



RoSA

NEWSLETTER

6TH EDITION 2017

FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

By *Folorunso Alakija (Mrs)*

On behalf of the Chairman and Board of Trustees of the Rose of Sharon Foundation, I have the pleasure to present a report of our activities in the second half of this year June to November 2017.

International Widows Day

The Rose of Sharon Foundation celebrated the International Widows' Day, (IWD) along with the rest of the world on the **23rd June 2017**. This year's event was marked with two sessions of activities. The first session comprised of our annual medical outreach to widows and their children; this involved free medical checks/consultation. Doctors and several health workers volunteered to attend to the needs of the widows and their children all day long. Dr. Friday Oke, an ophthalmologist from VisionSpring International (a US based social enterprise and world leading eye care organisation) also delivered a paper on **"Eye Health and its relationship with Economic Growth"**.

During the second session, RoSF was privileged to have Mrs Ayodeji Megbope, CEO of "No Left Over", enlighten us as the Guest Speaker with her experience and insight about **"The Economic Empowerment of Widowhood: A call to Reach out and Touch"**. Mrs Megbope shared her life story of hope, doggedness and tenacity with the participants and spurred them to believe more in themselves.

The Matron and Chief Hostess of the Foundation; Her Excellency, Mrs Bolanle Ambode, First Lady, Lagos State was represented by Dr. (Mrs) Folashade Onanuga, Director General, Lagos State Pension Commission. In her remark, she admonished the participants to take charge of their future.

Enterprise Development and Skills Acquisition Program (EDTP)

This annual empowerment program for our widows was held on 4th October 2017. The event presented a wide range of economic opportunities to the participants to enable them increase their earning opportunities. The programme was expanded to include our orphans and unemployed graduates based on their demands to be assisted with vocational skills during our RoSF Youth Empowerment programme (YEP) earlier this year. YEP, the Foundation's career development and capacity building programme, was organised to help our youth and unemployed school leavers discover and build their employability skills of being good entrepreneurs.

This year, export opportunities in livestock and crop farming was introduced to the programme. Mrs Eno Agada, an Agricultural expert, informed the participants of the huge demand in the international markets for some agricultural products such as cassava flour, sesame seed, bitter kola, cocoa beans, cocoa butter and shea nuts. She also taught them on how they can take advantage of these opportunities by packaging their products for

export. Other vocational skills covered during the program included Mark-Up Artistry, Outdoor/Event Decoration, Leather Works, Confectionaries Catering, Fashion Design, Textile Making, Jewellery Making, Tie & Dye, and Millinery training skills.

The participants also had a session on Customer Service improvement. Mr. Joseph Ogundare, the Executive Director of Relate Africa, taught the class on how to employ excellent customer service to increase sales.

Fish Farming (Aquaculture)

A practical session on fish farming was conducted by the Marine Science Department of the University of Lagos. Extensive training which covered all aspects of aquaculture was rendered by the HOD and other staff of the Marine Science Department. This was a follow up to the theoretical aspect of fish farming training during the ETDP program in October 2017. The training covered: fish pond development and management, pond layout and preparation, stocking, production of feed and feeding, water management, pond maintenance, harvesting, fish processing/drying/packaging and marketing. Start-up loans were approved for the participants who applied for capital to enable them commence business operations. These ones have brought their products here today to showcase at our exhibition and charity sales stand.

We thank our ever faithful and consistent partners;

- Our Matron and First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs. Bolanle Ambode
- The Management and Staff of Yaba College of Technology
- StreSERT Services Limited
- Lagos State Employment Trust Fund
- Our volunteer Doctors, Nurses and training facilitators who have given of their time to empower our widows and orphans
- Our friends in the media, who always ensure positive reporting and publicising of our programs

They all contributed to the successes of the programs we had this year. We could not have done it without them. May the Good Lord bless them and their organisations tremendously. Amazing testimonies of how all these have translated to the real change experienced by our beneficiaries are better told by them as shown in the testimonies included in this edition. Reading through the letters from some of our RoSF scholarship beneficiaries, I thank God for the opportunity given to us to impact their lives. I urge you to join us today, as together, we continue to reach out and touch more lives!

