor funding is also known for its flexibility and potential for innovation. Unlike public funds that are often tied to bureaucratic processes, philanthropic support can be used creatively to

pilot new ideas such as peer mentoring programs, value-based digital storytelling, and ethics education through drama and cultural performances. However, transparency and accountability are critical in sustaining donor confidence. Schools must be able to show that funds are used for their intended purposes and that the impact of donor-funded programs is being tracked and evaluated. Creating strong partnerships with philanthropic actors can help Rivers State secondary schools bridge funding gaps and sustain values education in the long term.

The integration of ethical and values education in public secondary schools in Rivers State is not just a pedagogical necessity but a national priority that demands reliable and diverse funding sources. Government budgetary allocation, community-based support, educational grants, internally generated revenue, and donor contributions all offer unique advantages in financing moral instruction. For sustainable national development to be achieved, especially in a society facing rising moral decline, the financial commitment to ethics education must match its importance in policy and practice. A combination of these strategies, supported by transparent management and continuous stakeholder engagement, is essential for embedding values education firmly in the secondary school system.

### **3. Conclusion**

Funding remains a foundational element in the successful implementation of ethical and values education in public secondary schools. This study has emphasized that beyond mere policy declarations, practical and sustained financial commitments are necessary to translate moral education into everyday classroom realities. Adequate funding supports teacher training in ethical instruction, development of context-relevant materials, extracurricular initiatives, and community engagement programs that reinforce societal values. While government budgetary allocations serve as the primary funding source, this paper also underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement through community-based support systems, TETFund grants, donor assistance, and internally generated revenue. Without a consistent and strategic approach to financing, ethical education risks becoming marginalized in the school system, thereby weakening the moral fabric needed for sustainable national development.

This paper holds the position that a multidimensional and context-specific funding model is crucial for the successful integration of ethical and values education in public secondary schools, particularly within the unique socioeconomic and political realities of Rivers State, Nigeria. It posits that the combination of governmental, institutional, and community-based financing strategies is not only desirable but necessary for delivering value-oriented education that contributes meaningfully to national growth, peace, and cohesion.

### **Suggestions**

The following suggestions are made:

The Rivers State government should increase its budgetary allocation to education and earmark a specific portion for ethics and values education. This should include funding for curriculum development, teacher retraining, and monitoring structures.

School management boards and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be mobilized to play active roles in supporting ethics-related programs financially and morally, including organizing community-based mentorship and outreach initiatives.

Educational stakeholders must build capacity for grant proposal writing and accountability to access and effectively utilize funds from TETFund and similar agencies to support ethics-based projects.

Schools should be empowered and monitored to initiate legal and ethical school-based enterprises that can fund moral instruction initiatives, such as moral clubs, debates, peer education, and values-based outreach programs.

Non-governmental organizations, faith-based institutions, and philanthropic individuals should be engaged to provide moral support tools such as learning aids, sponsorships for value competitions, and resource persons for moral talks and workshops.

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