

UK COMPANY CHOICE TEXTILE LTD TO DONATE ONE MILLION BOOKS TO IMO STATE GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA

Almost defying belief in such an oil rich country there are over eight million children who do not attend school in Nigeria, a figure unlikely to show any significant improvement over the foreseeable future. Even where children are lucky enough to reach a school, text books are in such short supply that in some of the poorest areas as many as twenty children will have to share just one book. And while in the UK every child has access to a library, there are very few libraries in Eastern Nigeria and even where they do exist they often hold only a limited and outdated range of text books.



> First shipment of books ready to leave London.

As UNESCO has reported “... education is the key to increasing economic growth in poorer countries – just one dollar invested in education can generate up to fifteen dollars in economic growth ...” Or, as the UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova in October 2011 said: “...an educated population is a country’s greatest wealth there can be no escape from poverty without a vast increase in secondary education...”



> Books being presented to the delegates of Imo State. Also present second from right is Ambassador Nwanna

A further document from the World Bank entitled “Textbooks and Library provision in Sub Saharan Africa” reported that “...the most significant sources of information for students were copying from the blackboard, teacher dictation and low cost leaflets often in the form of notes plagiarized by teachers and sold to students . These leaflets are generally poorly written and equally poorly produced but are affordable and thus in demand. Cases were reported of teachers forcing students to buy their notes as a means of income supplement.”

Lots of fine words have been written by many distinguished people but what has been needed is practical, positive action to provide young children with the books they need. Now one visionary man is showing what can be done. Aloysius Ihezue, Managing Director of Choice Textile Ltd., has for years demonstrated a passionate interest in the value of education and charitable activities.

As a result of his belief in the importance of education, not only for the overall betterment of mankind, but also for the vital part it can play in the eradication of poverty and ignorance, his company has launched a hugely ambitious project to send one million text and educational books to the Imo State Government in Eastern Nigeria over the next one year or so. The books, to be distributed to all schools throughout the state, are being sent to support Governor Rochas Okorochoa’s policy of providing free education for all children. Over time it is hoped to extend the project to cover other states in the region.

The first consignment of books was given a huge send off in London in the presence of Ambassador Dozie Nwanna, Deputy Nigerian High



> Our first container being loaded



> Aloysius with his staff and dignitaries from Africa who attended the Book Launch

Commissioner, Dr Eric Uzoalor representing Amb. Ralph Uwechue, President General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Ngozi Njoku Director General Imo Foundation and Donatus Ozoemena, Deputy Speaker, Imo State House of Assembly, both representing the Imo State Government, as well as the full complement of Choice staff who had worked tirelessly to collect, sort and pack the books.

As a company with a deep social conscience Choice Textile Ltd has over the years supported the work of many UK charities, has already helped to meet the costs of building a new school in Mgbidi Oru West LGA, supported a children's orphanage in Ghana, the SOS village in Lagos and, through Oxfam and the Red Cross, provided much needed assistance to the Haitian earthquake appeal.

Choice has promised that it will continue to meet all operational obligations right up to the arrival of the books in Nigeria. Once there the Imo State Government, working through the Imo Foundation and in close cooperation with Victor Ihezue, our Project Director, will oversee the warehousing, sorting and distribution of these books to nursery, primary and secondary schools, and in addition to libraries, universities and other colleges throughout the state.



> Triumph, as staff and delegates gather to bid farewell to the first of many containers to Nigeria

And the result? Many hundreds of thousands of children and older students will be provided with these all important text books and will benefit from much greater educational opportunities.

Children who perhaps may have missed out on a comprehensive education will be able to stay on at their school; secure in the knowledge that they now have the books to enable them to continue with their studies. This new venture, operating from a warehouse in West London and in partnership with the free education policy of the present Administration in Imo State, will help lift many children out of poverty and ignorance and be of lasting benefit to future generations.



> All smiles and a final wave while the book container departs London

Nigeria has the second lowest transition rate from primary to secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa

To monitor the ever increasing demand for secondary education, UNESCO has created “the effective transition rate”; an indicator which determines the chances of a student moving to secondary education.

The world’s lowest transition rates from primary to secondary education are found in sub-Saharan Africa, however the prevalence varies drastically between countries.

According to the latest UNESCO report, 2011 Global Education Digest, the transition for students from primary to secondary schools in the Seychelles is 98%. The report states Tanzania along with Nigeria has one of the lowest conversion rates of 36% and 44% respectively.

The report also went on to say that more than 21.6 million children remain excluded from the education sector, many of which were expected never to enter a school in Sub-Saharan Africa. Distressingly the report states “two out of three children in Africa are left out of secondary school”.



TABLE 1: PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS TRANSITION IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

STATE	PRIMARY ENROLMENT	SECONDARY ENROLMENT	%
Abia	277,443	142,508	51.3
Anambra	313,521	174,189	55.5
Ebonyi	415,940	180,063	43.2
Enugu	705,421	192,146	27.2
Imo	473,038	193,758	40.9

TABLE 2: PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

STATE	MALE ENROLMENT	%	FEMALE ENROLMENT	%
Abia	24,775	50.62	24,165	49.35
Anambra	137,390	51.20	35,640	48.80
Ebonyi	5,811	33.79	10,936	66.21
Enugu	7,403	50.46	17,083	49.54
Imo	32,182	49.80	32,432	50.20

TABLE 3: PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

STATE	MALE ENROLMENT	%	FEMALE ENROLMENT	%
Abia	138,165	49.80	139,278	50.20
Anambra	174,243	45.31	139,278	54.69
Ebonyi	205,615	49.42	210,325	50.58
Enugu	350,052	49.62	355,369	50.38
Imo	242,267	51.22	230,771	48.78

TABLE 4: SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

STATE	MALE ENROLMENT	%	FEMALE ENROLMENT	%
Abia	63,824	44.79	78,684	55.21
Anambra	74,690	42.88	99,499	57.12
Ebonyi	89,636	49.78	90,427	50.22
Enugu	83,311	43.36	108,835	56.64
Imo	89,923	46.41	103,835	53.59

Source from UBEC 2003 and Professor Grace Chibiko Offorma