
Meeting the Required Reforms in Legal Education in Nigeria:

Clinical Legal Education – Ten Years After

Charles Olufemi Adekoya

femairea@yahoo.com

The author is a Senior Lecturer and Sub-Dean, Postgraduate, Faculty of Law, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. He is the Faculty's Law Clinic Coordinator and holds a Ph.D. in International Human Rights Law from University of Ghent, Belgium.

A. INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world, including Nigeria, legal education systems have been severely criticized both by stakeholders and consumers for being deficient in many respects in preparing “future lawyers, with many failing to provide the core competence necessary to practice law after a university education.”¹ A global review has indicated that legal education systems are generally inadequate and needs to be improved upon.² Also, a series of discussions at both international and regional levels have emphasized the need for transition in legal training in order to enhance its effectiveness.³ Legal education systems around the world have been under surveillance for failing to produce students who possess problem solving abilities, and the skills and values required for the profession.⁴ In Nigeria, as it is in other jurisdictions, criticisms against legal education by stakeholders and consumers are severe, focusing on the quality of training, which is regarded as inadequate.⁵

For these and other reasons, critics have called for reforms in legal education in Nigeria.⁶

Based on the above, this paper attempts to examine the legal education deficits in Nigeria requiring reforms, and how clinical legal education (hereinafter called “CLE”) introduced in Nigeria in 2003, ten years ago, best meets the required reforms, the challenges confronting the practice and institutionalization of clinical education, towards the objective of having a legal education which inculcates knowledge, skills and values, and is more practice oriented. This paper is divided into

1 See Hovhannisian, Lusine, *Clinical Legal Education and the Bologna Process*, PILI Papers Number 2, December, (Hungary: Public Interest Law Initiative, 2006) p. 3.

2 *Ibid* at p. 4.

3 *Ibid* at p. 6.

4 See Nisreen Mahasneh and Kimberly Thomas, “Learning from the Unique and Common Challenges: Clinical Legal Education in Jordan”, Vol. X:N (2012) *Berkeley J. of Middle Eastern & Islamic Law*, p. 101.

5 These, basically are: 1. A majority of Nigerian law graduates are not able to practice immediately upon graduation, See Stuckey, Roy and others, *Best Practices for Legal Education* (First Edition, Clinical Legal Education Association, 2007 available at <http://cleaweb.org/Resources/Documents/best_practices-full.pdf> last accessed 26 June, 2013 p. 14.; 2. The main emphasis of legal education is too narrowly focused on substantive knowledge and skills, while it is deemed that graduates will learn other things in practice. See Feldman, Marc, “On the Margins of Legal Education”, 13 N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change 607 (1985) p. 618.; 3. There is disconnect in the legal training provided in the law faculties and the Law School, the law faculties teaches substantive law while law schools teaches procedural law. See Sam Erugo, C.K. Nwankwo, Nath Ikeocha and Emeka Okoroafor, “Legal Education and Social Change in Nigeria”, paper delivered at the 2012 Nigerian Association of Law Teachers Conference, held at University of Lagos, Akoka on 20 June 2012 p. 7.; 4. The teaching methodology in most law faculties and the Law School (until recently) is purely traditional and attitudes of law teachers towards legal training is conservative. See Ojukwu, E, “Introduction”, In *Clinical Legal Education Curriculum for Nigerian Universities’ Law Faculties/Clinics* (Network of University Legal Aid Institutions, 2006) p. 3.; 5. Examination at both faculties of law and the Law School, mostly require students to demonstrate substantive legal knowledge than they require for successful practice, and passing examination is often determined by ability of students to memorize notes and reproduce them, which are quickly forgotten after examinations. See Stuckey, Roy and others, *op. cit.* at p. 9, and Ojukwu, E, *op. cit.* at p. 5.

