



Onitsha Economic Empowerment Programme Takes Off

Implementation initiatives commence operations.

Four initiatives spanning business learning, technological skills acquisition, financial intermediation, and commercial activities have been created to drive the Economic Empowerment Programme. These are the Onitsha Leadership and Entrepreneurship Centre (OLEC), Ado Business Incubation Centre (ABIC), Microfinance Institution/Microfinance Bank (MFI/MFB), and OnAF Heritage Limited (OnAF Heritage).

The programme, which was announced in August 2020, by His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Agbogidi, Obi of Onitsha is part of



His Majesty Nnaemeka Achebe, Obi of Onitsha, (Agbogidi) addressing participants at the ABIC Start-up Hangout.

a strategy for medium to long term sustainable interventions in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

Implementation is under the auspices of the Onitsha Advancement Foundation (OnAF) an incorporated entity promoted by the Onitsha Traditional Council.

OLEC focuses on creating passion for learning about businesses, and how to create and grow small

OnAF Governance Arrangements

Following the establishment of the Economic Empowerment Programme, OnAF has been restructured with an expanded Executive Board of Directors made up of volunteers, all highly experienced, hardworking, and dedicated Onitsha indigenes. His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Obi of Onitsha is the Chairman of the Board of Directors. There is also an Advisory Board composed of members of the Onitsha Traditional Council and the leaders of the constituent groups. The Executive board has established an Implementation Committee specifically charged with following up on approved initiatives to ensure coherence, and proper phasing and execution. It also carries out regular reviews of the initiatives, to ensure that the limited funds of OnAF, are optimised, including disbursements and accounting processes, and enhancing accountability of the Board to stakeholders.



ABIC mentees at an online audio visual training session

businesses. ABIC serves as a catalyst tool to help new technology start-ups to grow and develop, including helping to accelerate and make optimum use of incubator resources. MFI/MFB will offer financial resources to low/medium income populations, in addition to targeting financial services at self-employed, micro, and small businesses generally overlooked in the Nigerian society. The plan is to transform this into a Microfinance Bank within twenty four months. OnAF Heritage has been established as a vehicle for economic and commercial activities geared towards achieving the goals and objectives of the Economic Empowerment Programme.

A Values Reorientation campaign serves as a critical enabler for the Economic Empowerment Programme. The campaign is designed to drive a new work/study/life ethic for Onitsha indigenes which is in tune with the times, as well as empower a rebirth of thrift, industry, achievement, self-esteem, and pride on a global scale.

The Economic Empowerment Programme was conceptualised by a panel of Onitsha professionals, who were charged with mapping out strategies to support the struggling and budding entrepreneurs of Onitsha Ado N'Idu in weathering the COVID-19



Participants at the ABIC Office Hours, a clinic to enable start-up leaders interact with mentors and business experts.

Update on OnAF Implementation Initiatives

Programme implementation is undertaken by workgroups of Onitsha professionals focused on specific initiatives. The workgroups have established processes and procedures for their operations and have commenced implementation. Some of the recent major developments are stated below:

Onitsha Leadership and Entrepreneurship Centre (OLEC)

- This is structured as an Enterprise Development Institute (EDI), for the development of Onitsha youths and women in the broad areas of leadership, entrepreneurship, and craftsmanship. Current

areas of interest include : Youth Training, Women Empowerment, and Master craftsmen Training.

- **Youth Training :** This is targeted at different categories of youths which include graduates, undergraduates, and secondary school certificate holders. The focus is on empowerment, skill acquisition, leadership skills, value orientation etc for purposes of developing an entrepreneurship mindset. An initial six-week (six Saturdays) Leadership and Entrepreneurship training for fresh graduates (men and ladies), was held from November 7 to December 12, 2020.
- **Women Empowerment :** Programmes will be developed to support women and their families and enhance their professional, economic, social, and physical well-being.
- **Master craftsmen Training :** This is designed to provide and equip the youths lacking formal university education with basic skills in craft and trade. Emphasis is on practical hands-on training, short-term skill acquisition and mentoring.

Ado Business Incubation Centre (ABIC)

With a location at Ime Obi, and an adjunct at Iba Asika Ajie, a team of twenty-six members form the nucleus of the operations of ABIC. During the last quarter of 2020, ABIC delivered three engagements as follows:



A facilitator speaking at the ABIC Start-up Hangout.

