

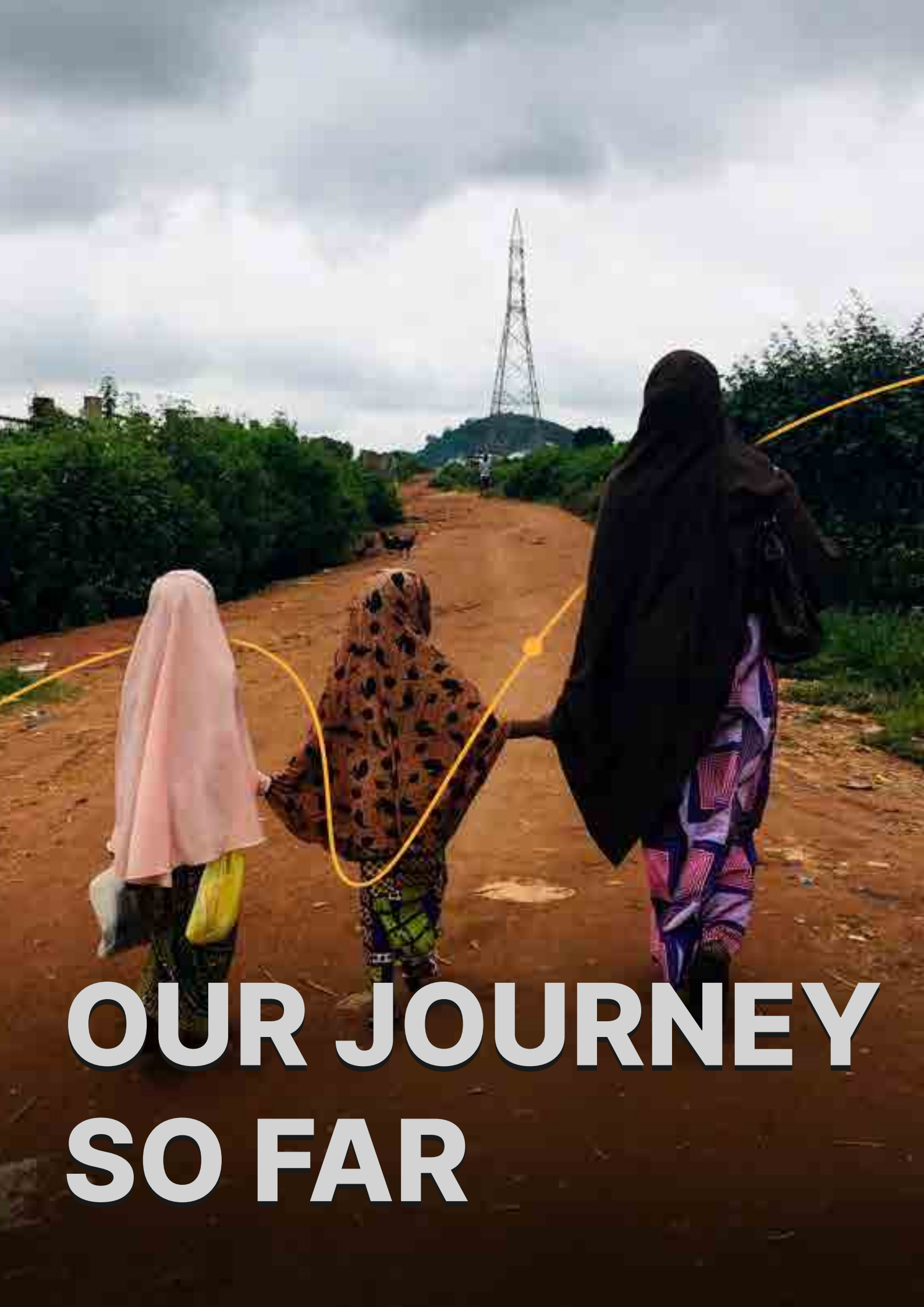
News Letter

Back to school
Back to life

Content

- 1** **Our journey So far** – Amina Abubakar
- 2** **Faiz Bashir** – The Interview
- 4** **The Story of Saude** - Success Story
- 8** **New Partnerships:**
W.A.S.T.E Africa Collaboration
NMFUK Collaboration
- 10** **Contact Us**





**OUR JOURNEY
SO FAR**

Our journey so far has been exceedingly transformational. We meet different kinds of people with unique stories every day, and these touching findings just push us to keep doing better.