6 See Onalaja, M.O., “Problems of Legal Education in Nigeria”, pp. 1, 10 and 11. Available at: <http://www.alimiandco.com/publications/ACCREDITATION%20AND%20LEGAL%20EDUCATION%20IN%20NIGERIA.pdf> last accessed 22 August 2013; Sam Erugo, C.K. Nwankwo, Nath Ikeocha and Emeka Okoroafor, *op. cit.* at p. 7.; See Ojukwu, E, “Introduction”, In *Clinical Legal Education Curriculum for Nigerian Universities’ Law Faculties/Clinics* (Network of University Legal Aid Institutions, 2006) p. 3.; Ernest Ojukwu, “Moving From Red to Green: Sharing the Nigerian Experience of Transforming Legal Education”, being a Keynote address presented at the 11th International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference, held at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia on 16-18 July, 2013.

five parts, Part II examines the introduction in Nigeria; Part III discusses the capability of CLE to meet the required reforms in legal education in Nigeria; Part IV examines the achievements, and challenges confronting the practice, mainstreaming and institutionalization of CLE in law faculties and the law school, and an evaluation of CLE; while Part V captures the conclusion and recommendations.

B. INTRODUCTION OF CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The introduction of CLE in Nigeria was the brainchild of the Network of University Legal Aid Institutions (NULAI Nigeria, hereinafter called “NULAI”),⁷ as part of its efforts to reform legal education and expand access to justice for the poor. NULAI was established in 2003 and some of its most significant efforts with respect to clinical education were the setting up of four (4) pilot clinics in 2004⁸ and producing a model CLE curriculum for Nigerian Universities in 2006 which was reviewed in 2012.⁹ From the introduction of CLE in 2003 to 2013, that makes it a decade that clinical education has been introduced in Nigeria. From four clinics in 2004, a total of sixteen (16) law clinics have so far been established at law faculties and the Law School, through NULAI efforts, while plans are in place to influence the setting up of additional ones.¹⁰

With the deficits in Nigerian legal education and clamour for reforms, the introduction of clinical education by NULAI was timely and could not have come at a better time when desired reforms in legal education by concerned authorities/stakeholders were coming too slowly.¹¹ CLE has as its core content, the establishment of live clinics. Some law faculties have established law clinics only, while some have in addition to that incorporated clinical education into their curricula. In addition, CLE brought a new teaching pedagogy which is clinical, thus changing the face of legal education in Nigeria.¹²

The CLE curriculum has resulted in new curriculum and teaching methodology that matches modern legal training with social needs,¹³ and through an array of novel subjects,¹³ some of which

7 NULAI is a non-profit, non-political and non-governmental organization established in 2003 and dedicated to promoting clinical legal education, reform of legal education, legal aid and access to justice. Its membership is open to law clinics/legal aid institutions in Nigeria’s universities/law schools. See <http://www.nulai.org/> last accessed 22 August 2013.

8 At Abia State University, University of Maiduguri, University of Uyo, and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Ondo State. See Network of University Legal Aid Institutions (NULAI Nigeria), 2004 – 2006 Activities Report (Abuja: NULAI Nigeria, 2007) p. 9.

9 See NULAI, Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 p. 2.

10 See NULAI Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 p. 11.

11 There was effort to reform legal education in 2006 with the Federal Government setting up a National Committee on the Reform of Legal Education in Nigeria. The Council of Legal Education on its part set up a Committee to review the Nigerian Law School curriculum but before the Committee concludes its task, there has been a shift in the teaching methodology at the Law School from the traditional towards a more interactive one. See Ojukwu, E, *op. cit.* at p. 5.

12 For some law faculties, they incorporated CLE into their curriculum in 2006 while for the Law School, it was in 2008. See Sam Erugo, C.K. Nwankwo, Nath Ikeocha and Emeka Okoroafor, *op. cit.* at p. 13.

