

**PROJECT TITLE:** TO PROVIDES LEARNING MATERIALS AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD

 FOR IMPOVERISHED CHILDREN AT MATHODIST SCHOOL

 IKOT- OTOINYIE, URUAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,

 AKWA IBOM STATE, SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

Basic Education can be described as the very first level of learning a child is exposed to in his attempt to acquire knowledge. As its caption “basic” connotes, basic education is the foundation for any form of learning a child should get. In effect, it is a ‘sine-qua non’ or the most necessary level of education for any person. It is vital for the Child’s future as whatever he/she becomes in life depends, to a great extent, on his/her educational background or the type of basic education he/she had.

In Uruan Central Ward III in Uruan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, South-South Nigeria, our area of focus, it would appear that this level of education, its importance notwithstanding has completely been neglected. On ground, each of the eight (8) villages that constitute the ward has a primary school with one secondary school to cater for the children. But these primary schools are ghosts of their former selves. For instance, the most vital tool for provision of learning-the teacher-is grossly underprovided. At Methodist School, Ikot Otoinyie, which is the most populated village in the area, there have remained only three classroom teachers for many years now. Broken down desks litter the compound here and there. One of the school’s blocks has remained abandoned. No water and toilet facilities and the three teachers and head teacher do not live in the village, as such, they arrive school late every day, that is, as from 10:30a.m and leave for their home or other businesses from 12:30p.m each day. Attempt by the village elders to change the situation has not yielded any positive responses as the Local Government Education Authority complained, each time, of lack of teachers to post to the school. This situation is duplicated in all the villages in the area.

**School Dropout and Effects on the Community:**

The result of this ugly development is a high rate of school dropouts in the area. When the Project Team visited the villages, it was discovered, to our greatest shock and shame that despite the state government’s claim of the implementation of free and compulsory education in the state, this segment of the state’s population has nothing to show for it. Almost in every compound we entered there were little children crying for insufficient food available, with sunken eyes and protruded stomachs. You may ask about their parents – these are products of teenage or child pregnancies. Their teenage parents have abandoned them for the aged grandparents to search for food either as house helps or beggars in the state capital. Some of the girls have taken to prostitution and other degrades just to survive with their kids while the boys hawk along the every busy highways or turn to pickpockets and other vices. The community is groaning under the weight of government insensitivity to the welfare needs of its citizens. Some of these dropouts have been hijacked by politicians for their unwholesome activities.

**Remedy to Address the Situation:**

The solution to this is the provision of sound, functional basic education for these unfortunate ones. It is a common sight to see young, beautiful girls dressed in second-hand ‘leggings’ with tops to match who cannot respond correctly to an ordinary greeting in English Language. There is this girl, Ekenmini, who apparently left school in elementary two years ago. She can hardly spell her name or read a text messages in her phone. Any time she receives such messages, she will go around looking for someone to read for her. She is very pretty and appears willing to learn. In fact, according to her, she had gone to Calabar to live with a sister to enable her to go back to school only for the sister to lure her into going to bed with her male friends. She had to escape back to the village. She is already a mother-without a husband.

This ugly situation calls for the provision of functional and basic education with acquisition of skills training in various trades to empower these less-privileged children and youths in our society at no or minimal charges.

The program will aim at preparing the learners for two certificate examinations namely; the First School Leaving Certificate Examination and the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination using the existing National Basic Educational Syllabus, but with some modifications to emphasize practicability and functionality of the knowledge gained by the learners, especially at the upper basic level to equip them effectively for sustainable livelihood at completion of their learning experience.

There will be need assessment after intense mobilization through awareness campaigns in our website, churches, market places, house-to-houses, use of town criers and mounting of banners and posters. Each contact will be preceded with a workshop to refresh the facilitators with proper and suitable delivery methods by expert resource persons in the identified areas. The trades to be built in the scheme will include – woodwork, metal work, hairdressing, computer training, sewing and electrical installation.

Remain bless for your kind contributions to alleviate illiteracy and poverty around the world.

Best regards.