- **Community Awareness Programme - October 2020:** This was an interaction with the youth population of Onitsha community interested in technology related endeavours and/or entrepreneurship. A major highlight of the programme was the discussion of the roadmap to empower the youths start-up businesses that can solve local problems with a global perspective.
- **ABIC Start-up Hangout - November 2020:** The Start-up Hangout brought together business owners and potential start-ups in a full day of interaction. There was also introduction to the ABIC programme calendar. Guest speakers made presentations on incubation journey and business funding possibilities. His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Agbogidi, Obi of Onitsha delivered an address
- **ABIC Office Hours - November 2020:** The ABIC Office Hours is a start-up clinic that created the opportunity for start-up leaders to have one on one sessions with mentors and business experts. A pitch fest which enabled entrepreneurs take the stage to sell their business in under 3 minutes to participants formed part of the clinic.
- ABIC has lined up various programmes and events for 2021 It has also developed and is implementing a grant and sponsorship marketing programme.

Microfinance Institution/ Microfinance Bank (MFI/MFB)

As work continues towards transformation to a Microfinance Bank, the entity currently operates as a Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises /Micro Finance Institution (MSME/MFI). The focus is on providing widespread access to business funding in a well-structured and sustainable manner. Areas of operation include Promotion of Cooperative Societies, Credit Administration, Credit Disbursement, and Partnership Marketing.

- **Promotion of Cooperative Societies:** The goal is to establish profitable and sustainable Onitsha Ado N'Idu cooperative societies, strengthen existing ones, and facilitate access to credit for members of these societies leading to entrepreneurship and empowerment. The Onitsha Ado (Onitsha North) Cooperative Society Limited has been registered by the Anambra State Government in line with the Cooperative Act as a primary cooperative society. It will serve as the umbrella body for all the multipurpose cooperative societies (MCSs) in Onitsha Ado N'Idu. In November 2020, six new MCSs were registered bringing to thirteen the number in operation. Work is in progress to create seven more MCSs. Graduates of OLEC training programmes are encouraged to form or join MCSs to facilitate their access to capital and business growth.
- **Credit Administration:** A credit term sheet has been developed to guide long term sustainability, and to avoid mistakes of the past. A credit committee has also been constituted to manage the process.
- **Credit Disbursement :** Total Anambra State Small Business Agency (ASBA) credits processed and approved amounts to N65M with beneficiaries comprising twenty-three OLEC graduates and eight multipurpose cooperatives societies (MCS).

- **Partnership Marketing:** Proposals have been sent to reputable national and international private charitable foundations for collaboration. The feedback has been positive.

OnAF Values Reorientation Initiative

- Conceived as a critical enabler in the quest to Lift (the poor in) Onitsha Out of Poverty (LOOP), the initiative seeks to bring about a shift amongst ndi Onitsha from:
 - Consumption to production
 - Applicant/employee mindset to entrepreneurial spirit/drive
 - Individualism to collaboration/partnership
 - Short-termism to a longer-term focus.
- Central to the initiative is the need to interrogate the ethical, moral and professional values of ndi Onitsha , in the context of ife eji abu Onitsha erika.



Cooperators at a loan flag off event organised by Anambra State Small Business Agency



Certificate of Incorporation of the Onitsha Ado Cooperative Society Limited as a primary cooperative society

The goals of the initiative are as follows :

- To change the mindset of Onicha people from a welfare mentality to a more productive, capitalist, and entrepreneurial mindset.
- Foster adoption and support of wealth creation, entrepreneurship and long-term capital development and deployment initiatives across existing organs of Onicha community such as Agbalanze, Otu Odu, age grades, etc.
- Encourage Onicha youths to embrace diversification of interests to include entrepreneurship and technology-enabled professions as a viable alternative to the more sought-after professional inclinations, such as employment in the private and public service.
- An action plan has been developed for initiating and deploying campaigns that communicate the orientation objectives. This is with a view to creating awareness and driving adoption of relevant programmes. However, to validate the framework, a Baseline Study is to be undertaken. The perception and views of the target audience (ndi Onicha) to the intended shifts would have to be ascertained, and the proposed ideas to bring about the change would have to be tested before implementation commences. The research will comprise two components: qualitative

Study and a complementary Quantitative survey using the synthesized information from the Qualitative study. Work will commence shortly.



OnAF Logos Competition Poster

The OnAF Logos Competition

Given the restructuring of OnAF and the various initiatives it has embarked upon, it becomes necessary that OnAF establishes a corporate identity which clarifies its organisational structure and enables its purpose and shape to emerge clearly. The corporate identity will not only make the strategy and vision of OnAF to be visible but will also enable the identity to be managed and projected to all its audiences.

OnAF has therefore instituted a logos competition. The purpose of the contest is to design logos for the various OnAF entities. The logos will be used in all media - including online, print, on merchandise and other visual collateral. The contest is open to Onitsha indigenes of not more than forty years old. The winning entry will be selected by a panel comprised of ndi Onitsha master artists and patrons appointed by The Onitsha Advancement Foundation. The prize for the winning entry is N200,000.00. There shall be prizes of N150,000.00 and N100,000.00 respectively for the second and third place winners. All other finalists shall receive consolation prizes.