Bringing about change has never been a thing of ease, this is so because this involves influencing the mindset of a people. In the remote communities, we work in, we encounter different challenges every day. There are people who would love to send their children to school but are saddled with poverty hence cannot afford to, these people are easier to deal with.

And then there are those who do not even see the need to, even with the advancements in the world. And this is where the real challenge comes, convincing those parents to send their children to school. However uneasy it seems, we hang in there until those children finally get to school because seeing them learning and happy is the food for our soul.

In just a year and half, we have been able to;

- Send 150+ children back to school
- Touch 500+ lives
- Recruit 18 Volunteers
- Form 8 solid partnerships
- Reach 6 communities



With this achievement within a short period of time, I can safely say that we are visionary committed youth who are working and will continue to work so hard until access to quality education is no longer a problem in Nigeria and the world at large.

We will keep exploring innovative approaches to faster learning while leveraging on technology.

I hope you enjoyed this read and will also join our amazing journey by following this link to donate.

flexisaf.org/donate

Yours always.

Amina Abubakar,
Secretary/Coordinator,
FlexiSAF Foundation

THE INTERVIEW



What made you start FlexiSAF Foundation?

I think this has to do with my background and upbringing. I am fortunate to come from a family that values education and we got the best of training. This made me realize the importance of education while I was growing. By destiny again, we started FlexiSAF EduSoft in 2010 with the vision to transform education using technology. Being in the education space and interacting with schools and teachers increased my passion for education.

I learned that education is the most powerful gift you can give to anyone. Unfortunately, the story of education in Nigeria is not an interesting one. With over 10m out-of-school children and the highest in the world, it's difficult to comprehend that we'd make any significant progress as a nation.

Our passion to improve education using technology and the enormous problem of the quality of our education & the out-of-school children menace is what actually drove us to start FlexiSAF Foundation last year.

Today, we have been able to impact the lives of over 150 children by supporting them to go back to school.

What priorities will help you achieve these goals?

We believe that making an impact to just 1 child is a big achievement. Therefore, our approach and priorities are simple; we'd continue to focus, innovate, engage and bring on-board as many people as possible (one at a time) to spark a national movement that will see an end to the out-of-school children problem.

What are your goals for the next three to five years?

Our medium goal in the next 3-5 years is to collaborate with different organizations and the government to see that we are making progress on taking back our kids to school. We project to drop the number by at least 30% through these efforts.

We'd continue to advocate for more efficient models such as the Accelerated Learning program (AccLearn) to be adopted in various locations to help address the out-of-children menace and provide quality education.

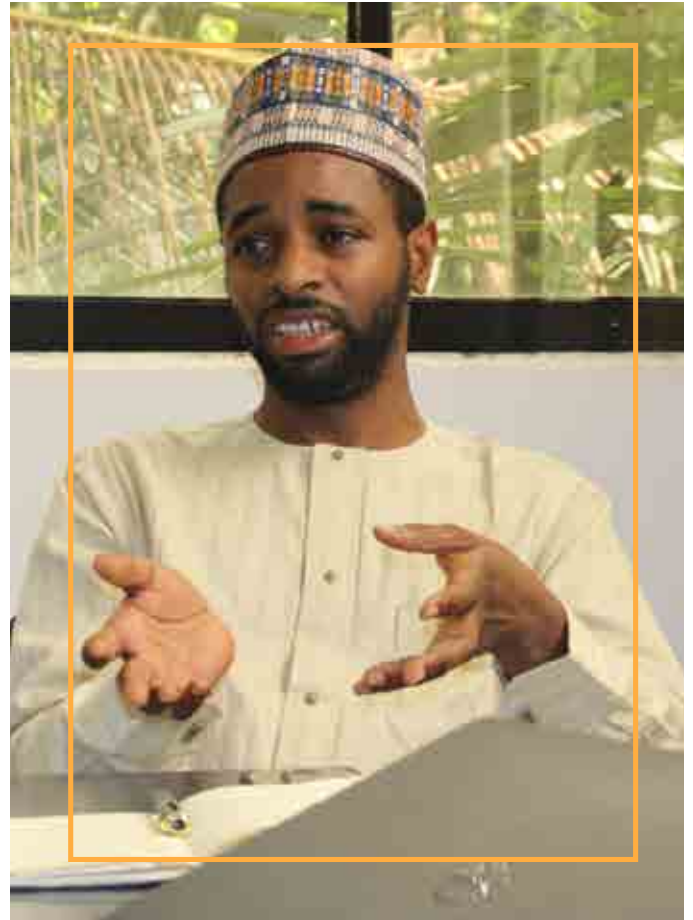
Technology is also going to be key and we'd continue to build eLearning solutions and models that can be used in scaling the access to quality education across the country.

