

Charity registration number 1191672



**ROPHEKA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
(REF)
ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2022**

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1.0 Our Aim

REF was set up by its board of trustees to: -

- Advance formal Primary and Secondary Education for underprivileged boys and girls (Aged 5-25 years old) in Ebologba, a poor rural community in Otukpo Local Government Area, of Benue State, Nigeria. There is a growing demand for good schools in rural communities in Nigeria. Therefore, the organisation intends to construct and manage its schools to deliver top quality primary and secondary education to children in rural Benue State, Nigeria. The provision will enable the children to acquire basic life skills like numeracy, literacy, citizenship skills and the capacity for lifelong learning. These will prepare the children for further education or vocational skills training and therefore, better prepare and equip them for employment;
- Advance vocational skills training for young adults (Age 18-25) in areas like catering, fashion, horticulture, welding and fabrication, plumbing etc. so, individuals are better equipped to work their way out of poverty. 42.6% of Nigeria's population is poor (World Bank, punchng.com). Therefore, it is hoped that skills training would certainly provide the necessary leverage that should lift the majority of the unskilled poor from mainly subsistent agriculture to ultimately owning small scale businesses with the attendant improvement in livelihood.
- Offer opportunities for improving literacy and numeracy and IT in the wider community so individuals can function better in current digital world. This would certainly improve the ability of such individuals to communicate better with others far and near. For example, being able to engage in digital communication via social media would offer tremendous advantage in areas like wellbeing, because of the abundance of information on the subject that is freely available on the internet.

2.0 Where the organisation operates

Nigeria

3.0 Ropheka International School, Otukpo

In September 2021, the organisation opened a primary school at Otukpo, Benue State, Nigeria after formal application and paying the requisite fees at the Benue State Ministry of Education, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. The school is temporally located at 14 Lagos St Otukpo. The board of trustees agreed this at their last meeting on 29 August 2021. There are currently 10 children aged 4 – 6 in attendance.

The quality of teaching and learning in rural or underprivileged communities in Nigeria have fallen principally as a result of government underfunding. A significant number children progressing to secondary schools have poor numeracy and literacy skills. These deficiencies are often difficult to correct in later educational life of the child because of the endemic lack of resources in government funded schools. In this context examination malpractices have emerged in which young people can gain certification from certain education centres without acquiring the knowledge and skills that are required to properly gain certification.

Therefore, the main focus of our curriculum (Primary 1 – 3) is literacy, numeracy and writing. The organisation aims to teach children under its care to be able to read fluently in English in their first three years of primary education through a variety of methods.

The lead trustee arrived in Nigeria from Manchester, UK in December 2021, to observe and work with the new school for six months to ensure that the right curricular decisions were being made and safeguarding measures are in place and highlighted.

3.1 Literacy

For literacy, the organisation uses Phonics resources produced by Phonic Books Ltd UK as local materials are inadequate or not readily available. There might be an opportunity for future international cooperation with the company to develop and market such resources for use in Nigeria.

The organisation purchased and transported over 100 children's books to Nigeria in support of our literacy drive. Most of them are second hand or bargains from stationary suppliers in Manchester UK. We aim to have a vibrant library of easy-to-read books that will encourage and inspire the children to enjoy reading.

3.2 Numeracy

Basic number work such as learning to count, simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division up to 2 - 3 digits in Primary 1 – 3. We use Primary Maths by Collins.co.uk in conjunction with appropriate local text books.

3.3 Writing

The school uses templates with hieroglyphic illustrations that the children can imitate.

3.4 Safeguarding

1. There were no incidents requiring us to trigger our child protection measures;
2. All children bring packed lunches to school. No child has been identified as without packed lunch to date;
3. Lunch supervision is provided by the teacher;
4. The school holds parental contact information for each child so we can contact next of kin should the need arise;
5. Corporal punishment of children is prohibited. Corrective measures based on dialogue have been adopted.

3.5 Monitoring

The lead trustee will spend 6 months in Nigeria Dec 2021 – May 2022 monitoring our primary 1 provision.

Observation of curricular activities

The lead trustee reports being encouraged by the sessions with the children, recounting that they display great enthusiasm for reading, indicating that our strategy for reading will succeed. The children showed typical frustrations with number work. The challenge will be to

use a variety of methods and resources to encourage them. Maths resources are expensive and this will be highlighted in the section “challenges”. The children are making good progress with writing skills. The temporary accommodation lacks a recreation ground and there is an urgent need to locate a playground near the school.

Dr Andrew Daniels and Mrs Jenny Daniels are the named persons on our governing document for monitoring the quality of our educational provision as well as our general administration. They are unavailable this year because of travel difficulties resulting from the pandemic.

3.6 Parents

The school hosted a Christmas party for the children on the last day of term in Dec 2021. The party was attended by both children and their parents. It provided an opportunity for the lead trustee to discuss our vision with the parents.