His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Obi of Onitsha (Agbogidi) at an outing during the 2020 low-key Covid-19 compliant Ofala

Sustaining the fight against COVID-19

The goal of preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the community has continued. Highlights are as follows:

- 2020 Ofala Onicha held in line with COVID-19 Guidelines: The low-key manner of the ceremony which took place on October 11, 2020 was in line with the decision of the Onitsha Traditional Council that the community would fulfill its annual traditional and ritual obligations in a modest way to comply fully with the Covid-19 safety and hygiene protocols. The decision took account of the general mood of the country and was a mark of respect for all persons in Onitsha and around the world who have been adversely affected by the pandemic.
- The Ofala, which is the highpoint of Onicha Ceremonial Cycle, was held in 2020 without the usual display of royal dances, tributes, parades, music, and art, in addition to other associated events, which have come to characterise the beauty and elegance of the festival.
- The low-key approach was also very evident in the celebration of the other festivals on the 2020 annual ceremonial cycle. These are Ajachi on June 29, Umatu on August 1, and Owuwa Ji, the celebration of the new yam harvest, which was held from September 26 to October 17.

- Proclamation No. 1 Of 2021 On Covid-19 Second Wave: Issued on January 25, 2021, it reiterates that all ceremonies will be carried out in strict compliance with the current Government protocols on safety and hygiene for Covid-19, the Regulations on Funeral Rites, Marriages and Other Cultural Matters In Onicha Ado N'Idu, 2015 Edition (Rules and Regulations), as well as the specific modalities agreed between the Obi-in-Council and the respective constituent groups. The proclamation has been made against the background of a second wave of the pandemic that is far stronger




A member of the Onicha Covid-19 Compliance Team carrying out a temperature check

and spreading much faster than the original virus. The proclamation was also necessary because, following initial compliance to Proclamation No. 4 of 2020 issued on October 5, 2020, there has been a relaxed their attitude towards the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Onicha COVID-19 Compliance Team: This has evolved from the Wellbeing Ambassadors who were trained to deliver an Outreach and Sensitisation Programme for Early Prevention and Mitigation of Covid-19 within the Onitsha community. Since October 2020, the team in collaboration with the various constituent groups, have offered prevention and mitigation services at such events as title taking ceremonies, burial ceremonies, marriage ceremonies etc.



Kpari Rita Okolonji, Lead of the Field Operations workgroup of the Onitsha Community Covid -19 Response Team addressing a cross-section of Onitsha women during a Covid -19 compliance session.



#COVID19Anambra
CASE UPDATE
27th February, 2021 | 2359HRS

110 NEW CASE CONFIRMED

TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES	135
TOTAL DISCHARGED	117
TOTAL DEATHS	14

ANAMBRA STATE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTRES
09034728047, 08117567363, 08145434416

COVID-19 UPDATES

Nigeria Centre for Disease Control
0809 955 5577, TOLL FREE No. 6232

3RD MARCH, 2021 | 1.00PM

TOTAL CONFIRMED CASES	156,963
DISCHARGED CASES	135,831
DEATHS	1939

#NdukaifeNine
#Nduka

Onicha Ado N'Idu Commissions Community Vigilante Unit.

Recruits Holds Passing Out Parade

The vigilante unit which operates under the auspices of the Anambra State Vigilante Services, is charged with helping the Nigerian Police maintain law and order in the community, and the protection of life and property.

Ninety-one recruits, who form the nucleus of the vigilante unit, have passed out at a parade which took place on February 13, 2021 at Ime Obi Onicha. His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Agbogidi, Obi of Onitsha, reviewed the passing out parade.

The training, which was provided by the Anambra Vigilante Services, is in line with established standards for vigilante services as approved by the Anambra State Government. Areas covered on the training include combat exercises, intelligence gathering, and forensics. The recruits were also exposed to the fundamentals of human rights. The training programme was initiated and coordinated by the Onitsha Traditional Council and the Onitsha Youths Council.



Recruits at the passing out parade at the commissioning of the Onicha Ado N'Idu Community Vigilante Unit.

The traditional ruler of Omor Kingdom in Ayamelum Local Government Area, Igwe Dr Chris Oranu Chidume (Eze Igwulube Omor) was the chairman at the ceremony which was attended by numerous dignitaries.

The Onitsha Advancement Foundation Newsletter is a continuation of a series which commenced with the Onitsha Community COVID-19 Newsletter. Published by the Onitsha Traditional Council, the series forms part of the effort to ensure that there is widespread information and understanding about development initiatives with the Onitsha community.



His Majesty, Nnaemeka Achebe, Obi of Onitsha, (Agbogidi) reviewing the passing out parade at the commissioning of the Onicha Ado N'Idu Community Vigilante Unit.

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