What are the biggest barriers to education in Nigeria, in your opinion?

I think the standard of living of many people is a major factor that hinders access to quality education in Nigeria.

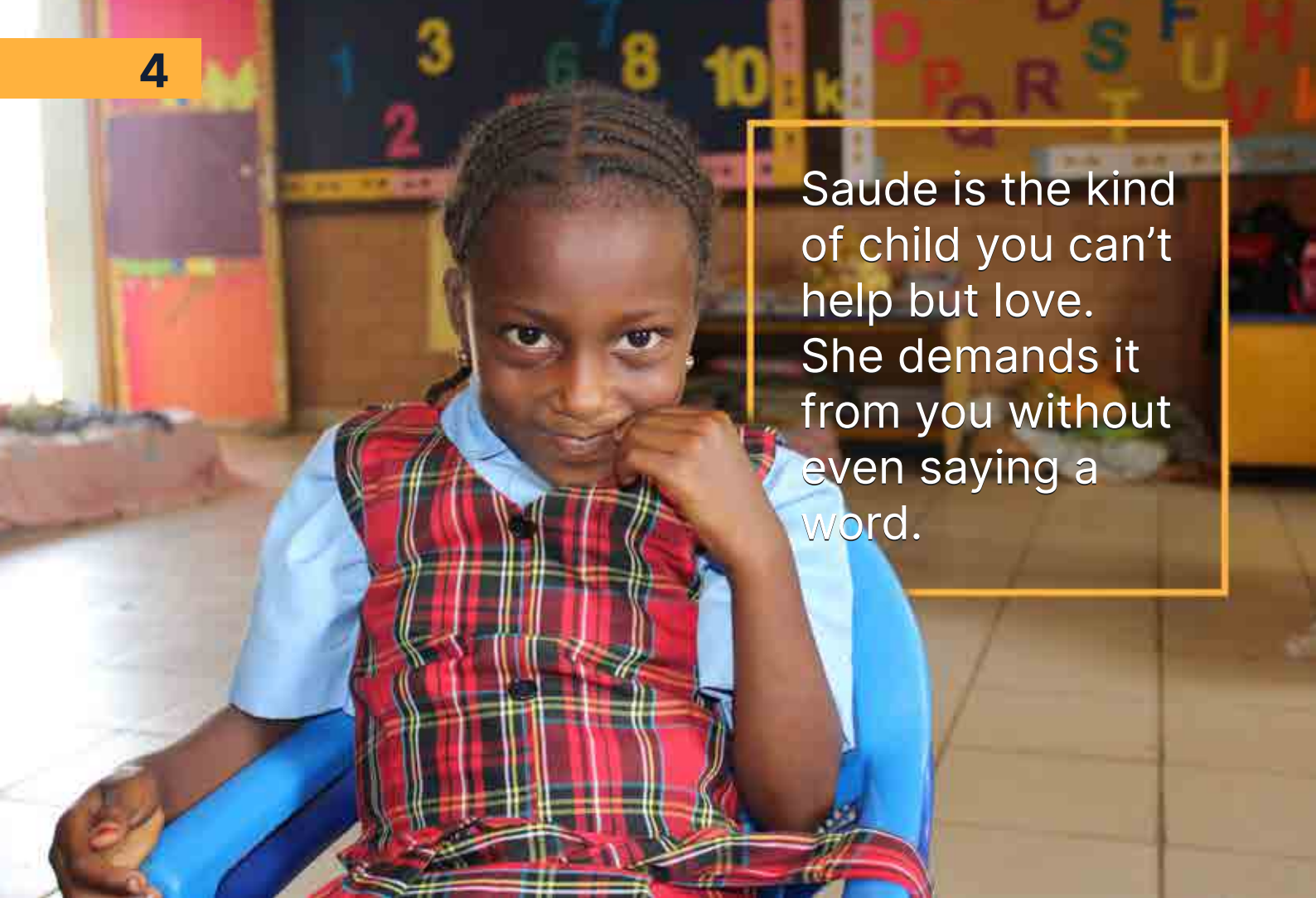
Secondly, the cultural barrier plays another role in slowing us down.

Lastly, the lack of awareness by many parents on the necessity to educate their kids is an obstacle.



What do you, personally, spend most of your time on?

Outside work, I get to read books, mostly on how to improve my skills. I am also working on creating more time to spend with my family.



