

Community Impact Case Study FY20

# Teach For Nigeria, Ogun State



## I. Case Overview

*In just four years since 2017, Teach For Nigeria has established an influential partnership with the government of Ogun State. They have quickly become a key institutional partner, providing teaching and leadership talent, staffing the state's virtual learning effort during lockdown, and now influencing the initial and ongoing training of the state's teachers. The most populous country in Africa and the 6th most populous in the world, Nigeria is home to over 250 ethnic groups. In the southwestern*

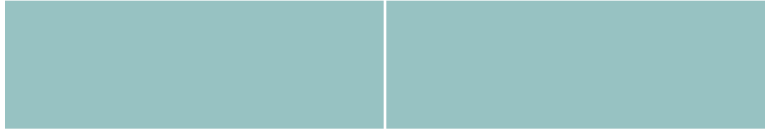
**Launch Year** 2017

**Fellows** 452

**Alumni** 206

45 fellows are currently working in Ogun State, which was Teach For Nigeria's first placement site

region, Ogun State shares a border with Lagos and has 3.7m residents.



### Student progress

- Education is required for children through age 15, and a federal program provides free meals, textbooks, and other materials to children. (Though, 10.5m children are out of school nationally.) Also, early childhood and healthcare is a national priority. The government provides free healthcare to children under 5, with an emphasis on disease eradication.
- Ogun State has the highest number of primary and secondary schools compared to other states in Nigeria. And, as school enrollment has increased, Ogun State has developed education infrastructure to expand access for its growing student population - e.g., improved classrooms, model colleges.
- The government largely views education as a tool for national development; one recent indicator is that it rapidly improved access to technology for all students (including higher education students) during the COVID-19 crisis.

## II. Ogun State Community Context



Nigeria is experiencing an education crisis. A third of school-aged children are not enrolled in school. Almost 60% of children in school are not learning. Nearly 60% of grade 6 pupils cannot read at all. Nigeria faces the biggest teacher shortage in the world. Yet only 6% of the national budget is allocated to the Nigerian education sector (UNESCO recommends 26%). Nigeria is referred to as the “country of the young,” with nearly 50% of the population under age 15. Strengthening education has never been more essential.

The country’s educational center is Ogun State and it is ripe to lead the nation in educational improvement for all. Home to 24 universities, the state has produced notable scholars and pioneering educationists. Recently, the Ogun State government dedicated more resources to improving the quality of education, particularly at the primary level, and expanding access to secondary and tertiary levels. Despite a paucity of funds, the state government still places a premium on education through construction and renovation of schools, developing teaching and learning facilities, and training and retraining teachers.

The economic outlook for children and families is based on Ogun State’s primary sectors: agriculture and textiles, particularly production and sale of Adire, vibrant fabrics worn widely, particularly in traditional garb. This indigenous tradition originated in Ogun State and contributes mightily to the local economy. There are also several efforts underway to grow the region’s private, STEM-based, and entrepreneurial sectors.



### III. Story of Collective Leadership

The Ogun State government stands out for its commitment to education. The leadership is progressive and forward-thinking, and understands the importance of teachers and teacher training in improving student outcomes. During the early stages of TFN, Folawe Omikunle and the then commissioner, public servants and Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) met frequently to discuss improving education in Ogun State and the nation. Through the then commissioner of education, Folawe and her team received support with mapping stakeholders and broker meetings. This systematic and relational approach was critical.

TFN continued to collaborate with stakeholders across the ecosystem to advocate for education. In 2018, local head teachers and TFN fellows and staff met at a usual town hall meeting with SUBEB officials to discuss progress and achievement outcomes. The practitioners shared data that illustrated 4th and 5th grade students were on average a full four grade levels behind. The data shocked the government officials; their information revealed challenges, but none as severe as what was being presented. The meetings resulted in additional public investment to address the gap. In a rare move, the government also agreed to pay a portion of the salaries for TFN fellows. TFN became one of the collaborating partners leveraged by the government to make educational change. Throughout the process, the former commissioner of education said, “Folawe really listened and looked for common ground. It was refreshing.”

