

'Project Unveil' to reduce school dropouts'

Project Unveil, a project that empowers the children from low-income families, recently finished the maiden edition of its VIVA Summer Camp held at Lifeforte International School, Asete, Ibadan. The Chief Executive Officer of the organisation, Miss Oluwadara Johnson, a student of Harvard University, United States of America, in this interview with OLAOLUWA MIMOLA discusses the rationale behind the establishment of the organisation, among other issues. Excerpts:

WHAT informed Project Unveil?

What motivated me was the drive and the desire to raise hope of a brighter future for the children from low-income families and the need to encourage an equal distribution of income in Nigeria. This I believe can be done through kind gesture of the rich to help the less-privileged ones in the society.

However, I wanted to drastically reduce the school dropout rates in Africa; making Nigeria the starting point.

How did you select the children for the programme?

Since we can't reach every indigent child in Africa ones, we decided to start from Ibadan, Oyo State. Hence, we reached out to principals of public schools in the city, to recommend indigent but brilliant children to us, so that we can raise hope for them in life. Some of these children were house girls, some of them hawk on the streets, while some don't even go to school. As a result, they are vulnerable to prostitution and human trafficking. We also considered the ability of the children to speak, and understand English Language, even if it is not that correct enough.

Though, we wished we could accommodate all the recommended children, we had to randomly select just 43 among them, that we could take good care of to the university level.

What were the responses of the parents?

We got mixed reactions. Some parents were very happy that the burden of taking care of their children for the whole one week was taken off their shoulders. They also considered it a rare opportunity for their children to see the other side of life. So, they did not want them to miss the opportunity. While some other parents were not really happy, because

the children were helping them to hawk. So, they thought that they were losing some money.

Meanwhile, the lucky 43 children had a wonderful time in the one-week camp. We fed them with good food, clothed them, protected them, trained them and also gave them pocket money, in case they have anything to buy. We are very sure that the training and the information that they got would change their lives for the best.

How did the children respond to the programme?

Oh! The children were

so elated, having a rare opportunity to see the other side of life, and experienced the life of a child born with silver spoon in his mouth. Many of them wished the camp did not finish. You could hear them saying: "Aunty, we enjoy our camp. We don't want to go again." And when you talk about their orientation now, it is superb and progressive. One of those things that they learnt and embraced was the confidence they had built that they could become anything they wanted to become in life, in spite of their backgrounds. A lot of them

were down cast when they came in, but now they are full of life and have hope for brighter future.

They were fully aware of the peril in human trafficking and prostitution among other vices. They now believe that education is the greatest engine of personal development, which unlocks their destinies. They learnt about table manner, performing art, drawing, how to comport themselves and some

other etiquets.

How did you raise the money to finance the project?

This was quite a challenge, as we all know the state of the economy in the country presently. So, we partnered with a private school in Ibadan, Lifeforte International School, and other meaningful individuals, who have made it and were ready to give back to the society.

What are the challenges so far?

The biggest challenge so far was having to let them go. The children were so dear to me. They too didn't want to go again. But we have equipped them with the necessary things that would see them through in life, and also what would help them when they go back to their normal lives, so that they may not be depressed. We encouraged them to continually practise what they have learnt while in the camp.



'Why we keep two teachers in class'

EDUCATION Tribune, during its interaction with some proprietors of private schools in Oyo State recently, learnt that Mount Zion International School, Sharp corner, Oluyole Ibadan, kept two trained teachers in a class.

The Proprietress of the school, Mrs. Joy Aderuju told Education Tribune that a class of 25 pupils would need two teachers for effective learning and to ensure that no child is left behind in the teaching process.

According to her, each child learnt at different paces, as some are fast learners, while some are very slow.

Her words, "In this regard, it is the responsibility of the school to provide a conducive learning envi-

ronment where both the fast and slow learners will learn independently.

"In this school, we believe that parents should be given value for their money," she said, adding that the two teachers in each class work together to ensure effective learning among the pupils.

Speaking further, she said "By this method, we have been able to bridge the gap between the fast and slow learners. Moreover, apart from the fact that there is no room for distractions, there is continuity in learning in the sense that if a teacher is not in school for one reason or the other, the second teacher would be around to take the class.

Speaking about par-



Ukrainian Ambassador to China, Dr. Oleg Skoropad, laying the foundation stone of African Maritime proposed University, Oyo, recently. With him are the staff of the African Maritime Academy, Oyo.

FCE (Special) Oyo COEASU gets new chairman

COMRADE Salami Rauf has emerged the new Chairman, College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU), Federal Col-

lege of Education (Special), Oyo chapter.

He became the new chairman of the union after a keenly successful and peaceful election held by the union recently in the college.

In his acceptance speech, Comrade Rauf pledged his commitment to the union and promised good welfare package for the union members.

"We shall be render-

ing selfless services to immortalise our name in the history of the union.

"Moreover, the new executive shall ensure that congress members are given value for their loyalty and financial contributions," he said, adding that the new executive would strive to improve and sustain the integrity of the union and congress members within and outside the college.



Comrade Salami Rauf, Chairman of FCE (Special) Oyo COEASU.