

ROPHEKA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

CHARITY REG NO: 1191672

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

1.0 Our Aim

The aims of Ropheka Educational Foundation (REF), are to: -

- Advance formal Primary and Secondary Education for underprivileged boys and girls (Aged 5-25 yrs old) in Ebologba, a poor rural community in Otukpo Local Government Area, of Benue State, Nigeria, where there is a growing demand for good schools. The strategy is to construct and manage its own schools, to deliver top quality primary and secondary education to children in rural Benue State, Nigeria. And, to prepare them for further education or vocational skills training for future gainful employment;
- Advance vocational skills training for young adults (Age 18-25) in areas like catering, fashion, horticulture, welding and fabrication, plumbing etc. for the purposes of self-employment and hopefully poverty alleviation. Over 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 could lift the majority of the unskilled poor from mainly subsistent agriculture to 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 the current digital age. 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 freely available information on the internet.

2.0 Where the organisation operates: -

Otukpo, Benue State, Nigeria

3.0 Observation of Curricular activities at Ropheka International School, Otukpo.

(A primary School Opened in September 2021)

The school now has a logo which is shown below with brief explanations of its symbolisms.



Designed by Chris Lomax (Trustee)

The Cross (Christ), Dove (Holy Spirit) and Book (Bible) are symbols that depict the ethos of the school. The school's motto "Veritas et Humilitas" means Truth and Humility, attributes the school intends to instil in its pupils. Ropheka International School by agreement of the trustees, is a Christian institution.

The lead trustee, Dr Owoicho Okpe visited the school from September to November 2022 and made the following observations.

There are 20 children on the school's register. Seven are in Primary Two, six in Primary One, and seven in the nursery. The nursery class started in 2023 in response to parental demands. The ages of the children in the school vary from three to seven years across the three tiers.

3.1 Literacy

Literacy, Numeracy, and Writing are the school's main curricular focus for Primaries One - Three. The organisation aims to ensure that the children admitted to the school should read well, and comprehend simple texts at the end of Primary Three. To further facilitate these objectives, the organisation started a library as shown in Figs 1 and 2 during Dr Okpe's visit in September - November 2022. Children will be assigned books to take home and read and their progress monitored by the teachers. The organisation intends to expand this facility in the near future.



Fig 1 Our Mini Library. We hope to expand the library to 4 shelves of books in Sept 2023.

The books were mostly donated by members of both the Tuesday Fellowship, and Authentic City Church Manchester.



Fig 2: Some of our Primary 2 Children sampling some of the new books.

Dr Okpe taught classes to children in Primary 2 during his visit and was amazed at the progress the children in Primary Two had made with their reading. I remember recounting the story of the prodigal son, as a part of a civic lesson in which the prodigal son decided to return home and say sorry to his father. Dr Okpe then wrote the word “Apologise” on the board, as an extension of “saying sorry”. This was an unfamiliar word to the children but he was surprised when two or three children applied phonic techniques and pronounce it correctly. That was delightful to observe. The children were obviously making progress. He was very optimistic that at the end of Primary Three in 2024, those currently in Primary Two, would have become good readers with the current Primary One hot on their heels.

3.2 Numeracy

The children were also making good progress in this subject. The teachers were keen to ensure that Primary Two children for example, can do simple additions, subtractions, and multiplications involving at least 2 digit numbers etc. Primary One focussed on learning to count up to 100 (figures and in words), do simple 1 digit sums etc as appropriate. The teachers use a variety of methods including games to facilitate the children’s learning as shown in Fig 3.



Fig 3: Primary 2 Numeracy group work “Roll the Dice and Add”.

3.3 Art (Colouring)

This was very popular with the children and they enjoyed colouring pictures. It was also an opportunity for group work enabling the children to learn to work together and share resources like coloured pencils and crayons. Fig 4 depicts such a session.



Fig 4: Primary 2 children in their “art” class.



Fig 5: Our typical classroom setting.

