

## Annual Report Submission for Period Ending 12/31/2013



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**Organization:** Catholic University of America  
To support the Promoting Secondary Education by Training Teachers in Nigeria project.

Organization: **The Catholic University of America,**  
**School of Business and Economics**

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### **NARRATIVE**

#### **“Promoting Secondary Education by Training Teachers in Nigeria”**

This project analyzes the impact on training teachers, their educational techniques and motivation as a source of improving secondary education and promoting integral economic development. Special emphasis is placed on the ways female teachers as well as girls' learning and retention are affected. We use an innovative integral approach methodology. Our research takes place in Lagos, Nigeria.

For a comprehensive evaluation, we will compare data of teachers that have not been part of the program (control group) with participants in the program –direct participants and teachers trained by trainees (treatment group). The goal of the data collection is to evaluate the impact of training provided to teachers on supporting transition and retention in secondary education, targeting girls and other disadvantaged groups. This includes evaluating whether teachers assumed a mentoring role as a result of training; whether educational techniques received from training are helping their teaching style; whether absenteeism has been reduced as a consequence of teachers assuming a new role as leaders and mentors in the classroom and whether that has translated in better performance and higher motivation for both students and teachers leading to an improved quality of life.

Original dates for the project: January – December 2013

New dates for the project: September 2013 – September 2014

**Reason on the delay to start:**

The IRB approval at the Catholic University was delayed until letters from the directors of schools in Nigeria considered for the project were sent. This was a lengthy process that took about 5 months. Upon completion of the letters needed, the IRB committee met and approved the project by June 2013. As the school year in Nigeria ends in mid-July, it was better to start the project in the new school year in September 2013.

There was communication and approval by the MacArthur Foundation for modifying the dates of the grant and made it possible to run from September 2013 to September 2014.

**Progress –at the end of 2013:**

In September 2013, we started conversations with the organization that provides the training, QAARDAN in preparation for the first exploratory trip to Nigeria.

The trip was from October 21<sup>st</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup> of 2013. Two faculty members embarked on the trip. The goal of the trip was to oversee the main aspects of the project under review in order to design instruments for data collection. With that purpose, during the visit there were scheduled meetings with QAARDAN officers, schools where QAARDAN had trained teachers, and schools where QAARDAN has not been present. These last group of schools is part of the control group, which information is needed to contrast with the findings of the treatment group (the schools receiving training from QAARDAN).

We visited 10 schools originally considered for the sample, 5 treatment schools and 5 controls schools:

<b>Treatment Schools:</b>
Crescent School
Meadow Hall School
Whitesands School
Ojodu Junior Grammar School
Victoria Island Senior Secondary School
<b>Control Schools:</b>
Liberty Bells School
Greenwood House School
St. Finbarrs College
Agidingbi Grammar School
Akande Dahunsi Senior Grammar School

The treatment schools and the control schools were selected to represent the type of schools QAARDAN trains and include both private and public schools and diverse income level population.

Our visit to schools made it possible to discuss important details with teachers, directors, and students involved in the program, and those who had not heard of QAARDAN in the control schools. It also made it possible to speak to the people of the organization in their offices in Lagos.

The difference between public and private schools was striking and very evident. Private schools in general have modern infrastructure with access to labs and permanent electricity including air conditioning for students, which is almost a luxury in the country. Another important difference it is the number of students per classroom. There were fewer students in comfortable classrooms in private schools, while many students in very basic infrastructure try to learn in public schools. This particular difference confirmed our intention of focusing the research on public schools.

Another revealing fact from the visits was the issue of discipline. During our meetings, there was acknowledgment that physical punishment in public schools especially as a way of controlling the classroom environment and holding students accountable. From conversations with teachers in public schools, they tend to feel not appreciated in their efforts and overwhelmed with the number of students per classroom.

From talking with some teachers at public schools who have been trained by QAARDAN, we found that they were much more enthusiastic about their job and about their capacity to exercise a positive influence among their students for learning and retention. Those teachers also tended to complain less than others who have not received the training.

Teachers at public schools also expressed their frustration on access to teaching materials. They explained that in some cases they have to purchase some materials to have them available in their classroom. Because of the large class size, it was evident during the visit that the teacher needs to speak in a high tone of voice to command the attention of the class and control even small distractions among students in order to maintain the attention of the 100-average students per class.

Conversations with students were informative because they helped us understand their attitude to learning and how well they participated in class. In public schools, most students did not feel encouraged to talk and the method of dictation, where they copy basic concepts the teacher dictates was implemented. Other students follow a method where the teacher states a concept and all students repeat it several times in order to memorize it. Thus, memorization and dictation as methods of teaching appear prevalent in the public schools we visited.

Students manifested their desire for having more access to modern technology and extra curriculum activities that will put them at the same level as their peers in private schools. All students interviewed wanted to attend a university and have already set the career path they would prefer, with most male students inclined to engineering careers, while female students had varied interest from psychology to teaching.

Some students recognized that their parents could not afford private education so they have to attend public schools. Some student leaders emphasize the issue of motivation of classmates as the key to success in learning, these student leaders said they themselves try to motivate others through community projects that will help students realize that in spite of apparent disadvantage from other students at private schools, students at public schools could still contribute to others.