13 Such as, Street Law Advocacy, Access to Justice, Legal Research and Case Analysis, Interviewing and Counseling, and Public Interest Lawyering, etc.

are entirely new in law faculties' curricula, and law students are required to undergo experiential learning, geared towards legal service delivery.¹⁴

In the last ten years, NULAI has done a yeoman service in promoting CLE, fund raising and sustenance of law clinics,¹⁵ capacity building for law teachers/students,¹⁶ organising and funding of workshops¹⁷/conferences¹⁸ for law teachers/students, organising competitions,¹⁹ promotion of human rights and expanding access to justice, promoting a culture of community service among future lawyers, conducting impact assessment of law clinics in Nigeria, and expanding the frontiers of clinical education movement.²⁰

NULAI has produced resources on CLE, such as, the Handbook on Prison Pre-trial Detainee Law Clinic, the Manual on Prison Pre-trial Detainee Law Clinic and it publishes a peer-reviewed journal, the African Journal of Clinical Legal Education and Access to Justice, among others. These resources have assisted in galvanising research and scholarship on clinics, clinical teaching and learning, thus inciting research in this fledgling area of law in Nigeria.

C. CAPABILITY OF CLINICAL EDUCATION TO MEET THE REQUIRED REFORMS IN LEGAL EDUCATION

In the last ten years, CLE has positively impacted upon legal training and holds promises as an educational method that will remedy and compensate²¹ for the many myriad of deficits in the current patterns of legal education in Nigeria, on the following basis:

1. Clinical Education Infuses Theory and Practice Together

Clinical education integrates the teaching of theory and practice²² as a form of instructional pedagogy, by combining substantive law with skills, and also values, while the law clinic serves as the laboratory for practice, on the basis that the primary aim of legal training is to prepare students for practice.²³ Clinical education exposes students to law practice during legal training, unlike the traditional method, and does not teach theory alone in the belief that students will learn everything else in practice.

14 *Ibid* at p. 23.

15 NULAI conducted report writing and fund raising workshops for law clinics and law faculties. See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* Slide 6.

16 See NULAI, Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 pp. 6, 7, 9 and 20.

17 NULAI performs evaluation visits to law clinics and conducted in-house teacher training workshops for 14 Law Faculties. See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slide 6.

18 For instance, NULAI hosted the 1st Nigerian Clinical Legal Education Colloquium and 2nd All Africa Clinical Legal Education Colloquium in Nigeria. See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slides 5 and 6.

19 NULAI currently organises Law Clinics Essay Writing and the National Client Interviewing and Counseling skills Competitions.

20 For example, NULAI extended its advocacy for the adoption of Clinical Legal Education within the African sub-region by providing technical and capacity support to Law Faculties in Ghana, the Gambia and Kenya to establish and effectively manage law clinics. See NULAI, Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 p. 2.

21 See *Feldman, Marc, op. cit.* at p. 617.

22 See *Stuckey, Roy and others, op. cit.* at p. 72.

23 *Ibid* at p. iv.

At Nigerian law faculties and the Law School, it is amazing to see students at the clinics handling live cases and meeting real clients. They perform the functions of a lawyer, short of appearing in court, ranging from client interviews, counseling, writing letters, resolution of disputes, negotiations, etc. In their role, students investigate clients' cases, carry out legal analysis, write legal briefs and evaluate possible solutions, collaborate with colleagues, relate with clients, plan and take action, and accept responsibilities for their action.²⁴ During the process, students interface with so many dynamics thereby acquiring varying lawyering skills such as problem-solving, collaborative skills, drafting and letter writing skills, required for law practice. For law students to undertake the above activities while in training, is unprecedented in Nigerian legal education history.

Students' role performance is the core of clinical education's experiential learning methodology, which is "learning by doing". Students are able to put into practice what they learn in the classroom by rendering services to clients in law clinics.²⁵ This greatly promotes active learning, and enhances the rate of assimilation and memory of students about what is learnt practically.²⁶ Functioning as lawyers in the clinics gives students a sense of responsibility in ensuring that they render services in the best interest of clients; thereby instilling in them the spirit of professional responsibility.