Once again, on behalf of the Chairman, the Board of Trustees and all the staff of the Rose of Sharon Foundation, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed 2018.


Founder



INTERNATIONAL WIDOWS' DAY 2017



Dr. Mrs. Folashade Onanuga - representative of the First Lady, Lagos State.



From Left, Mrs Ayodeji Megbope, CEO No Left Over, Mrs Aisha Ime-James, CEO Ample Food Venture, Dr Friday Oke from Vision Spring International.

The Rose of Sharon Foundation celebrated the 2017 International Day of Widows in an outstanding way. The Foundation through its Advocacy and Campaign Programme keeps pushing for widows' rights, social inclusion, economic stability and political participation.

The International Widows' Day 23rd June is a global day set aside by the United Nations (UN) to address the social, economic, cultural and political issues that affect widows. As the UN calls for urgent action from world leaders to help widows succeed, the foundation has positioned herself as the leading NGO in this part of the world, to advance the cause of widows through every available channel until governments of nations and world leaders fulfil their obligation to widows and their children according to the Charter of the United Nations. This Charter articulated a commitment to uphold human rights of citizens with outlined sets of principles relating to achieving 'higher standards of living, addressing economic, social, health and related problems, universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom for all (including widows) without distinction as to social status and others.'

This year's event which was held on Friday, 23rd June 2017 at the ROSGMI Hall, 14 Ogunlana Drive, Surulere, Lagos was marked with two sessions of activities. The first session was the annual Medical Outreach to widows and their children, which involved free medical checks/consultation and a health talk on 'Eye Health in Relation to its Economic Impact' by Dr. Friday Oke from VisionSpring

International, a US based social enterprise and world leading eye care organization. Several Doctors and health workers volunteered to attend to the needs of the widows and their children all days.

The Second Session of the event was a seminar on the topic "Economic Empowerment of Widowhood - a call to reach out", which had a participation of several resource persons from all works of life. The Guest Speaker, Mrs Ayodeji Megbope, CEO of "No Left Over," a catering company which started up with next to nothing, but dogged determination took her to the White House of the United States of America. Her story is one of hope, doggedness and tenacity. Whilst sharing it with the participants, she spurred them to believe more in themselves and indeed positioned widows to begin to take bold steps towards achieving their goals, knowing that the death of one's husband is not the end of the world.

The Matron and Chief Hostess, Her Excellency, Mrs Bolanle Ambode, First Lady, Lagos State who was represented by Dr. (Mrs) Folashade Onanuga, Director General, Lagos State Pension Commission, admonished participants to take charge of their future.

Other Speakers include Mrs Aisha Ime-James, CEO Ample Food Venture; Mr Adewumi Oni, Head, Micro Enterprise LSETF, Mrs Joy Ezeigbo, Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA), Mrs Lola Adefusika (Longrich, Nigeria).



Mrs Folorunso Alakija addressing the participants



Cross Section of Participants



A medical volunteer attending to a widow



Mrs Folorunso Alakija with some of the facilitators



Mrs Folorunso Alakija and the rep. of the first lady - Dr. Mrs F. Onanuga

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT & SKILLS ACQUISITION TRAINING (EDTP 2017)



Mrs. Eno Agada addressing the participants

The Rose of Sharon Foundation's annual Enterprise Development and Skills Acquisition Programme for widows, their children and orphans was held on 4th October, 2017 at the Multipurpose Hall, Yaba College of Technology. This event was in collaboration with Yaba College of Technology, Enal Marine and Environmental Services Limited, Relate Africa and Marine Service Department, University of Lagos.

This year's event was a huge success, as participants were eager to discover viable sources of livelihood to cushion the effect of recession and unemployment. Multiple streams of income opportunities were presented to the participants to increase their earnings.

In attendance were the honourable members of the Board of Trustees of the Rose of Sharon Foundation, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Development Mrs. Aderemi Thomas Dapo, who represented the First Lady of Lagos State, Her Excellency Mrs Bolanle Ambode, Executive Director Relate Africa Mr. Joseph Ogundara, Managing Director Enal Marine and Environmental Services Ltd Mrs. Eno Agada and other facilitators.