Saude is the kind of child you can't help but love. She demands it from you without even saying a word.

THE STORY OF SAUDE

We first met her on a hot sunny day in the middle of February. We were identifying out-of-school children in a small community called Gudaba in Kuje, Abuja. While on our community engagement for FlexiSAF Foundation, we received information about some out-of-school children that seemed to fit our criteria.

Saude's family was in their little house behind a small mosque on the Kuje expressway. Her father, Mallam Abubakar was an elderly man who looked at us with distrust even after we identified ourselves and explained our purpose.

"You know the world has changed," He told us bluntly, "I don't want anybody to take my daughters from me."

I assured him that as a woman myself, my only mission was to see that his daughters had a chance to get the opportunities they deserve; that seemed to placate him.

Mallam Abubakar was the caretaker of the little mosque. As you can imagine, he didn't earn much, but he seemed to love his work. He walked around, tidying up the compound as we spoke, filling little kettles with water and lining them up beside the mosque.

“What brings you to our community?”

We explained our mission to him and told him we wanted to help him send his children to school.

“I want them to go to school, but it’s too expensive.” he informed us as he began to sweep up the compound. “Besides, my daughters are too young to go to school, and my son who is old enough lives with his grandmother in the village.”

With a little more prodding, he confessed to us that his daughters were 2 and 5 years old and agreed to introduce them to us.

We sat on the mosque’s veranda and waited while Malam Abubakar went to call his children from their little house behind the mosque. He returned a few minutes later with three girls in tow. Their ages I estimated to be 8, 6 and 3. With that in mind, I addressed the eldest of the group.

“Hello! How are you?”

All I got in response was a giggle.

“What’s your name?” - Another giggle.

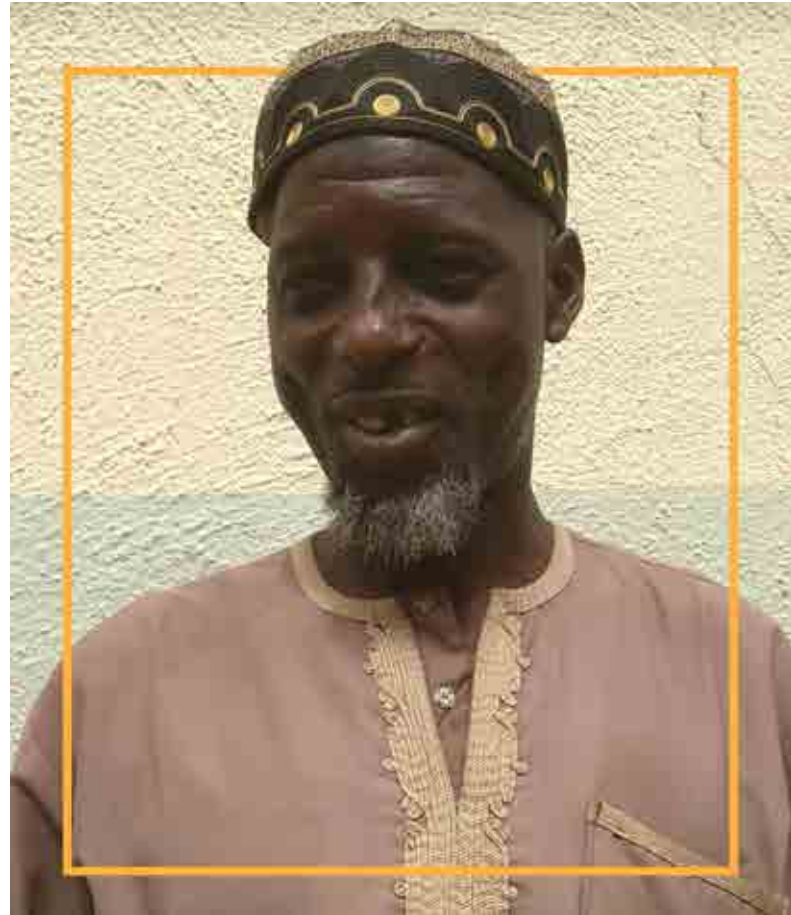
“I am your friend, please tell me your name,” I asked the giggling child.

“Her name is Hadiza. What is your name?”

I was startled to hear the younger girl’s answer.

As I gave her a more thorough study, I was arrested by her beautiful brown eyes which were sparkling with a mixture of bashfulness and mischief. I wondered which would win and based on the direct way she met my eyes, I thought I had my answer.

Her little oval face did nothing to hide the cleverness and inquisitiveness shining through those eyes.