In clinical education, students are able to perform in unfamiliar situations by relying on previous experience²⁷ and use them to find solutions to many legal problems.²⁸ CLE builds the skills and strength of students, and also boosts their confidence since they perform in a safe clinical environment, thereby equipping them for the rigours of law practice.²⁹ All these are absent in the traditional method, where case analysis provides the sole raw material for learning.³⁰

2. Clinical Pedagogy is Collaborative and Student-Centered

Clinical pedagogy emphasizes the use of carefully designed curriculum which is outcome-based, states the expected outcomes (i.e. what learners would be able to know or do at the end of the lesson) and content (i.e. the areas that will be covered with the purpose of teaching knowledge, skills and values) for the course, and methodology to be used. Teaching delivery is by the use of lesson plans, which set out the topic, outcomes, content, activities (this set out the interactive teaching methods that will be used to deliver the lesson) and the resources required for executing the lesson plan.³¹ These are new and unique features of CLE in legal education in Nigeria.

The array of activities contained in the lesson plan together with the use of different instructional materials now effectively engage the students and promote active learning. Dictation of notes and distraction of students through such activity in class, as it is with the traditional method has greatly reduced. Nigerian law students are now exposed to clinical pedagogy, through interactive and student-centered learning. Students now actively participate in the learning process and are not

²⁴ See *Feldman, Marc., op. cit.* at p. 614.

²⁵ *Ibid.* at p. 625.

²⁶ *Ibid.* at p. 615.

²⁷ *Ibid.* at p. 614.

²⁸ See Matthew I. Fraidin, Ibidun Roberts, Jeannine Winch and Larissa Chernock, *op. cit.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See *Feldman, Marc., op. cit.* at p. 617.

³¹ E.g. case study, handouts, pictures, flip chart, laptop, PowerPoint projector, DVD player, etc

mere observers as in the traditional method. Law teachers now merely play the role of a facilitator, facilitating the ideas of students, unlike in the traditional method where the teacher gives a lecture and the students listen without their experience/knowledge being used.³² It is amazing to see students display such high analytical skills during presentations.

With the active learning which CLE pedagogy stimulates, law students do not need to force-feed their brains with notes dictated in class or textbooks in order to pass tests/exams because they learn by doing, and remembering comes naturally to them and their success is influenced by their own efforts not by how good the teacher was.³³ Through clinical teaching, law students now place emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values, and not on passing an examination, as it is in the traditional method. With this, clinical law graduates are able to apply their knowledge and skills after the examination.

Drawing a causal link between teaching methodology and students' learning ability and performance, the Committee of Provosts and Deans of a public university in Nigeria, while discussing the students' failure rate at examinations in their university stated "the need for lecturers to improve on their teaching methodology for the failure rate is an indication that there is a fundamental problem with the teaching methodology".³⁴ The Committee therefore called on colleges/Faculties to organize a retreat to educate lecturers on the student-centered learning approach", which is a feature of CLE.

Although, the Committee did not state the failure rate in the University as a whole or on a College/Faculty basis, their statement is however illuminating enough to suggest that the traditional teaching methodology, which is prevalent in Nigerian universities, is dysfunctional and harmful to students learning and performance.

From the above, clinical method impacts knowledge, skills and values in law students. If both law faculties and the Law School adopt clinical education, there will be congruence in legal training in Nigeria, and law graduates will be well-equipped for practice.

3. Service Component of Clinical Education

The clinic serves as the service and laboratory components of CLE. In the faculties/Law School clinics, students render diverse services to the poor in their host communities, free of charge.³⁵ In clinics, students deal with human beings and not with cases or some abstract situations as in the traditional method; and in the process they acquire critical lawyering skills needed for practice, in addition to an appreciation of the value of professional responsibility.³⁶ Nigerian law students now learn and become sensitive to the importance of poverty and access to justice, social justice, rule of law/human rights protection, and other social problems, in the lives of the people and the

32 See Christopher White and Lynn Manfred, Guidebook for Clerkship Directors, 3rd Edition Alliance for Clinical Education, 2005 available at familymed.uthscsa.edu/ACE/chapter5.htm last accessed 20 August 2013 p. 6.

33 Lewis, Richard, "Clinical Legal Education Revisited", Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University, Wales, UK. <http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/research/pubs/repository/212> last accessed 22 August 2013 p. 7.

34 See the decision extracts of Special Meeting of Committee of Provosts and Deans of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria, in Internal Memorandum Ref. OOU/ACA/31b dated 8th March, 2013.

