

ADU-ACHI WOMEN CO- OPERATIVE UNION

OJI-RIVER LOCAL GOVT. AREA

ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Motto: Upliftment and Empowerment

Email: aduachiwoco@yahoo.com

Phone Nos:
0703183074
4
0703589310
~

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

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PROJECT REPORT FOR IGWelt - 2016

PREAMBLE

Charity they say begins at home, and the women are the chief source of a peaceful and progressive home. Women all over the world have risen with one voice to say no to oppression and marginalization. In many homes, many women have been subjected to second class members of the family with the men taking most of the glory for achievements they never took part in. Women sometimes are the bread winners of the family and at the same time, they are mandated to always surrender to the whims and caprices of their husbands. Living under such conditions have made some to relent and wait for whatever the men bring to the table. A young girl in her parents' home grows up to be less hopeful and determined to live up to certain expectations. These actions directly or indirectly affect the society and make it look like a one-man show with nothing to offer, especially to the youths. Even for a hardworking husband and father, a strong home is not the one that has many children running around or playing in the garden, a strong home is the one backed by a woman's strength and support. As home builders, the women become nation builders, because "when you train a woman, you train a nation". Due to the poor living conditions of the masses, especially in the rural communities, the rural women encounter challenges that make them distinct from others. Their living states are quite pitiable and to think that they live in a land blessed with a lot of natural and material resources. Owing to their poor backgrounds/conditions, the rural women see the need to come together to form a group where they can address their issues. Having formed this women group under the supporting influence of

the Canadian Samaritans for Africa, and now the IGWelt, the women are now more determined than ever to rise up to their challenges and say no to poverty, oppression and financial stagnation.

INTRODUCTION

The Adu-Achi Women Cooperative Union was established under the influence of Rev. Father Stan Ilo, whose benevolence for his people was nothing but prospects to ameliorate their suffering. In other words, it is an organization formed under love and care.

Year Established: 2008

Location: Aduachi village, Oji-River Local Government Area, Enugu State, Nigeria.

Fund received: ₦653, 100 (Six Hundred and Fifty Three Thousand, One Hundred Naira).

Source of fund: IGWelt (Initiative Für ein gerechtes Welt) through CSA (Canadian Samaritans for Africa).

The women cooperative consists of six sub-groups located in smaller villages within the same community (Adu-Achi). These groups are:

- **Ifunanyaka Cooperative Society** (Orunato Unit) – This group consists of 8 women.
- **Udokamma Cooperative Society** (Ezinato Unit) – This is a twelve member group located at Ezinato Unit.
- **Ifunanya Chukwuka Cooperative Society** (Umuogbudu Unit) – This is made up of 26 members.
- **Ugogbeoyibo Cooperative Society** (Umualugwa Unit) – Consists of 15 members.
- **Udodiri Cooperative Society** – This is at Umuezie Unit, and is made up of 15 women.
- **Onyemebina Cooperative Society** – This group is located at Ojiri Unit, and comprises 18 women

From the above subgroups, it could then be seen that the Adu-Achi Cooperative Union is made up of at least 94 women, with the utmost aim of improving the plight of women in the society. Though, out of this number, some have dropped out while others are continuing to participate and bring in more active women into the cooperative, thus, reducing and increasing their number at intervals.

This Cooperative is registered with the Oji-Rover Local Government. By so doing, they create awareness and can as well source for support from the government. The women remain grateful for the support received from IGWelt (Initiative Für ein gerechtes Welt) in Austria.

VISION and MISSION

The liberation and empowerment of women is the ultimate vision of this group. There is no better way to achieve this than to get them together to realize this objective. The women, though coming from different families have one thing in common, financial challenges. Living in a rural environment makes it even more difficult, therefore leaving them in great need of financial support. The Canadian Samaritans for Africa have for some years now tried to ameliorate their sufferings by granting them financial freedom and empowerment, with hope for a better tomorrow. Many thanks to the IGWelt group for supporting the women's plight by contributing in a great way to their financial freedom and empowerment.