She gave me a wider smile as if prompting me to answer her question.

“My name is Fatima, and this is my friend Nelson. What is your name?”

“My name is Saude,” she said with a bashful smile. “And this is my sister Zainab” she pointed to the youngest girl. “Is it true you are going to take us to school?”

I felt my heart swell.

“Do you want to go to school?” Nelson asked her gently.

“Yes I do, but not across the street. We are not allowed to cross, because the highway is dangerous.”

And just like that, Nelson and I shared a look. We would do all it took to get that girl into school.



Two days later we went back to Gudaba, this time with a different mission; to inform selected families to prepare for the enrolment of their kids into AFLON Digital Academy for a full scholarship. One by one we broke the news. House to house, we went, getting a variation of the same reaction – Joy. Some laughed, some cried some gave hugs and offered prayers. The last house on the list was Saude’s house. We couldn’t wait to share the good news with them. On reaching the mosque, we found the compound empty of all but a woman I vaguely remembered as Saude’s mother. After a brief exchange of greetings, we shared the good news and urged her to prepare herself and Saude and Hadiza for enrolment into school. We were very excited because the school was just a short distance away from them, with no highway crossing required.

“We are not interested. We will take our children to school when we are ready.” She stated quietly.

You could hear a pin drop. None of us had ever considered the possibility that these parents would not jump on the chance to take their kids to school in such a convenient manner. After all, AFLON is a school known by everyone in the community, an upper-crust private school, with educational opportunities they could only dream of for their children. To have such a school doling out twelve scholarship slots to their children with no strings attached! I simply could not wrap my head around their refusal.

“Do you mind telling me why you don’t want us to enroll your children in school?” Nelson’s voice snapped me out of my reverie.

“My husband consulted with our neighbor, Hadiza’s father after you left the last time, and they made up their minds.” She wouldn’t meet any of our eyes.

After a short deliberation, we decided to come back and speak with the fathers the next day. Bright and early the next day, we arrived at the little mosque along Gudaba highway, this time with back-up in the form of Amina Abubakar, Coordinator, FlexiSAF Foundation. The moment Malam Abubakar saw us, he started smiling, and we could see his surprise at our insistence. After introductions on both sides, Amina got right down to the issue.

“Malam Abubakar, our organization is interested in sending your daughter and your neighbor’s to school. Why is that a problem for you?”

“We don’t want anyone to take our children away. I don’t know what kind of school you are talking about or what kind of people they will meet there.”

His reply was both sobering and frustrating at the same time.

“The only place we are taking your kids is down the road to school. We have secured scholarship slots for them. You will be responsible for taking them to school every morning and getting them home every evening. At absolutely no cost. Free of charge!” Amina was just getting started. “I’m going to explain it to you in all the languages I can speak until you give in.”

And so it went, until he gave in.

Saude has just completed her Kindergarten class at Aflon, and is performing very well. We caught up with Malam Abubakar last week and he had a lot to say about his daughter’s achievements.

“I am grateful everyday that FlexiSAF Foundation did not give up on me or my daughter. I was scared at first, but now I realize what a blessing education is. I never went to school, but I know now that my children’s futures will be secured because of education.” He gushed. “I have relocated my eldest son from the village, and I have enrolled him in the local school here. I will do everything in my power to make sure they all stay in school and succeed. There is already a remarkable change in my children.”



OUR PARTNERS: W.A.S.T.E Africa On Bottles for Books Initiative

27th March 2019 – FlexiSAF Foundation and W.A.S.T.E AFRICA signed a broad agreement to simultaneously tackle the alarming rates of out of school children and the rising rates of plastic waste threatening the future of Nigeria and the world at large. This partnership is in line with sustainable development goals Sdg4, sgd13, sgd15 and sgd17; with the pledge to reach those targets ahead of 2030.

According to National Geographic, 6.3 billion metric tons of plastic has become waste, polluting our habitat and our oceans. Of that, only nine percent has been recycled. The vast majority—79 percent—is accumulating in landfills or sloughing off in the natural environment as litter.

While according to UNESCO statistics, About 262 million children and youth are **out of school worldwide, with Nigeria accounting for a whopping 10 million according to the Ministry of Education.**

Towards
securing the
future of Nigeria
through quality
education and
environmental
sustainability



ABOUT W.A.S.T.E AFRICA

Initiative for the Advancement of Waste Management in Africa (aka W.A.S.T.E Africa), is a non-profit arm of Chanja Datti Ltd. W.A.S.T.E Africa is contributing assiduously towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically geared at tackling climate change, ending extreme poverty, promoting clean water and sanitation, responsible consumption & production and fighting inequality.