35 See sub-paragraph 3.1 above for the various activities of students in clinics.

36 See Hovhannisian, Lusine, op. cit. at p. 10.

important role they can play in all of these.³⁷ This process inculcates public interest lawyering in them and propels them to defend human rights and social justice in practice.³⁸

Through various clinical activities, law students widen access to justice for the poor in Nigeria, and 13 law faculties now have law clinics.³⁹ In addition to carrying out enlightenment programmes on human rights and democracy, etc, some of the clinics have special projects/community outreach programmes, targeted at specific communities, especially at the grassroots. Clinical experience is so unique, outstanding and incomparable, such that students feel highly motivated and inspired when they solve problems of the poor, and for this reason, the clinic stands out as the highlight in the legal training and personal lives of some students.⁴⁰

4. Benefits to Faculty

Clinical education offer benefits not only to the law students but to teachers as well, as it helps to develop the faculty, both in terms of scholarship and teaching methods. Through clinical methodology, teachers are exposed to new teaching skills and thereby improve their competence.⁴¹ New practice based courses could also be stimulated by engaging in clinical methodology.⁴² Scholarship is promoted by presenting opportunities for Nigerian law teachers to write scholarly articles on CLE, which have been published both locally and internationally. Clinical education also offers opportunities for law teachers in Nigeria to have a rethink about the traditional teaching method and the need to shift from this.

D. ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND EVALUATION OF CLINICAL EDUCATION

1. Achievements of Clinical Education

In the last decade, clinical education has gained much awareness among stakeholders of legal education, especially law teachers, coupled with the advocacy efforts of NULAI, some measure of successes have been recorded. Amongst these are:

- i. The Council of Legal Education – which is one of the bodies regulating legal education in Nigeria, in its revised accreditation guidelines, now requires the introduction of clinical education and the setting up of law clinics in law faculties as one of the best paths to the development of the faculties of law in Nigeria.⁴³
- ii. The Legal Aid Act 2011 (as Amended) now recognizes law clinics as providers of legal aid, under Part IV Section 17.

³⁷ *Ibid* at p. 14

³⁸ Law Commission, Review of Legal Education in Bangladesh, Final Report , *op. cit.*

³⁹ This was stated by Ernest Ojukwu, in his Keynote address “Moving From Red to Green: Sharing the Nigerian Experience of Transforming Legal Education”, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ See the clinical experience of Nigerian law graduates in Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slides 15, 16 and 17.

⁴¹ See *Feldman, Marc, op. cit.* at p. 636.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See NULAI, Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 p. 21.

- iii. The National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian Universities, Law,⁴⁴ now recognise clinical work, amongst other means of determining students' academic competence for the award of bachelor's degree, apart from script/examination assessment.
- iv. The National Universities Commission (NUC), has now introduced in its minimum benchmarks, community service, as a compulsory course, an ideal already encapsulated by clinical education.⁴⁵
- v. The capacity of legal aid in Nigeria has been expanded by an additional 2,000 law students working in the clinics offering pro bono services throughout the country.⁴⁶
- vi. Law graduates with clinical experience are more skilled in problem solving in law practice than their non-clinical colleagues.⁴⁷ At the 2013 Freedom of Information Teacher Training Workshop for Clinical Law Teachers,⁴⁸ staff clinicians attest to the quality of clinical law graduates, in terms of their communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills, etc.
- vii. Establishment of law clinics improves the ratings of faculties during accreditation exercises by NUC and Council of Legal Education.

