

Nigeria

Catch up!

In Nigeria, visual artists Ikegwuonu Chidimma Urunwa and Uche Uguru run art workshops for children who have dropped out of school. Drawing and painting enable them to express their emotions and restore their self-confidence. Metis helps them to find permanent schooling.

COUNTRY

Nigeria

LOCALISATION

Abuja

DATES OF THE PROJECT

June 2021 – May 2022

ARTISTS INVOLVED

Ikegwuonu Chidimma Urunwa & Uche Uguru

PARTICIPANTS

30 children and teenagers

FUNDING

Fonds Metis 15,000 €

PARTNERS

Urunwa Art
Girls'Voices
Glitovine Development Initiative

SECTOR AND SDG'S



18,5

MILLION CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL IN NIGERIA

30

CHILDREN SUPPORTED IN THEIR QUEST FOR A PERMANENT PLACE AT SCHOOL

IN NIGERIA, CHILDREN EXCLUDED FROM THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

In Nigeria, widespread poverty and the prohibitive cost of education are forcing a growing number of parents to withdraw their children from the school system at an early age. In 2021, 18.5 million children will be out of school – 60% of them girls. Young people who have dropped out of school have given up the idea of ever going back to school, and believe that education is not for them. Many have lost the desire to learn. The consequences of dropping out of school are devastating: it compromises the individual development of the children, but also the economic and social development of the country.

DRAWING TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Ikegwuonu Chidimma Urunwa was confronted at an early age with the discrimination linked to her status as a woman, and she sees her work as a plea for gender equality and access to education. Uche Uguru uses a variety of media including ink, pencil, acrylic, oil, watercolour and pastel – but her predilection for collage has earned her the nickname 'Queen of Collage' in Nigerian artistic circles. Together, the two young Nigerian artists wanted to mobilise the arts to encourage 30 street children in Abuja to go back to school.

For six months, they run 30 workshops for 20 girls and 10 boys from the precarious neighbourhoods of Mpape and Jahi. They teach them drawing, painting and collage techniques, and invite them to work on their fears, dreams and aspirations. The workshops, run jointly with a psychologist, provide a space for children to express themselves and listen to what they have to say.

The works produced by the children are exhibited in Abuja and sold alongside those of the two artists. The funds raised help to pay the school fees of the children, who have returned to school after the workshops – and have regained the confidence to continue their studies.

At the same time, a back-to-school fund has been set up by AFD to finance the schooling of the participating children over the long term. The children are always monitored by a psychologist, and close dialogue is maintained with the teaching staff to ensure that they continue their education.

A documentary film was made by the NGO Girls Voices, which trains young Nigerian women in audiovisual professions. Its screening at the French Institute of Nigeria and in a number of cinemas across the country is an opportunity to launch a debate on education issues.

THEY SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

'As a girl, I thought that only boys and men could do art, but now I want to try it too – and it's a woman who's teaching us art!'

FAVOUR CHIDI, AGED 12

'I've always been sensitive to the suffering of street children and the psychological challenges they face at such a young age. How can I get in touch with them? Through art! There's no particular language to adopt... The children simply feel free to communicate.'

CHIDIMA URUNWA – VISUAL ARTIST