Mrs. Bolanle Ambode through her representative noted that for widows to survive, they should have sustainable income. According to her, one of the worst things that can happen to a widow is to lack a means of livelihood. She urged the participants to grab the opportunity offered by the foundation to

learn ways of generating income for their families.

Apart from the widows, other beneficiaries included orphans and unemployed graduates, who were introduced to export opportunities in livestock and crop farming. The training also covered skills acquisition in make-up artistry, outdoor/event decoration, leather works, confectionaries catering, fashion design, textile making, tie & dye, jewellery making and millinery.

The participants were also taken through a customer service training to improve their businesses and increase sales. The Executive Director of Relate Africa, Mr. Joseph Ogundare, in his comment stated that 'to give real service, you must add integrity and sincerity to achieve a successful business and that a satisfied customer is the business strategy for all'.

Agricultural expert, Mrs. Eno Agada, taught the participants how to export some local products that are highly sought after in international markets and the huge profit which can be made from them. These Products include cassava flour, sesame seed, bitter kola, cocoa beans, cocoa butter and shea nuts.

EDTP - Three years of successful economic empowerment.

The Founder and the convener of the event, Mrs. Folorunso Alakija said that the training was structured to provide business and life support services to participants who have become principal

providers for their families. She stated that, these women, like the proverbial tea bag have been thrown into the hot water of life, but we believe that the emotional, financial and vocational skills support will make them thrive and become stronger to achieve their dreams, this is what motivates the Foundation. She added that the impact of EDTP for three years now has been tremendous, as they are

living witnesses to the transformation in the lives of 1000 beneficiaries who have been empowered in earlier editions of EDTP and skills acquisition programme. Women who could barely feed themselves have now become employers and can provide for their children. Mrs. Folorunso Alakija urged Nigerians to reach out and touch the lives of orphans and widows in the society.



Cross section of participants



Mrs. Aderemi Dapo (centre) with members of the Board of Trustees of RoSF



Mr Joseph Ogundare, addressing the participants



Cross section of participants



Cross section of student participants



Mrs Tope Olusola (RoSF Publicity Sec.) presenting the Founder's Speech



Mrs N. Udechukwu, RoSF Coordinator, addressing the participants

EDTP TRAINING Contd...



Miss. Busayo Samuel & her trainees

Jewelry Making



Mr. Famoyewa Oyekola & his trainees



Handbags



Hat Making

EDTP TRAINING Contd...



Mrs. Adepoju and her trainees



Lunch Box



FISH FARMING (AQUACULTURE)

As a follow-up to the widows' empowerment programme held on 4th October, 2017 where participants were trained in the theoretical aspect of fish farming. A practical session was conducted by the Marine Science Department of University of Lagos. An extensive training in fish farming (aquaculture) was offered by the Head of Department and other staff members of the Marine Science department, which covers:

- Fish pond development and management
- Pond layout and preparation
- Stocking
- Production of feed and feeding
- Water management
- Pond maintenance
- Harvesting
- Fish processing/drying/packaging and Marketing.



HOD, Dr I.C. Onyema addressing the widows



HOD on field training



Feed production session



Fish processing and drying session

FISH FARMING Contd...



Samples of feed



On site training with the widows



On site training



Feed Production

FISH FARMING Contd...



Pond layout and preparation



Facilitators, RoSF Staff and Widows

TESTIMONIES OF SOME STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS ACQUISITION 2017

MASTER CHIDINDU GEORGE CHIGOZIE

It is a great privilege to write on the impact and value the Rose of Sharon Foundation has made in my life. By the grace of God, I have been a partaker of the welfare scheme. I am a beneficiary of the free skill acquisition training, where I learnt a new skill that has given me a source of livelihood and made me more responsible. I am no longer a job seeker, but poised to be a boss and an employer of labour. It is my prerogative that I use this skill to be a light to my world {Matt 5:16} via integrity, originality and



quality to empower others when the time comes to reduce joblessness etc. thereby making the society a better place, to the glory of the Almighty God.