2. Challenges of Clinical Education

In spite of the laudable achievements of clinical education within a decade, it is nevertheless being confronted by some challenges inimical to its mainstreaming and institutionalization in Nigerian legal education. Some of these are:

- i. *Apathy to CLE*: Twenty law faculties have neither established law clinics nor introduced clinical education.⁴⁹ The issue with this is that, those who resist the introduction or mainstreaming of clinical education are from within the law faculties, especially senior faculty members, who are unfamiliar or unclear with the concept.⁵⁰
- ii. *Lip service to CLE*: Some of the law teachers pay lip service to the adoption of clinical methodology, while in actual fact, they still continue with traditional habits and practices,⁵¹ making legal education, business as usual.
- iii. *Inimical actions by some Deans/Provosts*: The actions/inactions of some Deans/Provosts of Faculties/Colleges of Law are inimical to clinical education where it has been introduced with the component of law clinics,⁵² e.g. by not allowing clinics to be integrated into the curriculum

44 Published in April, 2007 p. 24.

45 This was stated by Ernest Ojukwu, in his Keynote address "Moving From Red to Green: Sharing the Nigerian Experience of Transforming Legal Education", *op. cit.*

46 See NULAI, Nigeria Annual Report, 2012 p. 3.

47 See Krieger, H. Stefan, "The Effect of Clinical Legal Education on Law Student Reasoning: An Empirical Study", Vol. 35:1 (2008) *William Mitchell Law Review* p. 396.

48 Organized by Network of University Legal Aid Institution (NULAI) Nigeria held at Best Western Ajuji Hotel, Gudu, Abuja 23rd – 24th May, 2013.

49 See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slide 13.

50 See Nisreen Mahasneh and Kimberly Thomas, *op. cit.* at pp. 112 and 130.

51 See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slide 14.

52 See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slide 14.

or by not allowing clinical work to be graded. This has the effect of relegating clinics to a second-class status in the minds of both the faculty and students.⁵³

- iv. *Lack of proficiency in curriculum and lesson plans' development:* Most teachers in law faculties with clinical curriculum still struggle with developing proper and effective lesson plans, as a vehicle for teaching delivery. The inability to successfully develop lesson plans make teachers easily revert to the traditional method.
- v. *Clinics operation violate best practices:* The way some clinics are run and the services rendered violates best practices and professional ethics.⁵⁴ The result is that, clients' interests may be compromised, in addition to rendering clients with "second-hand" or "substandard services".
- vi. *Low staff-students ratio in some clinical programmes:*⁵⁵ In some clinical programmes, there are a few staff clinicians supervising many student clinicians. The immediate consequence of this is the overburden of the staff clinicians and in addition, there may be ineffective supervision of clinical work, resulting in shoddy services.
- vii. *Disruption of clinical service:* Most law clinics in Nigeria are situated within faculty premises and operate from campuses. When there is a strike action, especially by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) whether at national or local level, to press governments/university authorities for various demands, clinical services/projects in public universities are disrupted. Some of the strike actions can last for several months.⁵⁶

3. An Evaluation of Clinical Education

From the consideration of capability of CLE to meet the required reforms in legal education in Nigeria, and the achievements of CLE, it can be opined that clinical education, has the potential to meet the needed reforms in legal education in Nigeria. The timeless MacCrate Report, 1992⁵⁷ gave the recipe of what should be the content of modern legal education and the core competences it must instil in students, comprising of basic skills⁵⁸ and values.⁵⁹ CLE encapsulates all of these, as can be gleaned from the examinations above.

"A lawyer can only be as good as the system of legal education that produced him."⁶⁰ For this

53 See Feldman, Marc., *op. cit.* at p. 621.

54 See Ernest Ojukwu, *op. cit.* at Slide 14.

55 *Ibid* at Slide 14.

56 The nationwide one declared on 2nd of June, 2013 by ASUU, for instance, to compel the Federal Government to honour an agreement reached with the Union in 2009 on adequate funding of universities and provision of infrastructure, is running to four months now at the time of writing this article.

57 A report of the American Bar Association's Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap.

58 These include: 1. Problems identification and solving; 2. Legal analysis and reasoning; 3. Legal research skills; 4. Factual investigation; 5. Communication; 6. Counseling; 7. Negotiation skills; 8. Trial and ADR procedure; 9. Practice management; and 10. Recognition and resolution of ethical dilemmas. See LawLearn, "Equipping Our Lawyers 2: Integrate attorney standards into law student education". Available at: <<http://lawlearn.wordpress.com/tag/maccrate-report/>> last accessed 24 August 2013.