In contrast to teachers and students, school directors in general were very positive on their outlook of the school under their direction. When ask about limitations, they would emphasize that the reality of the country is large classrooms and that they have been

implementing changes since named directors. Some, for instance, explained an innovation in the way of disciplining students. Instead of physically hitting a student who misbehaves, now they ask the student to kneel down with open arms in front of the classroom. This was shown in 3 schools as an improvement over physical punishment and the directors were enthusiastic in sharing this development.

Directors also state that the teachers under their charge were in general satisfied with their jobs and that they are enthusiastic and cooperative.

We showed below some pictures that serve to illustrate the differences among schools in terms of infrastructure and students access to educational tools.

At private schools:

At Crescent School:



At Liberty Bells School:



Labs available to students:

At Whitesands School:





At St. Finbarrs College:



The infrastructure shown above corresponds to private schools. As observable, labs where students learn and practice sciences are available to students in private schools. Also, it is noticeable that the classroom size is small, fewer students per teacher. All of this greatly contrasts with public schools, shown next.



At Ojodu Junior Grammar School:



Students are condensed in a smaller classroom, sitting arm to arm next to each other in public schools in very hot weather. There is almost no space for the teacher to walk around the classroom observing students. Monitoring individual learning is almost impossible within the allotted time per subject and teacher. Some students were noticeable sleepy during our visits, it seemed like only the students in the front of the classroom were able to pay attention and follow instructions.

Visual materials are rarely used and they are not available. The following picture shows a small graph of the human body in a science class which description is not observable from the back of the classroom.

Environment teachers in public school faces:



The following pictures show visit to students at public schools:



Dr. Cruz Zuniga is in the back of the classroom



Dr. Cruz Zuniga talking to students in public schools:







The following pictures are with teachers at public schools:





Another important component of the trip was meeting at the offices of QAARDAN, the program whose results we are evaluating. Several meetings took place during the days of our stay in Nigeria. Most meetings were with the general manager of this organization, and some with the trainers and staff that are in charge of specific components of the operation such as contact with schools, logistics, content of manuals, promotion of events.



A picture at QAARDAN offices appears below:



In the meeting with QAARDAN's personnel, we reviewed in detail training materials, topics of the training, and discuss general goals of the training itself. It was clarified to us

that while QAARDAN charges private schools a fee for the training courses, it provides for free to public schools. Although this fact may have limited the offerings to public schools, it has on the other side, make the process transparent as there is not monetary component involved in the operation.

The main objective of the training to teachers is to equip them with diverse and more innovative pedagogical techniques in the classroom. Thus, the training emphasizes:

- Methodology: voice and speech patterns, introduction of audio visuals in schools as lesson facilitators, class arrangement/organization, identification of learning levels among students,
- Class interaction: promote class participation through creating an environment where students can ask and answer without fear, increase level of student interaction, activities to foster active thinking, and use of games to facilitate learning.
- Motivation: leadership skills acquisition, empowerment of teachers to understand their role as mentors and motivators of students, and especially as agents of change in society. To empower teachers, there is also a discussion on how to dress professionally at work in order to improve self-confidence and job promotion.
- Discipline: encouragement to eliminate physical punishment as a tool for controlling classroom environment, teachings on how to develop a capacity to cope with failures and learning from mistakes.

The trip was really informative. The **main lessons learned** from the trip that will impact the next step, data collection, from the trip are:

- Differences among public and private schools are considerable so the data collection and the focus of the study will remain with public schools. Few schools called “missionary” schools will be considered as they also serve the population of interest (low income families) with a very low pension to pay.
- Survey design must include motivation among questions not only to teachers but to students

- Questions on infrastructure and facilities at school are needed to assess its influence in academic performance.
- Questions are needed on the approach of teachers to girls education and whether there are differences in fostering and motivating their engagement in education
- Questions must inquiry the role of the school director in improving education
- Questions to parents and teachers must address the issue of low engagement of the former on the education of their children.
- Questions will also include training in general, not only QAARDAN's as it was clear that teachers may sometimes attend other training activities.

#### **Activities during November and early December:**

With the information from the trips, we started to work on designing the surveys. Three surveys are needed for teachers, parents and students.

#### **Expected during 2013 vs. Achieved in 2013**

As stated above, the project was originally expected to be completed in 2013. Upon the needed modification in dates because of a late start, the activities accomplished during 2013 are conducive to reach the goals of the project by the new due date, that is, by September 2014.

From the proposal, Objective #1, Identification of treatment and control groups and initial work on surveys was almost accomplished during 2013. This objective contemplated a visit Lagos, prior to conducting any survey work and then working on the surveys. Thus, activities in 2013 were successful in providing the information needed for the next steps contemplated for this project, and that are described next.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

At the end of 2013, surveys were undergoing with modifications and changes based on the observations and discussions of the exploratory trip. The next steps for the process, to be started in 2014 are:

1. Calculation of exact sample size with details requested to Nigeria of number of students per grade and teachers per school from control and treatment schools. This is expected for January 2014.
2. Purchase of tablets and software for data collection, expected in early February 2014.
3. Data collection trip, expected for late February 2014. This trip will have the purpose to train surveyors on how to properly collect data including consent forms needed to be sign by participants.
4. Data collection during February and March. This process may extend until April depending on early tests on collecting data during the second trip.
5. Third trip for focus groups/experiments expected for late May 2014.
6. Econometric analysis of all data collected, expected for June and July 2014
7. Report of the main findings, expect for August 2014
8. Presentations of the main findings, expected for September 2014

This last picture from a public school in Nigeria is very encouraging of any effort to improve education in the country:

