SUPPORTING A QUALITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

SUMMARY: Taking a Holistic Approach
Oando Foundation, launched and supported by Oando PLC, is committed to increasing access to and improving the quality of basic education in Nigeria by focusing on the areas of education with greatest need. Understanding that improving education quality is a multifaceted problem, Oando Foundation’s education programme addresses multiple challenges facing education and learning inside and outside of the school environment. With the assistance of the community and through its Adopt-A-School Initiative, Oando Foundation takes a holistic approach to education in addressing gaps in the education system in Nigeria.

TYPE OF IMPACT
ON SOCIETY
• Access to educational opportunity
• Learning outcomes
• Strengthened education systems
ON SOCIETY AND BUSINESS
• Development of a skilled workforce
• Efficiency of education collaborations
• Community social and economic development
ON BUSINESS
• Brand differentiation
• Employee retention and morale
• Profitability
• Business resilience

TYPE OF INVESTMENT
• Direct Programming
• Educator Training
• Product Development
• Infrastructure

INTENDED BENEFICIARIES
• Children, youth and adult learners
• Educators
• Community
• Government
• Business

OANDO FOUNDATION (NIGERIA / ENERGY)
**THE EDUCATION ISSUE**

Nigeria has the largest number of primary-school-age children out of school of any country in the world, with some 10.5 million children of this age not attending school. Although primary education is free in Nigeria, various barriers including school fees for school uniforms and books can prohibit a child from getting an education. As Nigeria’s population grows, additional strain will be put on public resources to provide access to quality education.

**THE BUSINESS CASE**

Headquartered in Nigeria, Oando PLC’s long-term operational plans are solely focused within the country. By improving access to quality basic education in Nigeria, Oando PLC, through Oando Foundation seeks to develop a skilled workforce in the long term to drive economic growth and poverty reduction and create a safe and equitable Nigeria.

**PLANNING FOR IMPACT**

Prior to 2011, Oando PLC’s corporate social responsibility department managed the company’s social investments, including education. Oando PLC limited its investments in education to improving school infrastructure. Once the CEO decided to increases its investments in education in order to improve learning outcomes in the communities where Oando operates, Oando PLC established the Oando Foundation.

The Foundation conducted an extensive analysis of the education sector in Nigeria to identify where its investments in education could have the most impact to improve learning outcomes. After conducting a needs-based assessment and determining that significant investment in secondary and tertiary already existed, Oando Foundation made a strategic decision to focus its investments in primary education, particularly girls’ education in the northern states of Nigeria. Oando Foundation embraced this as an opportunity to innovate and strengthen the delivery of education in Nigeria, and take a leading role in changing the education landscape in Nigeria.

Oando Foundation works closely with the government and partners with experts in their education specialties to maximize impact.

**THE INVESTMENT**

Initiated in 2007 as an initiative focused on improving infrastructure, Oando Foundation started its flagship programme, the Adopt-A-School Initiative (AASI), in 2011 in partnership with the Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Boards to focus on specific aspects of education and learning.

The AASI currently takes a more holistic approach to improve learning outcomes and to increase enrolment, retention and transition rates in public schools in Nigeria through seven programmatic areas and activities: 1) constructing and renovating school building and facilities; 2) providing teacher training and instructional aids; 3) establishing and strengthening “School Based Management Committees” (parent-teacher associations); 4) building capacity of Local Government Education Authorities including training on Education Management Information Systems; 5) setting up Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Creative Centres; 6) establishing Early Childhood Care and Development Centres; and 7) providing financial aid to students through the Oando Scholars Programme.
**BE SMART**

Given that the majority of children in Nigeria attend government-sponsored schools, Oando Foundation invests in public schools to improve the state of education in Nigeria. In order to **align with government needs** and address gaps in the education system, Oando Foundation works closely with the government and **partners with experts** in their education specialties to maximize impact. The Foundation also works with carefully selected nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in each state where Oando adopts a school that have experience within the education system. As a result, not only do the AASI’s programmatic activities respond to the local context, but partners are also able to be the eyes and ears of the company to address needs as they arise. At the same time, the Foundation is cognizant of not overstretched its partner NGOs to ensure the quality of its programmes.

The AASI also **respects and supports the right to education**, and it **promotes equity and equality in education** by placing a strong emphasis on girls’ education in the most vulnerable and marginalized states in Nigeria.

**OUTCOME & IMPACT**

The broad scope of Oando Foundation’s investments demonstrates that it is committed to radically improving the quality of teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools. By investing for the long term, Oando Foundation hopes to help **develop a skilled workforce** in Nigeria.

To date, the AASI’s investments in school construction, ICT Creative Centres, Early Childhood Development Centres and the Oando Scholars Programme have improved **access to educational opportunities**. Specifically, these investments improved school infrastructure, provided new learning opportunities and enabled marginalized children to access education. Additionally, the provision of Early Childhood Development Centres and the Oando Scholars Programme has resulted in an average 11% increase in annual enrolment in primary school and a 42% increase in pre-school enrolment because of the existence of an environment conducive to learning and funds to support progression. Through its Teacher Training Programme, ICT Creative Centres and Early Childhood Development Centres, Oando Foundation has also been able to impact **learning outcomes**.

To date, through the AASI, Oando Foundation has awarded 870 scholarships, adopted 58 schools in 23 states, and trained 600 teachers. Quarterly monitoring and evaluation surveys demonstrates that this led to 300 pupils per year transitioning from primary to secondary school and more than 50 teacher and 1,500 pupils to be exposed to ICT education in order to improve ICT skills. Oando Foundation anticipates that these interventions will improve learning outcomes for more than 25,000 pupils at the end of the 2014/15 school year.

Oando Foundation’s work with School Based Management Committees, Local Government Education Authorities, and its investment in Education Management Information Systems have **strengthened education systems**, increased the **efficiency of education collaborations**, and aided **community social and economic development**. Employee engagement through its education programmes has also helped to improve **employee retention and morale** at Oando PLC.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

The Oando Scholars Program helped prevent an early marriage. Oando Foundation’s local partner and the School Based Management Committee identified a 13-year-old girl as a candidate for a scholarship to transition from primary to secondary school, but her parents refused.

The parents planned for the girl to be married as the immediate financial gains outweighed potential school costs. These education partners convinced the girl’s parents to allow her to continue her education with the financial support of the scholarship. In a country with an estimated 20% of girls married each year before the age of 15, the action strengthened the Foundation’s conviction that investing in girls is a smart investment. Oando Foundation’s investments in education have the capacity to transform lives through education.

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