59 These include: 1. Competence; 2. Promoting justice and fairness; 3. Improving the profession; and 4. Professional development. See LawLearn, *op. cit.*

60 See Onalaja, M.O., *op. cit.* at pp. 1, 10 and 11.

reason, clinical education, which has been adjudged as successful in filling some of the gaps that exist in traditional legal education,⁶¹ should be seriously considered in Nigeria if we want our legal education to be richer in educational opportunity and professional promise,⁶² by ensuring that all law faculties embrace CLE both as part of curriculum and as teaching methodology.

In spite of the capability of CLE to meet the desired reforms in legal education in Nigeria, there is the human element necessary to drive the change. Therefore, there must be willingness and more commitment on the part of law teachers, to change from current traditional practices and attitudes⁶³ to clinical method, in order to offer excellent teaching and learning environments.

On the evaluation of the introduction of CLE, it can be said that clinical education has been very beneficial to legal education in Nigeria and its performance with the last decade a huge success, judging from the examination made above, despite some of the challenges identified. For these efforts to be improved upon and the challenges to be surmounted, it will take sustained efforts on the part of NULAI and faculties/Law School, to build capacity of law teachers and for clinical education to be firmly entrenched in the breath and ethos of legal training in Nigeria.

One issue that must not be glossed over in legal education is funding because preparing students for legal practice is a big and important task. The MacCrate report was criticized for glossing over the issue of funding.⁶⁴ Clinical programmes must therefore be well funded by the university, in terms of provision of adequate physical space, equipment, staffing and funding of projects, etc.⁶⁵

The best way to fund clinical programmes is for it to be incorporated into the faculty budget, since the clinic is the laboratory and a content of legal education.⁶⁶ This is necessary for clinical programmes to be taken seriously and be seen as part of the educational programme of the faculty.⁶⁷ Before this is attained, law clinics in the interim, can partner with Bar Associations, NGOs and individuals for technical, service and financial support.⁶⁸

The status of law clinics in law faculties that have not integrated clinics into the curriculum is murky, in the sense that, clinical work will not be graded and will merely be taken as an extra-curricular activity. This has the tendency for clinics not to be seen as part of the faculty programme and thus not to be taken seriously by students, with the consequence that students will not like to devote their time to clinical work that would not earn them any credit and might ultimately affect clinical services or its survival.⁶⁹

It is vital that national best practices and benchmarks for legal education be articulated by NULAI and stakeholders of legal education in Nigeria, as it exists in other jurisdictions, such as United States, U.K. and Australia, in order to create an atmosphere for academic excellence.

61 *Ibid* at p. 3.

62 See Feldman, Marc., *op. cit.* at p. 621.

63 See Stuckey, Roy and others, *op. cit.* at p. 3.

64 See Rose, Jonathan, "The MacCrate Report's Restatement of Legal Education: The Need for Reflection and Horse Sense", 44 *J. Legal Educ.* 458 (1994).

65 See Nisreen Mahasneh and Kimberly Thomas, *op. cit.* at p. 115.

66 *Ibid* at p. 131.

67 See Nisreen Mahasneh and Kimberly Thomas, *op. cit.* at p. 131.

68 *Ibid* at p. 132.

69 See Feldman, Marc., *op. cit.* at p. 621.

E. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The examination of clinical education above has revealed that it is practice-oriented and offers an excellent teaching and learning environment, if best practices are followed and this paper therefore concludes that CLE has the capacity to address the deficiencies in legal education in Nigeria and meet the desired reforms which have been sidestepped for a long time, towards a legal training that builds competence, value and more practice oriented. CLE is therefore recommended as a template for legal education reform in Nigeria, and other countries in a similar situation to Nigeria.

This paper recommends that legal education should urgently be reformed and clinical education be adopted as a template for this reform. It equally recommends that the regulatory authorities for legal education in Nigeria should make the adoption of clinical education in law faculties curricula part of the accreditation requirements, and that clinical courses be offered as compulsory courses, including taking part in clinical work. This will go a long way towards improving legal education and make it more practice oriented, before any major reform is carried out.