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Since then, Teach For Nigeria has become a prominent institutional partner and enabler of collaboration and alignment across the system. The team was asked to collaborate with the government to deepen its impact, while improving the quality of education in the state by “getting the DNA of TFN” into the system. In order to cultivate collective impact (and avoid spreading the team too thin), TFN introduced government stakeholders to respected, successful NGOs such as Wave Academies, and Profuturo Fundacion to stoke systemwide collaboration and impact. With that, a group of education reformers was formed. At the moment, Teach For Nigeria, in partnership with Profuturo Fundacion, is working to improve the quality and access of education for students in Ogun State by training 5,000 teachers on student vision, developing digital skills, and more. In another partnership with Google for Nonprofit, Teach For Nigeria is working on launching a leadership program for heads of schools, to train them on transformative leadership that’ll help accelerate impact within school systems.

TFN’s approach is leading to new possibilities in teacher training at scale. Recently, the Tai Solarin College of Education, a center of excellence and prominent teachers’ college, invited TFN to help achieve its vision to revamp its teacher training institution. Tai Solarin College is said to have produced 80% of the teachers in Ogun State and Lagos, so the potential for impact is vast.



At the foundation of TFN’s effort is building the capacity of fellows and alumni to influence and drive change. Recently, in response to the crisis prompted by COVID-19, fellows mobilized to ensure students were safe and continued to learn. Some fellows fundraised to purchase devices for children, and filled the devices with high-quality learning content before distributing them. Through a partnership with the local

government, a group TFN fellows developed and became the face of TV educational programming that was broadcasted to hundreds of thousands of children so they could learn while safe at home. Martin Odebowale, a fellow who led this effort, is now on staff as a Special Assistant to the Special Adviser on Primary and Secondary at the Ogun State MOE. As a second year fellow, he is also leading the State's remote learning intervention, OgunDigiClass, during the COVID-19 crisis for primary and junior secondary school teachers, leading related public private partnerships, tracking interventions, hosting the MOE's social media, and more. He hopes to revolutionize Ogun state's education system through technology.



## IV. Teach For Nigeria's Approach

Teach For Nigeria believes that there is no single solution to educational equity. The team knows they cannot single-handedly solve the challenge, and thus take a collective approach. TFN believes they can “act as a catalyst to build a network of leaders who understand the root causes of inequity and are committed to changing it.” Launched three years ago, the TFN community is building collective leadership in many ways:

### Delivering community-centered fellow training and support

From peer-to-peer learning to listening-leadership cycles, multiple elements of TFN's program emphasizes a collective, community-centered approach. Examples include:

- *Immersion week during summer institute* - One week of Institute is dedicated to fellows learning about what life is like in the communities they are preparing to serve. Fellows learn about the community by connecting with different people and listening, asking questions, and sharing experiences. TFN carries this spirit and approach throughout their fellowship and beyond.

- *Clustering placements in schools* - A minimum of two fellows are placed at schools. The goal is for fellows to support one another as they work collaboratively with colleagues, the head teacher, and families.
- *'Be The Change' Projects* - In fellows' second year, they identify root cause challenges students face, and work collaboratively and entrepreneurially to develop a solution. Using a design-thinking approach, the fellow works with the community, students, and school colleagues to develop a sustainable project. Fellows have developed everything from community libraries to farm initiatives to hygiene projects to vocational programs. Some fellows have gone on to launch enterprises based on these projects. "It's impossible for this project to happen independent of the community," Omikunle says.

### Partnering with and influencing institutions

TFN is valued as a trusted voice in Nigerian education. The team builds deep relationships with governments, NGOs, and teachers colleges. To foster ongoing partnership, the team participates in regular monthly meetings with government officials across agencies to learn from data, discuss challenges, and strategize on improvement.

### Enabling collaboration and alignment across the system

The team is committed to catalyzing collective action across the system. In doing so, they prioritize ruthlessly and use their position to bring in other entities and actors to address the systemic, multi-faceted challenge of educational inequity.

### Generating shared data and proof points

TFN staff and fellows work with head teachers, peer teachers, and government to produce compelling student-level data which drives continuous learning and improvement.

### Modeling listening and humility

An orientation to listening and humility, members of the TFN community are flexible, curious, and open. Finding the root cause to challenges based on multiple data sources and input, listening to find common ground, being open, and co-creating solutions are part of its approach in the program (e.g., the Be The Change Projects) as well as in government partnerships.

## V. Looking Ahead

As the team looks ahead, they will continue to work collaboratively across the system to tackle educational inequity. Specifically, they will continue developing their strong pipeline of leaders, confront the crisis brought on by COVID-19 and its ensuing challenges, and pursue partnerships to influence teacher training and development particularly with Tai Solarin College of Education.

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