

# **CARE-GIVING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN IMO STATE NIGERIA.**

## **A PROPOSAL**

### **BACKGROUND**

Owerri, the state capital of Imo state, Nigeria is yet a growing city with many rural communities. Many workers in the town come to work from their homes-villages. So, the larger population of people live in the villages. The city is serving only a small percentage of the state. This explains also why the rural community is the focus of this proposal.

When a Priest of the Roman catholic church said “give me a child until he is seven and you can have him all his life” it was generally accepted as a maxim and an eternal statement but how far this maxim is put into practice and made useful remain a big question. In many rural homes in Imo State for example children of five years down do not have access to such knowledge that would prepare them for life above five. Which is the period of education. Reason, parents are either ignorant or have no time to give their infant children the necessary training that are taken before school education. The difference or lack of this basic knowledge is the reason for many bad behaviors among adults of our time. Such people, even when they acquire school education are a miss-fit in businesses, public offices or institutions. They are called (educated illiterates). Even when they are wealthy are called (money-miss-road)

Simple courtesy, mannerism, politeness, hygiene, group work, time to play, time to rest, time to work are inculcated to children when they are young. How to show appreciation respect to seniors, industry etc are also acquired while young. Eating habits, learning of own names, knowing the names of parents other siblings, name of village or town. How to escape from hurts or dangers etc are what children should know about before they enter into the world. Children of elite families no doubt acquire this knowledge along while children of rural

parents do not. They therefore enter into public schools timid raw and withdrawn. Often are easily provoked and fight to cover ignorance. This is not to say that the elites in society give all these to their children of this age bracket. Maybe that is why it is said that many adults have only 10% of their potentiality, except one is a genius. That gap in life continues to be a gap in development. At best parents of poor/rural community struggle to give their children food and get satisfied. The Proposal is aimed to narrow the gap if not bridge it for some as example. Be informed that Imo Self Help Organization (ISHO) started this care-giving with the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) before they phased out the idea in Imo State. We are happy to revisit it again.

## **THE PROBLEM.**

The problem is the disparity in life style and behavior between children of the high-class society and those of poor/ illiterate parents. Poor backgrounds and upbringing remain widen in the lives of those who did not acquire this basic knowledge earlier in life. This is made worse by the fact that these are not school subjects. They are practical things and habits they develop with time. At adult age they become imitative and unnatural. Those who do not acquire such habits from young ages and up become miss-fit in society. In appearance, dressing and choice of colors. they look awkward and shabby as literate adults. As a result of this lack there is fighting in offices, bad behaviors, superiority complexes or inferiority complexes. These complexes continue to divide society. This is why some adults do not even reason well. For a friendly society and good neighborhood, human development should be balanced to avoid disparity in life style and for harmonious living.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To balance or bridge the gap between children of privileged class and non to enhance productivity eg. In public services. At each age there are expectations but this is not true for all.

2. To fill the gap of what is not learned in poor homes, the basic instructions/knowledge that are taken for granted as children enter public school. Absence of which may retard progress.
3. To inculcate in children till 5 years of the less privilege in the rural areas such habits that would enhance their physical, mental development early in life and before they are six vide the maxim above.
4. To reduce miss-fit in our society. To reduce the number of never do wells.
5. To assist parents of poor class in the development of their children who are their first investment and more often their last hope.
6. To lay the foundation of the knowledge that would help children in question to march up with their peers of elite class in school and work places.
7. To initiate/ draw attention to this lack of basic education of children of rural population and to help the idea to spread to other areas. Hence it is started in Imo State with an intention to extend to the neighboring states.

## **METHODOLOGY**

People to be involved in the exercise:

1. Project carrier – Manager and Team.
2. Children from the age of 0 to 5
3. 20 centers to be chosen from rural villages. Qualification, they must have Nursery schools. Each center must be 50 children in number to qualify for a center. Those not up to are merged.
4. 5 care-givers must be chosen and trained for each center, with two nannies to clean the children. Care-givers are mostly women.

5. 2 supervisors should take care of the 20 centers and prepare interim reports.
6. Each center should have equipment for out door games and well fenced and protected to ward off intruders where there is enough space.
7. Care-givers already trained by Project team share 50 children per center into two and inculcate in them those essential things they need to know before entering public schools. Such as simple mannerism, how to be clean in body and environment, being polite and show of appreciation on receiving of gift, being able to pronounce their names and the names of their parents and where they come from, where they live or name of their village and town. Tolerance and being friendly. Learn the importance of not playing too much and when to rest, group activities. Common things like reporting injuries to parents or seniors before it is late would also be taught to the children. We chose care-giver because what the teacher says is taken more seriously than what parents say. Also the care-giver being part of the school creates the enabling environment for continuity . Supervised followup by the Project team , would help to sustain the program. Children are given snacks and lunch. Supervisors prepare reports while the project manager collects the final report. Best practice are awarded of both care-giver and children.

## **BUDGET CRITERIA**

1. hiring of personnel/handlers- - care-giver, nannies, supervisors etc
2. snacks and lunch for 50 children
3. transportation/ supervision
4. well protected equipment for games

5. preparation and training. The total cost is estimated at \$70,000. below is the breakdown.

## **SUMMARY**

The ultimate result of the Project is to prepare children before age 5 of Rural parenthood before they enter into the primary Education. It is aimed to prepare them for entry into the world. The things they learn will help them to integrate and socialize with their peers, who perhaps have been groomed in some of these activities.

The entry point is Nursery and as more children enroll year by year they cue into the scheme. That is why teachers in Nursery school are chosen as care-giver and for continuity.

1. The school is already existing and will make room for continued relationship.
2. The care-givers chosen from the Nursery will also make for a permanent relationship.
3. Each center will have a well built enclosure for gaming equipment and well labeled. This will also make permanent relationship with the Project carriers and the sponsors.
4. With the \$70,000 , estimated \$3,500 would be for each center.