Mr Famoyewa Oyekola and George Chigozie and Miss Jane Madubueke

MISS MADUBUIKE PRINCESS JANE

The Rose of Sharon Foundation has been a great blessing to the life of my twin brother and I. After my father's death, when we had given up on hope for education, we received a scholarship from the Rose of Sharon Foundation. When the devil thinks he has won, the spirit of the Lord goes ahead to raise a standard and in our case the standard is The Rose of Sharon Foundation, who through its Founder Mrs Folorunso Alakija has over the years been a perfect story of the truth that with God anything is possible!

While participating in the skills acquisition training, I have been able to finally cast aside my fear, that bag making is difficult and complicated. This skill training programme has simplified everything and that anyone can learn to make bags. Many thanks to Rose of Sharon Foundation for helping me to dream, hope and believe again.



STRAIGHT FROM OUR HEARTS

.... Scholarship Beneficiaries of RoSF Educational Programme

The RoSF Educational Program works to ensure that the orphans and widows' children have continuous access to high quality primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Education helps them to realize their full potential and shape the development of their families and communities at large. We believe that education is a right not a privilege. Every child has the right to receive quality education.

Through RoSF Scholarship programme, 1,366 students (widows' children and orphans) are currently receiving free education across more than 150 primary and secondary schools in Lagos State and in almost all tertiary institution in Nigeria, all fully sponsored by the Rose of Sharon Foundation. Listen to some of the heartfelt comments by the students as they speak from their hearts...

The Best Mummy in the world,
My name is Folake Olawunmi; I am 13 years old. When I lost my dad a few years ago, the major concern I had was my education. But my fear of continuing my education was defeated the day my mum came home with the best news I have ever heard in my life, that I was awarded a scholarship from primary to university level by the Rose of Sharon Foundation. Here I am today, going to school without worrying about the school fees and my books. What more could I ask God for? May the God of heaven replenish in 100 folds all you are spending to give quality education to the poor. -.....

Folake Olawunmi, Seylek City College, Lagos

Dear Big Mummy,
This letter is to thank you so much for loving me and my family and for all these wonderful things we are enjoying. I love education and I am glad you made it possible for me. I am studying very hard in school to come out with good results. I want to become a Banker so I can have plenty money to help the needy as well. May God continue to bless you and keep you for us. I love you Ma.
Showole Ifeoluwa, New State High School, Lagos

My dear sweet mother Alakija,
I, Ajawara Jeremiah want to testify about how Rose of Sharon Foundation has been paying my school fees since 7 years ago when I lost my father. I was sent out of school, because my mother could not pay my school fees, but since we met Rose of Sharon Foundation, my school fees has been regularly paid and I am very grateful and happy for this opportunity. I thank Rose of Sharon Foundation; may God bless them for everything that have done.....

Ajawara Jeremiah, Ade-Osho Comprehensive College, Lagos.



Dear Mummy Alakija,

I thank the Lord who gave you a heart for the needy. Thank you ma for sending me back to school and I promise I won't disappoint you. You didn't only send me to school through the scholarship of RoSF but you ensured I am attending a good school. My mum returned home one day and told me Mummy Alakija said we should change the school I was attending which was not Government registered to a better government registered school to obtain quality education. I immediately said to my mum, 'LEVELS DON CHANGE'. Indeed, ever since I changed to my new school, my academic performance has improved. God bless mummy Alakija a million times.

Mohammed-Naheed Olayiwola, Seylek City College, Lagos

Dear Mummy,

You are the god I see every day. You have made my future so real and simple. RoSF picked me when I was nobody but today am very proud to say that I am somebody because I know where am going. You fulfilled the Word of God in my life as I read in the Book of Psalm 113: 7-8. "He raised the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from their misery and makes them companions of the princes, the princes of His people" (GNB).

Death snatched my biological father from us but am so grateful to God who gave me another father in you. I have never ceased to pray for you ever since I became a beneficiary of RoSF Scholarship programme.

Chiamaka Simeon, Blessing Nursery and Primary School, Lagos

Dear Mrs Alakija...