Throughout the previous years, the women have always engaged in small scale businesses, sometimes in form of petty and individual trading, but somehow, for about four to five years, the women were left without funds, therefore, they had a lot of challenges, and also reduced the number of their members till a few years back when they got a lot of support by CSA, and was able to pick up from where they left off. In 2015, the women got maximum financial assistance from the IGWelt group in Austria, and this has gone a long way in uplifting their lives in various ways. From the funds received, the women were able to embark on the production of household items such as, nylon making, baking and soap making, and some other trades that they could possibly engage in. The focus of this particular project report however is on the activities carried out in 2016 from the funds received earlier this year from IGWelt. The activities carried out this year by the women took a different pattern and this is mostly as a result of the skills presumably acquired by the members. These skills were as of 2015 on nylon production, baking and soap production. After the training, some of the women have been able to start up their own businesses especially with the funds received in 2016 from IGWelt. Though things did not move as smoothly as planned because of the sudden and drastic change in the Nigerian economy in 2016, but the women did try to hold fast to their dreams and utilize the little they have towards achieving their objective. There are still plans under way to include other skills and ventures to expand the cooperative and increase opportunities for the local women.

ACTIVITIES

The activities carried out by the women in 2016 were done mostly individually. The funds received at the beginning of the year were distributed to the women individually and the beneficiaries were those that participated in the 2015 training process. 55 women benefitted from the funds. It would be important to note that the plan mapped out for this year's activity was a bit hindered owing to the current economic crisis in the country. The anticipated prices of materials in the market were no longer the same as at the time the women were ready to embark on their various businesses. This affected a lot of the women, but some still beat the challenges to overcome and move on with their businesses. Since the women were settled individually, many of them found it very difficult to stand on their own and get the necessary materials required for them to establish themselves, however, because some of the expensive equipments have already been provided during the training, those that were not able to afford the equipments on their own had to continue to make use of the ones at the centre. While some continued individually, some came together and combined their funds in order to purchase more materials and possibly generate more profits from their activities. The revenues generated would then be shared amongst the participants of that particular group.

Apart from those that put their money together to achieve greater results, some still thrived in their own individual practices. Some of them had to raise more funds on their own to get some of the materials and equipments needed to embark on their acquired skills. For example, Mrs Patience Orah and Mrs Florence Ofoezie are two women who acquired the skills for nylon production and today, from the share they received from the funds, and a little help from their families, they were able to purchase nylon making machine of their own. Some other women, who learned the skill of baking, are still making use of the baking oven and gas cylinders at the centre. At the moment, they have not been able to afford the baking machine which is very expensive.

From time to time, at least once every month, the women come together to discuss and settle issues in order to come up with workable solutions to their problems. They also make monthly contribution of N100 each to contribute to, and increase their financial resources.

Names of Beneficiaries (₦10,000 each):

1. AGNES ONYEAGBA
2. AMAKA IWE
3. AMARA KENECHUKWU
4. ANYIM MODESTER
5. AUGUSTINA MADUAKOR
7. BLESSING OBIKA
8. BLESSING OKE
9. CALISTA OKOLO
10. CATHERINE
11. CHARITY UHARA
12. CHIDIEBERE ONYEACHONAM
13. CHINEDU ILOAMA
14. CHRISTIAN DILIBE
15. CHRISTINA UZOR
16. CHUKWUEMEKA JACINTA
17. CLARIS ANIEKWE
18. DEBORAH IWE
19. DIANA MADUAKOR
20. DORATHY EZIKA
21. EBER
- ESTHER NZEABALU
24. EUCHARIA ONWUGHALU
25. FAUSTINA ONYEBUCHI
26. FELICIA OKAH
27. FLORENCE OFOENZIE
28. FLORENCE ONOCHIE
29. FRANCISCA OFFOR
30. GEOGINIA UDEOKOLO
31. GIFT ONYEACHONAM
32. GINIKA MADUAKOR
33. GLORIA OHA
34. GRACE CHUKWU
35. ILOKAMMA ABIGAIL
36. IRENE EZIKA
37. IRENE ILO
38. JOSEPHINE MADUZOBA
39. JOSEPHINE UZOAGBARA
40. LETICIA EJIOFOR
41. LORETTA NZE
42. LOVELINE MBA
43. MARTINA DILIBE
44. MOULDLINE EZIKA
45. PATIENCE MADUAKOR
46. PATIENCE ORAH
47. PERPETUA CHUKWU
48. PHOEBE ACHISI
49. PRISCILLA ILO
50. PROMISE EZECHI
51. REGINA NDUBUISI
52. ROSELINE ILO
53. SCHOLASTIC AGU
54. SUSSAN I

