The idea of universal education was first mooted in 1955 when the universal primary education scheme was inaugurated by the government of Western Nigeria. The program was consequently adopted and introduced to other regions in the country. Using secondary sources of data collection, the paper took an historical overview of the role of local government in the management of the universal primary education program. The paper establishes that despite the laudable vision and objectives of the UBE program, the program has been generally constrained by lack of adequate funds, poor planning, poor institutional capacity, political interference among others. It therefore recommends among others the need to expand local government revenue base, institutional capacity in the area of planning and implementation and a strong public service ethics.

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