My name is Olajide Heritage and I am 9 years old. Ma, I love you because you are the best thing that has happened to me and my family in the whole world! In you I have seen the love of Christ displayed towards the needy. Thank you Mummy Alakija for helping the children of widows like me to have access to quality education through the scholarship scheme of RoSF which am one of the beneficiaries. May God rewards you at all times in Jesus' name.

Olajide Heritage

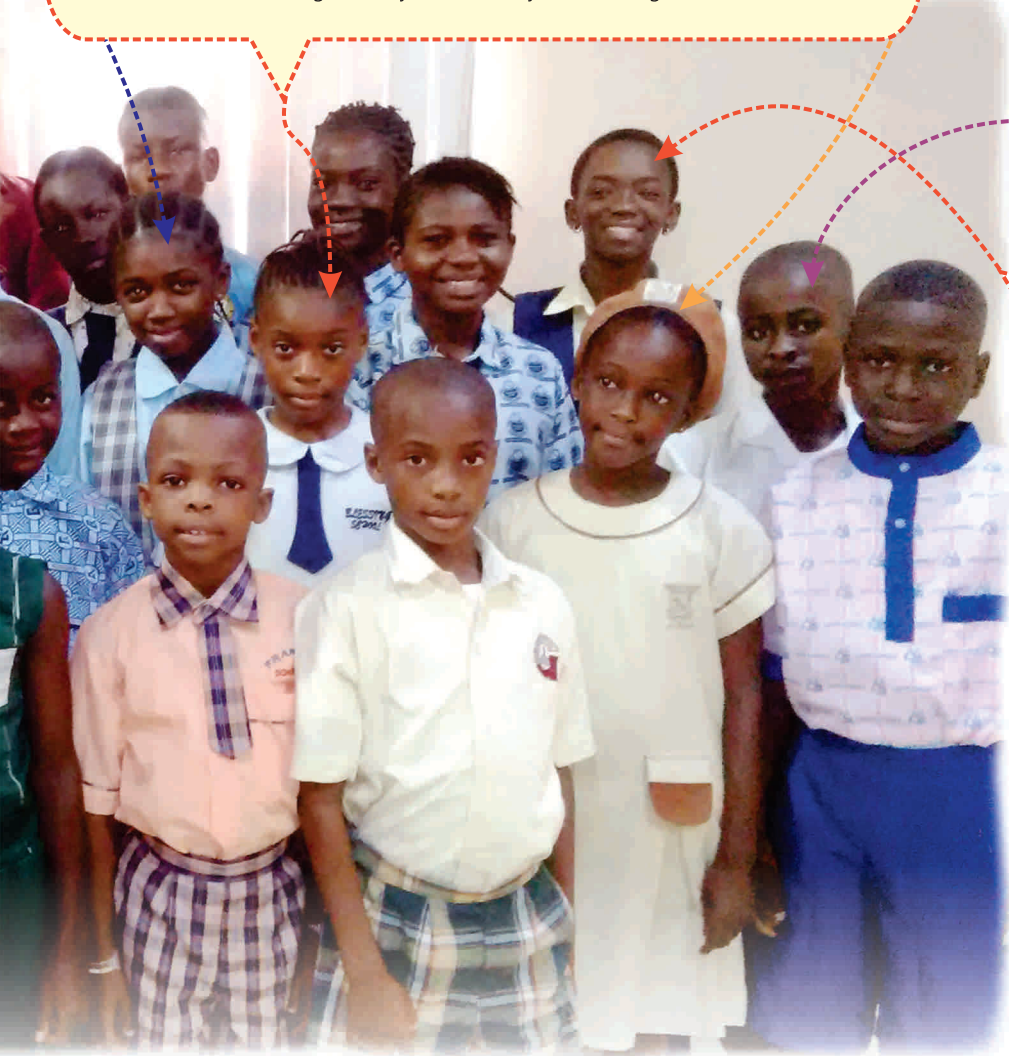
Maryland Covenant Private School, Lagos

Her Excellency Mrs. Folorunso Alakija (Rose of Sharon Foundation)