Income Generation

Based on individual production, an average of ₦100.00 is being generated as income daily after expenses/running costs. This is to say that the average monthly income generated by every member, especially those that were given funds is about ₦5, 500.00. The women generate a monthly income of about ₦10, 000-₦15, 000 each depending on how good or bad they made sales. This amount though could be more or less. As for those that combined their part of grant and worked as a group, the impact in-respect of the income generated is not so much and there was no significant difference between them and those that worked individually, all pointing to the poor economic situation in the country. But this can all be improved on with time given the right situation and market.

CHALLENGES

Due to the present economic situation and recession in the country as well as the incessant increase in the price of domestic goods and raw materials, the women are finding it very difficult to cope with the situation, hence there is generally low and poor income generation. The cost of goods and raw materials has risen above 100%, and as a result the money at they each got was

not able to purchase much for them. This had adversely and drastically affected/reduced their daily and monthly income. These economic crises have made it difficult for the women to generate more income and to sustain their little businesses. They are earnestly and passionately appealing/asking for more grant to enable them boost their income generation and sustain the business they have learnt and mastered.

In addition to the recent economic recession, the women are yet to find suitable means of transportation for their products. However, this is not a major challenge at the moment since the women are into small scale individual businesses. This is in preparation for the future, because the women have bigger plans of expanding their businesses and making judicious use of the centre for further training of new members and for other lucrative businesses.

Insufficient power supply is still a significant issue since some of the equipments for the project are electrically powered. This necessitated the women to dig deep into their purse to provide money for generator and regular purchase of petrol to keep the work going. This is a general issue, as the country is yet to witness a time, when there will be uninterrupted power supply.

Not forgetting the individual settlements of the women and the escalation of materials and equipments in the market, some women are finding it very difficult to cope with the little amount given to them individual. Though some have defied all odds to establish and sustain their businesses. Some of them have come together to combine their resources in order to purchase more materials and probably make more profit, and some others have from their private savings and the help of their loved ones, been able to purchase some of the equipments needed to fully go into the business. It is also important to note that many of the women rely on the already available equipments in the centre for their individual productions. So the only things they have to get on their own are the raw materials needed to produce the goods. This too is not so easy since some of them have to cope with having to fuel the generators to make use of the nylon making machines and or refill the gas cylinders which cost about ~~N4000-N5000~~ for each refill. For example, Mrs Perpetua Chukwu has been utilizing the baking equipments for her baking productions, but she finds it a bit challenging to refill the gas cylinders from the little profit she makes. She sometimes combines with other members who are willing to do the business together so that they can maximize profit (though the difference is still not so significant at the moment). Some embarked in small scale trading that is different from the skills acquired from the training received. This is because, since they are not able to purchase equipments or enough materials for

them to embark on the business, they decided to put it into their own personal trade to boost their market.