3.4 Lunch time

Parents provide their children with packed lunch. Our lunch break is at 11 a.m. as most children rarely have breakfast before arriving at school at 7:30 a.m. Our classrooms then double as dining rooms. Teachers supervise lunch breaks. Fig 6 shows a typical lunch time.



Fig 6: Lunch break.

3.5 Playtime

Our temporary facility has a limited space for play. There is very little outside space, therefore, classrooms double as “playgrounds” after lunch. This limits our play sessions. See Fig 7, 8 and 9 show our play sessions.



Fig 7: Children kitting up.



Fig 8 and 9: Playtime.



Fig 9: Playing/learning with the Number Board. (The Number Board was bought from Longsight market Manchester, UK).

3.6 School Uniform

In Nigeria, a school is incomplete without a distinctive and an attractive school uniform. So, in in October 2022, after due consultation with the parents and children, the school adopted its own school uniform adorned with the school's badge sewn on the shirts' chest pockets. The badge was designed by Chris Lomax a trustees (see section 3.0).



Fig 10 showing the school logo sewn onto the chest pocket of the school shirt.



Fig 11 showing the pupils in their smart new uniform

3.7 Christmas Party 2022

A Christmas party was held for the school children and their parents on 16th December 2022. By this date, Dr Okpe had returned to the UK but was informed that the children, staff and parents had a great time. Fig 12 shows the children and one of the teachers in their party dresses!



3.8 Safeguarding

There were no incidences during my visit that required us to trigger our safeguarding measures. It was noteworthy that the children were keen to attend school and parents were supportive.

3.9 Quality Assurance

Lesson observation with the aim of improving teaching and learning will be implemented for quality assurance purposes at the next visit Dr Okpe will undertake, hopefully in August - December 2023. At the recently concluded educational show in London by Bett from 29 - 31 March, 2023, it was suggested that videoing a lesson, and later analysing it with the teacher would be a useful way to proceed.

4.0 School Furniture

In most African countries, factory produced school furniture is difficult to come by or too expensive for a school on a low budget like ours. Therefore, the route often taken to procure them is to find a local furniture craftsman, often called “the carpenter”, give him a description of what you want, advance a fee to enable him to buy the necessary materials and with a great deal of supervision, you might achieve what you hoped for. The figures below indicate how we added 12 new tables and 22 chairs, to our existing set of furniture in 2022/2023 academic year. Figs 13,14 & 15 display the processes.



Fig 13: Coupling of the frames of our chairs and tables. The “carpenters” is on his lunch break.



Fig 14: Bookshelf being crafted.
The end product is often very good when well supervised by the customer.

5.0 Financial Projection for 2022/23 Academic year

	Estimated Cost in Naira	Sterling Equivalence (at N900: £1).
Staff remuneration (3)	N457,000	£508
School Furniture	N420,000	£467
Electricity and Water	N81,000	£90
Rent (2 years)	N400,000	£445
Advertisement	N30,000	£34
Shipping (Educational materials) from the UK to Nigeria 2022/23	N450,000	£500
Travel (Air ticket)	N900,000	£1000
Total	N2,738,000	£3044

A new set of school furniture comprising of 12 tables and 22 chairs was made in October 2022 costing N350,000 and 2 book shelves at N70,000 (total, N420,000 or (£467 approx.). These were paid for by Dr Okpe and family during his visit to Nigeria in September - November 2022. Staff remunerations are also being similarly met when proceeds from fees are inadequate (see table below).