Further 1 – 1 sessions with parents are planned for May 2022 to discuss progress so far and our future plans. Issues to be discussed include tuition fees. Currently, a fee of N8000 (approximately £12 per child each term has been set. Only 1 parent has so far paid but no child has been excluded for failure to pay the fees. The fees were set to meet basic cost of printing study materials and stationery. Parents are finding payment to be a challenge. It is not surprising as most of them are engaged in the informal sector of the local economy. The school aims to encourage the formation of a lively parent association that it can positively engage with for the benefit of the children.

4.0 Contact with a local organisation(s)

During the lead trustee’s time in Nigeria, an orphanage within a couple of miles of our primary school has been identified. The lead trustee met informally with one of the orphanage’s founders. Ropheka International School can offer school places to some of the children from the orphanage but there might be the need for externally sourced bursaries to fund school fees for the children. This will be discussed at the next trustee meeting.

The lead trustee plans to visit Peculiar Treasure Nursery and Primary School in Gboko; Benue State, Nigeria, a highly successful school with the aim of observing their good practices and, the possibility of collaborative work in the future. Peculiar Treasure is operated by Peace House, a Christian charity.

5.0 Finance

Items of Expenditure	Expenditure in Naira (Nigerian currency)	Approx. Sterling (£) based on the Bank rate of exchange of the pound to the Naira (£1 = N550)
Teacher remuneration Sept 2021 –April 2022;	N140,000	£225
Cleaning materials Sept 2021 – April 2022;	N5000	£10
Printing/photocopying	N33,000	£60
Class set of 9 tables and 18 chairs for start of the 2021/2022 academic year;	N120,000	£220
Electricity	N49,000	£89
Water	N7000	£13
Rent for 2021/22 academic year;	N200,000	£365
Air travel UK – Nigeria Return + Covid Travel charges;		£900
Upkeep Allowance at N100,000/month for 6 months (N600,000) (£1100)	N100,000/month for 6 months = N600,000	£1100 (Owed)
Logo design		£100
School Registration Fees	N265,000	£480
Radio Advertisement	N15,000	£30
Poster and Handbills	N15,000	£30
Book freight (BA) Nov 2020 Manchester to Nigeria		£130
Total	N849,000	£2652

£95 was contributed by three members of Authentic City Church Longsight, Manchester before the lead trustee travelled to Nigeria in Dec 2021. This sum will be handed to Ms McLachlan, responsible for finances, when the lead trustee returns. It is all the money the organisation has presently.

The expenditures indicated in the table above have been borne by the family of the lead trustee. The pandemic affected our original intention to appeal to the public for funding but as the country slowly emerges from it, it may be time seek effective ways of generating income.

6.0 Challenges

- The organisation needs to consult and work with a fundraising organisation as referred to in our charity governing document.
- The school would need 10 tables and 20 chairs for the next intake at the start of the 2022/23 academic session. Estimated cost N200,000=00 (£365 approx). The organisation projects admitting 20 new children in Sept 2022;
- A photocopier estimated to cost between £300 – £500 would be needed for the academic year 2022/23 for the school in Nigeria;
- Primary Maths learning aids are urgently required;
- There would be need for 2 additional teachers at the start of the 2022/23 academic year. One person to look after Nursery provision for which there seems to be a reasonable demand and a primary 1 or 2 teacher;
- Volunteering by parents to help with cleaning and lunch time supervision. Volunteering is not yet a well-received concept in Nigeria. Generally, people expect some remuneration for their services;
- The organisation urgently needs a bank account as it requests for donation from the public. Unfortunately, our applications have been rejected by three banks in the UK. The organisation may need professional assistance in this regard;
- The organisation initially planned its Phase 1 activities to include commencing construction work on a permanent site. A minimum of £20,000 - £30,000 would be required to start. The pandemic has set us back by at least a year and half but we hope to start this in 2023;
- It is predicted that by 2050 (Approx. in 30 yrs.), Nigeria would have a population of about 400 million people. There are attendant social and economic consequences of such growth without adequate planning. Currently, Nigeria is experiencing serious and growing insecurities in certain parts of the country. With poor infrastructure and industrialisation, skills training should hopefully provide young adults with opportunities for positive advancement in areas of small-scale entrepreneurship to prevent them from drifting into violence and crime. This is an urgent need as government schemes seem to falter. Consequently, I plan to visit a local Catholic Technical School in Makurdi, Benue State in May 2022 to study what they do and its effect on the employment prospects of the beneficiaries.

7.0 Trustees

Dr Owoicho Okpe (Lead Trustee)	Planning and Monitoring;
Ms Josephine McLachlan	Finance
Mrs Catherine Okpe	Primary Education
Dr Kola Saka	Skills Training
Mr Christopher Lomax	Project Monitoring

8.0 Appendix

Travel Risk Assessment

The risks to the lead trustee in Nigeria and mitigations: -

1. Kidnapping. Avoid unnecessary travel and travel in day light (Risk low);
2. Malaria. Use anti mosquito body creams to ward off mosquitos (Risk medium);
3. Diarrhoea. Exercise care in food and water intake and have access to treatments (Risk medium);
4. Vehicular Accidents. Minimise travel and travel during the day where possible (Risk medium).