Finally, with regard to the above, a significant problem faced by the women comes in form of lack of support from some members who are not fully committed to the group. This is a major problem since this group of people tends to draw back and discourage others from engaging in this worthwhile venture. Some of the women, especially those that are serious with the cooperative are then left alone to cater for themselves in things that require group effort and solidarity. For example, in taking care of the centre, the women did map out plans on how to clean and maintain the equipments, clear the surroundings, but some still find it difficult to do their own part. Also, some of them that received the funds have not put it into good use, thereby wasting the money that would have been added to others to boost their effort. The cooperative however is working towards fishing out this category of women and sanctioning them. They have to observe the rules and principles of the organization, and failure to do so should attract penalty and possible expulsion from the group. No matter how little, any little amount should count and put into good use. If on any account anyone finds it difficult to continue, or feels incapable of utilizing the available funds, they should indicate from the onset so that the money can be channeled into supporting those that have little and are willing to support themselves and their families through the funds provided. These challenges though are understandable given the economic challenges in the country, but this is not really an excuse to misuse funds or make them dormant when there are people that are ready to utilize them. In other words, it could be said that the funds should be distributed based on individual or group output (effort) from the little they have received, and those who have nothing to show for what they have received so far, and are not committed to the group in any way, should be singled out and scrutinized to avoid wastage.

SUSTAINABILITY

The unified efforts of the women in supporting each other have been their basic source of strength. Also part of the strategies mapped out to ensure sustainability of the cooperation is through basic evaluation of active members. Those that are not active should not be allowed to continue to be part, since they act as a form of discouragement for others who may want to commit themselves fully to the group.

Efforts are made towards maintenance and repairs to sustain the equipments.

The women manage to sustain and support each other even in the absence of any fund, by remaining faithful in the payment of their dues to add to any available fund. They are very

hopeful and consider themselves fortunate through the continuous assistance of the Canadian Samaritans for Africa and the IGWelt group in Austria. As a result of the activities carried out so far by the women, more women are beginning to join the group, thereby increasing their number and productivity.

As previously mentioned, with time, a resource person can be consulted at intervals for further training in any area that would benefit the women financially.

Suffice it to say that there is no going back for the women, as they have promised to make the best out of what they have been given and together, they are going to improve and positively project the image of the group, not just for themselves, but for the community at large.

ASPIRATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The Adu-Achi women are undaunted in the pursuit of their dreams and aspirations regardless of the many challenges they face. They have fully engaged themselves by making use of the newly established centre for skills acquisitions training. In a way, their dream has been brought to life. With the CSA fund and the support of the IGWelt group in 2015 and 2016, the women have gone a long way in realizing their potentials and contributing positively to their community and the entire society. They have been able to not just acquire the basic skills to enrich and empower themselves, but they have also acquired some equipments to make the exercise a smooth and lasting venture.

The Adu-Achi Women Co-operative society are more than willing to continue to work hard towards the common good of their members and their various families, thereby facilitating societal development.

In a special way, the women remain ever grateful to the IGWelt group for their assistance and pray that Almighty God will continue to bless and protect them now and always. They also wish to use this opportunity to wish them a happy and blissful new year ahead.

Thank you.

Sincerely

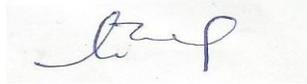


Chiamaka Igboayaka (CSA Agent and Manager, Flairglob Nig.)

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On behalf of Adu-Achi Women Co-operative Union

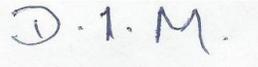
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Ndubuisi Regina (President)



Irene Ezike (Vice president)



Gift Onyeachonam (Secretary.)

Diana Maduako (Treasurer)

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Diana Maduakor and Perpetua Chukwu at the women centre preparing their goods for sale





Patience Orah at her house with her personal machine producing Nylon to be sold at the market.



Patience Orah in the market with some of her products



Sussan Ezete with her locally made foodstuffs



Florence Ofoezie with her nylon machine and the jack bought with her share of the funds (with some help from her family)



Some of the soap making materials at the women centre



Cutting table for the soap products



Diana Maduakor clearing the centre as part of their Saturday activities



Some of the women with the CSA Agent (Chiamaka Igboayaka)



A front view of the Women Cooperative Centre