5.1 School Fees

In 2021/22, as the nations were coming out of the Covid-19 lock down, we had only seven pupils and organisation did not set any fees for obvious reasons. However, to help with some of the running cost, it became necessary to do so, though, set at a minimum as most of the parents are engaged in the subsistent sector of the local economy and would find it difficult to pay higher fees. The fees were set by Dr Okpe and the school teachers and they are comparable with those in schools in the region. The fees set for 2022/2023 were as follows: -

Term 1 (Sept -Dec)	Nursery	Primary 1	Primary 2
Blue T-Shirt	Free	Free	Free
School Uniform	N2,500	N2,500	N2,500
Portfolio of curricular materials	N2,000	N3,000	N3,000
Tuition Fees	N2,500	N5,000	N5,000
Hygiene materials	N300	N300	N300
Total	N7,300	N10,800	N10,800
Sterling Equivalent @N900:£1	£8.10	£12	£12

Term 2 (Jan-April)	Nursery	Primary 1	Primary 2
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Portfolio of curricular	N2,000	N3,000	N3,000
Tuition Fees	N2,500	N5,000	N5,000
Hygiene materials	N300	N300	N300
Total	N4,800	N8,300	N8,300
Sterling equivalent @N900:£1	£5.33	£9.22	£9.22

Term 3 (April-July)	Nursery	Primary 1	Primary 2
Portfolio of curricular materials	N2,000	N93,000	N3,000
Tuition	N2,500	N5,000	N5,000
Hygiene materials	N300	N300	N300
Total	N4,800	N8,300	N8,800
Sterling equivalent	£5.33	£9.22	£9.22

Fees Collected (Term 1)

Primary 2

4@N10,800 = N43,200
 1@N8,000* = N8,000 (owing N2,800)
 2 pupils owing = 0*
 1 pupil left = 0*
 Total = N51,200

Primary 1

5@N10,800 = N54,000

Nursery

4@N7,300 = N29,200

Overall total = N134,400 (£149).

*pupils owing fees

So far, the organisation has not excluded children whose parents owe fees. There is a need for a policy on school fees and this would be included on the agenda for the next trustees meeting.

5.2 Expenditure from the school fees collected

Part staff remuneration	N65,000
Tailor (school	N18,000

uniform)	
Photocopier ink toner	N5,000
Printing logo on T-shirts and school shirts	N5,000
Transportation of school furniture from “carpenter” to school	N3,000
Hygiene products	N2,100
Production of exam materials	N9,790
Total	N107,890 (£120)
Balance	N134,400 - N107,890 = N26,510 (£30)

The balance will be used to meet emergencies like electricity and water.

5.3 Donations

A total of £770.85 has been donated to the charity by the Tuesday Fellowship and some members of Authentic City Church, Manchester UK.

6.0 Assets

A photocopier worth over £300 was gifted to the school in September, 2022 by an elderly gentleman who wished to remain anonymous. The photocopier is now in use at the school. There are also 22 tables and 42 chairs.



Fig 15: The children were delighted with their copier.

7.0 Challenges

Some of the challenges that we had in 2021/22 for example, provision of additional furniture, photocopier, recruitment of additional teachers, have been met. However there are still some challenges as stated below: -

- The organisation, needs to consult and work with a fund raising organisation urgently. Unfortunately, this is being hindered by banks' reluctance to open an account for the charity. Hopefully, this will be an item of discussion at the next trustees' meeting with the aim of resolving it. There are suggestions to go online but I am a little concerned;
- I visited Peculiar Treasure Nursery and Primary School, Gboko Benue State, Nigeria in October 2022. Unfortunately, the staff at this school didn't seem open to collaboration. However, Dr Okpe will continue to search for schools in the locality that may be willing to engage in mutually beneficial collaboration.
- Visiting the Catholic Technical School in Makurdi, Benue State has been postponed until a more appropriate time.

8.0 Trustees

Dr Owoicho Okpe (Lead Trustee) Planning and Monitoring;

Ms Josephine McLacklan Finance

Mrs Catherine O Okpe Primary Education

Dr Kola Saka Skills Training

Mr Christopher Lomax Project Monitoring

8.0 Appendix

Travel Risk Assessment

The risks to myself in Nigeria: - 1. Kidnapping. I avoided unnecessary travels and travelled mainly in day light (Risk medium); 2. Malaria. I used anti mosquito body creams to ward off mosquitos (Risk medium); 3. Diarrhoea. Adopt reasonable hygiene standards (Risk low); 4. Vehicular Accidents. I travelled less frequently and in day time mostly (Risk medium).