Dear ma, You are the true identity of a God-sent. Ever since the departure of my father you have always been there to help us. I pray the Lord Almighty continues to enhance you with love, long life, and more blessing. Thank you ma, for what you have done in the life of my mother and that of my sister. Thanks a lot ma, and God bless you. **Udoka Godson Okoro**, Total Standard College, Lagos

My dearest Mummy Alakija, My name is Adewale Peace. I am 14years old and I am in SS2 . My dad died when I was 3years old. It was not easy growing up without a father. On the fateful day, a woman in my church introduced my mummy to a foundation. She [my mum] was given a form to fill and just like that, God turned my family's sorrow to joy. My sister and I were given scholarship and my mum was give a loan of N40,000.00 to pay back without interest. It was like a dream.

Now when my classmates who have both their parents alive are being sent home for not paying school fees, we won't be sent home because God has supernaturally provided for that through Mrs. Alakija. Ma, may God bless and reward you and also turn all your sorrow to joy in Jesus' name.....
Adewale Peace, Ade-Osho Comprehensive College, Lagos.



WIDOWS TESTIMONIES

MRS AUGUSTINE CHINWENDU

I am giving this testimony to the glory of God. I thank God for making me a beneficiary in Rose of Sharon Foundation. Ever since I was enrolled in the foundation, things have really changed for my three children and I. My prayer for you Mummy Folorunso Alakija, the Founder of the Foundation, whom God has used to wipe away the tears of we the widows, is that pains and afflictions will never be found in your life.

The Rose of Sharon Foundation gave scholarship to my children and I also benefitted from the interest-free loan offered by the Foundation, I also participated in the free Enterprise Development and Skills Acquisition Training organised in the month of October. I learnt a new skill and I am better positioned through this newly acquired skill, which has increased my income. Mummy Alakija and all our Facilitators, may God continue to energize you and you will not be weary in doing-well!

Praise Master Jesus Amen!



GRADUATION OF MISS UNGIME UDOISONG



MRS. JUSTINA UDOISONG.

First, I want to thank the Almighty God and the person whom God used to introduce me to Rose of Sharon Foundation.

When my husband died, I never thought I could still have a graduate in my home. To the glory of God, my daughter, Miss Ungime Udoisong, graduated with a degree in English Language from the University of Ilorin, Kwara State. This was made possible through the intervention of the founder, Rose of Sharon Foundation Mrs. Folorunso Alakija, whom God has used to help people like me. Mummy, with all my heart I am saying a big 'THANK YOU'. God Almighty will continue to protect you and your family, and the entire members of the Rose of Sharon Foundation. Thank you and God bless.

The Rose of Sharon Partnership Opportunities

We offer platform for partners and alliances to contribute to the solving of issues affecting widows and orphans by ways of rendering free services in these focus areas:

Healthcare Services –

- Assistance in promoting healthier lifestyles
- Supply/donation of drugs and others
- Corporate partnership with Healthcare institutions for free treatments of widows and orphans.
- Free eye health services

Technology –

- Information technology capacity building for widows, their children and orphans
- Donation of learning aids such as computers and other gadgets to support the education of their children and orphans.
- Mobile technology

Human Capital Development/Training –

- Enterprise development training
- Skills acquisition and vocational training
- Agribusiness (farming, fishery, piggery, poultry, etc.)
- Donation of machineries/equipment e.g., sewing machines
- Donation of farm lands and other tools for positioning them better for success.

Mentorship Programme

Responsible individuals are welcome to mentor our beneficiaries in the areas of their interest.

• Volunteer Field Workers

Welfare visits to widows and orphans difference locations within (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States)

For more information on how you can participate,

call 07013901147 or 07013901160.

Visits us at No 13, Adeniran Ogunsanya Street, Surulere, Lagos.

(Monday to Friday 8.00am – 5.pm; Saturdays 9.00am – 12.00pm)



Publications by **Folorunso Alakija (Mrs.)**

Folorunso Alakija

Your business is
God's Business.

#FolorunsoAlakija #DaughterOfZion
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