

# OPPORTUNITY EDUFINANCE

Education Quality Program

## Case Study:

### Beginning Steps Nursery and Primary\*, Nigeria

As the school proprietor, Ms. Gloria commenced her journey with minimal financial resources. **With help from a friend, she launched Beginning Steps Nursery and Primary School\*, in Lagos, Nigeria.** Founded in October 2014, the school employed 2 teachers and 4 learners. Over time, it prospered thanks to the introduction of innovative services, including Saturday drop-off and a summer school program. **Today, the school proudly employs 10 teachers and 90 learners.**

Ms. Gloria initially built the school using personal savings and financing to procure essential classroom furniture and cover teacher salaries. **Later, she secured loans from First Bank of Nigeria and EDFIN Microfinance Bank, utilizing the funds to expand the school's infrastructure and acquire better-quality teaching and learning materials.**

EDFIN Microfinance introduced Ms. Gloria to the services offered by Opportunity International EduFinance. **Opportunity EduFinance provides a comprehensive three-year school improvement program, known as the 'EduQuality Program', to local affordable non-state schools.** This program aims to enhance the quality of education children receive and create a supportive learning environment.

The EduQuality program offers **School Leadership Professional Development (SLPD)** training under the guidance of Education Specialists working with local schools in the field. These sessions aim to benefit school leaders' management techniques by honing their leadership skills. The school proprietor was able to determine her priorities for school improvement and build a structure to implement changes. **Keeping child protection and financial planning at the top of her priorities for development, Ms. Gloria has seen a massive improvement in these areas.**



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**School Leader**  
Gloria Ihuoma Oji

**Financial Institution**  
First Bank Nigeria, EDFIN  
Microfinance



\*DISCLAIMER: THIS SCHOOL'S NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED IN LINE WITH OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY.

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- **Child protection:**

**The school has implemented a child protection policy, conducted teacher training on child protection, and appointed child safety officers.** In addition, they conducted safety inspections to identify and address potential threats to the children. For instance, a cracked school fence was identified as a safety concern, and it was promptly repaired. As for the results, they have been highly positive. Teachers are now well-prepared to respond to child injuries, and a designated health officer, trained by Lagos state, oversees health matters.

- **Financial planning:**

Ms. Gloria now engages in both annual and quarterly budgeting. Past salary arrears have been successfully settled, as she has become adept at managing finances. Additionally, Ms. Gloria has adopted a proactive approach by sending forms home at the end of each term to determine which learners will return for the upcoming term, allowing for efficient planning and budgeting. Ms. Gloria has now started finding budgeting more exciting and recounted, **“I now carry my budgeting book around. I don’t spend unnecessarily and am more disciplined and accountable”**.

In affordable non-state schools, teachers often have diverse educational backgrounds and limited access to professional training. EduQuality offers **Teacher-Mentor Professional Development (TMPD) training**, which follows a ‘train-the-trainers’ model to identify and prepare mentors who, in turn, train their fellow teachers through classroom observations, feedback, and ongoing coaching. **At Beginning Steps Nursery and Primary School\*, teacher-mentors are actively participating in these sessions, which has led to an increase in classroom engagement and participation.**

Ms. Gloria's journey as the school proprietor of Beginning Steps Nursery and Primary School\* in Lagos, Nigeria, reflects a remarkable transformation. Ms. Gloria's dedication exemplifies the positive impact of continuous improvement in affordable non-state schools.



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