



Rural Africa Children's Education Trust

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New Milestone as RACET Celebrates 10th Anniversary

In September 2008, twelve children from rural villages in Cross River State, Nigeria, were helped by RACET to attend secondary school. They were children whose parents were mostly subsistence farmers growing small plots of cassava and yam, including several displaced by tribal violence which swept through the area in 2005.

Parents and relatives had been lost and many children were left without the means to attend secondary school due to the costs of tuition, textbooks and writing materials. Donors were found for these twelve children with the goal of assisting them through the six-year secondary school term. But as successive groups of children gained assistance, it became clear that attendance at secondary school was insufficient: the quality of education had to be improved in order to break the cycle of rural poverty.



Gabriel Chigbe is studying Mass Communications at the University of Calabar. He is pictured here at the Induction Ceremony in April 2018, marking the official beginning of his university career. Potentially a future journalist, Gabriel joined the Press Club during his first week at uni. He always stood out as one of RACET's brightest students and it is truly a pleasure to see him have the opportunity to fulfill his potential.

With the generous support of several donors, including the family of Sir Brandon Gough after whom the centre is named, RACET inaugurated a library and computer suite in 2015 – the same year computer based tests became compulsory for aspiring university students in Nigeria.

Now children in Ntrigom, many of whom never had access to electricity in their villages or schools, can finally learn how to use computers and accompanying digital learning materials, all powered with solar energy. The number of students in receipt of full annual scholarships has also increased to 56 students for the 2018 academic year.

Unsurprisingly, a large number of students now regularly excel at their WAEC leaving exams and dream of attending university. Mr Ayo Gbadebo, our Head of Operations in Nigeria, is responsible for managing the centre and ensures all the resources available is best deployed to support students at the three secondary schools we assist.

With great pride RACET is happy to announce that three of its former secondary students are now at university, thanks to the generosity of two families. We hope there are other families willing to do likewise because, as a result of RACET's success, eight students who passed the JAMB entrance examination in March 2018 now have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams by attending university. It costs approximately £600 annually to support a student at university with tuition, textbooks and living expenses. **RACET is urgently seeking more families and individuals who would be willing to undertake that level of assistance over a four-year period.**



Linda Elom is studying Human Anatomy at CRUTECH and intends to pursue a career in medical sciences. One of RACET's original twelve students, Linda never thought she'd have the opportunity to finish secondary school, much less go on to University. She is grateful to her donor family who made all this possible.



Janet Ayim is studying Industrial Biochemistry at CRUTECH. One of our youngest students, she proved her academic merit at Ntrigom Community Secondary School and was encouraged by RACET to apply for university. When she gained a place, RACET was delighted to assist her thanks to a big-hearted Sevenoaks family determined to support the education of girls.

RACET will continue to work predominantly at the Senior Secondary School level supporting bright students with the full costs of tuition, textbooks, examination fees and all writing materials.

Library Nears Completion



RACET wishes to thank Fr. David and the One World Fund at St. Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks for the generous donation which enabled the purchase of 30 tables for the Library at the Sir Brandon Gough Centre in Ntrigom. Students wasted no time in using the new study area by bringing their own stools to sit on while the new stools are being made by a local carpenter.

Sometimes it's not just about the books...

- On the last inspection visit to Nigeria, Trustees distributed more than 300 packs of sanitary towels to female students. In rural communities, hygiene products are a luxury item most families cannot afford. Crucially, they make the difference between a female student being able to attend school four weeks per month or only three. This kind of practical support is another way RACET is working hard to keep young women in school.
- Friday Odey is a name to remember. When RACET Trustees met this brilliant young man outside his family home in February, he was too weak to stand. Laid low weeks earlier by suspected appendicitis and a large unhealed incision to his groin, Friday clearly needed medical treatment. With his family unable to afford further medical treatment, RACET stepped in to ensure funds were provided and RACET's Head of Operations, Ayo Gbadebo, over the course of the next 10 days, took Friday for treatment several times to the hospital in Abakaliki, an hour away by car. Determined to sit his university entrance exam despite having missed school for two months prior and not being fully recovered, Friday scored the highest mark – well above the requirement to gain a place. He has since regained his health too.

A time for farewells and hellos...

The Trustees of RACET wish to heartily thank Debbie McMenamain for her nine years on the Board of Trustees, the final three during which she served as Chair. Deirdre Trapp has accepted the invitation to take on the role as new Chair, and Olga Herrmann has been welcomed as a new Trustee.

Visit the RACET website at www.racet.org
and share your thoughts with us at
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For information about donations and
other queries by phone, contact
Mary Ann Perasso on 01959 522337

**Olga Herrmann, new Trustee
who has made two trips to
Nigeria with RACET**