The BOTTLESFORBOOKS initiative seeks to provide a solution to both rising issues by converting recyclable waste into funds geared towards tuition, books, and uniforms for out of school children who do not have the resources to afford to school.

W.A.S.T.E AFRICA CEO Funto Boroffice stated that she was excited with the partnership “Our commitment to the environment was the catalyst that led to the launch of the BOTTLESFORBOOKS initiative. We recognize the need to partner with organizations that are dedicated to reducing the number of out of school children. It is my pleasure to partner with FlexiSAF Foundation and I believe it is a step in the right direction.” She also added that the goal of W.A.S.T.E Africa is to reach marginalized communities and ensuring waste clean-up while providing access to quality education for out of school children in those communities.

Ahmad Salihijo, Chair of FlexiSAF Foundation also expressed his commitment to the initiative during the MOU signing; “We have undertaken to curb the menace of out of school children in Nigeria, and have taken bold steps in achieving this goal. To buttress that, we are Partnering with W.A.S.T.E Africa on the BOTTLESFORBOOKS initiative to ensure that no child is left behind. We will provide W.A.S.T.E Africa with all necessary support in identifying out of school and tracking the educational progress of all children enrolled through this partnership.”

FlexiSAF Foundation and WASTE Africa are set to enroll 100 out of school children before the end of 2019.



OUR PARTNER:

Muslim Forum UK To Reduce The Number Of Out-Of-School-Children in Nigeria

5th JULY 2019, Abuja: A new partnership was struck on Friday 5th July 2019 between FlexiSAF Foundation and the Nigerian Muslim Forum UK (NMFUK). The agreement was struck by both organizations in an effort to reduce the number of out of school children through active and systematic identification and enrollment of out-of-school children into quality schools within their communities. Based on a Memorandum of understanding signed by both parties, NMFUK will provide funding for out of school children as part of activities for their newly established Education committee.

FlexiSAF Foundation will be responsible for the identification, enrollment, and tracking of their progress. The Foundation will also provide timely progress reports on all beneficiaries sponsored by NMFUK.

Towards securing the future of Nigeria through quality education



ABOUT NIGERIA MUSLIM FORUM

Nigeria Muslim Forum(NMFUK) is a registered charity organization under the charity commission of England and Wales with registration number 1144040. The NMFUK's education committee was set up with the objectives of improving access to quality education through sponsorships, improving the quality of teachers through teacher training programs, increasing access to teaching equipment and resources and working with other stakeholders to advocate for qualitative, sound and purposeful education at all levels.

At the MOU signing, Dr. Garba Sani, Chairman, NMFUK said, "The Nigerian education system is in urgent need of intervention from all able sources. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of quality education ahead of 2030, we have established a council which focuses on providing aid to worthy educational endeavors. Innovative educational solutions, such as have been provided by FlexiSAF Foundation, holds the key to reducing the number of out-of-school-children in our dear country. To that end, we are eager to establish this partnership and providing brighter futures for all out-of-school children.

"NMFUK has partnered with with FlexiSAF Foundation because of its track record of integrity and reliability, this serves as a vote of confidence from MNFUK to FlexiSAF Foundation.

Nigeria currently holds the record for out-of-school children with a whopping 10.2 million, according to the ministry of education. This worrying statistic has to be tackled if Nigeria is to reach its SDG4 target ahead of 2030.

To buttress this issue, Ahmad Salihijo, Chairman of FlexiSAF Foundation stated that the organization has redoubled its efforts to reduce the number of out of school children in Nigeria.

"We have been tackling the issue of out-of-school children at the grassroots level since our inception, and have witnessed the real-time effects of illiteracy on marginalized communities in Nigeria. The issue of out-of-school children is pressing and could pose a threat to the future of Nigeria if left unchecked. With that being said, we will leave no stone unturned in our mission to provide solutions to this problem.

"Our partnership with NMFUK is indeed exciting, and we intend to hit the ground running in our quest to reach as many out-of-school children as possible, within our capabilities."

In the closing remarks, Co-founder of FlexiSAF Foundation, Faiz Bashir stated that the foundation is integrating technology in all of its initiative. This is what makes the Foundation's initiative so different for other organizations and also ensures scalability for all the foundation's initiatives.

The partnership will work towards improving access to quality education for out-of-school children and also enhancing children's learning through the use of logic and technology from an early stage.



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