

# The imperative of research in Nigeria: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic

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The industrialized world has responded in disparate ways to the emergence of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the ensuing pandemic it caused, COVID-19. Technology was repurposed to track and

monitor the disease and research and development focused on the development of vaccines and investigated pharmaceutical and physical interventions to treat the disease.

New research published in the *International Journal of Technological Learning, Innovation and Development* has looked at the response from a developing nation, Nigeria. This nation has, not unlike many others with fewer resources and less money to spare, not yet contributed in a significant way to R&D into the coronavirus and our response to the [pandemic](#). Through a [case study](#), the team has gleaned lessons that might be applied to lessen the crisis in Nigeria of the next pandemic.

Morolake Bolaji, John O. Adeoti, and Joshua Adeyemi Afolabi of the Innovation and Technology Policy Department at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), in Ojoo, Ibadan, Nigeria, explain that Nigeria may have the capability but has remained a "laggard in R&D spending as well as R&D activities, particularly in the [health sector](#)." One might suggest that the term "developing nation" can only be applied if that country is active in the areas that lead to development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, the team suggests, reinforced "the imperative for Nigeria to significantly and urgently increase its R&D spending not only to combat subsequent health challenges but also to facilitate rapid structural transformation and economic [development](#)." A country that fails to rise to such crises and challenges by boosting its Sciencebase will inevitably continue to suffer the worst consequences of such a pandemic.

The team has five recommendations. The first is that the government must increase the nation's R&D budget. Secondly, health infrastructure needs considerable improvement. The third recommendation is that public R&D needs to integrate more effectively with the private sector to improve technological results. Fourthly, the government must improve

the transfer of the currently limited R&D "outputs" to the end-users. Finally, education in science and technology must be given a boost through governmental scholarships that focus on problem-solving rather than promotion.

**More information:** Morolake Bolaji et al, The imperative of research and development in Nigeria: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, *International Journal of Technological Learning, Innovation and Development* (2021). [DOI: 10.1504/IJTLID.2021.116342](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTLID.2021.116342)

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