



Address by the Award Screening Committee Chairman

Protocol

It gives me pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Inoyo Toro Foundation, to this Ninth Award Ceremony. At this event we seek to appreciate and celebrate our teachers who have excelled during the year in the prime profession of teaching. This profession, which is a pillar of the society, ought to be so recognized and those involved in it should also be appreciated. Education, according to Aristotle, is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity. It is more than a service or a job as it gives birth to every other profession. In the words of Lee Iacocca, "In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us have to settle for something less". Unfortunately, the JAMB cut off for Colleges of Education is usually the lowest. This year it is 130. Former Speaker Dimeji Bankole wondered: "If we are selecting poorer academic performers to train and teach our students, how can we expect our students to be high achievers?" (The PUNCH, Oct 04, 2016, p.37). Inoyo Toro Foundation has become a trail blazer in this direction by giving prime attention to teacher motivation to encourage effectiveness, and they deserve our commendation.

This year, we have seven subjects under consideration. We are still hoping for sponsors for History which is becoming very attractive in the universities but hardly has teachers at the secondary level. The Foundation still seeks to encourage the development of subjects which may not appear to be popular but are very critical in our economic and socio-cultural development.

The aims of the Foundation are to:

- encourage teachers of Science, Mathematics, English, and some other endangered subjects in our public secondary schools,
- stimulate awareness for the study of these subjects,



- promote healthy and positive competition for excellence among teachers,
- help teachers to be more committed to their profession as they constantly update their knowledge and help to mentor other colleagues and
- provide mentorship opportunities for the students of public secondary schools by volunteers drawn from different professions.

Through this project, the Foundation is also supplementing the Akwa Ibom State Government's effort in her educational development, because when the teacher is well recognized and motivated, he will teach from his heart with personal devotion to the work, not from the book! We also believe that teacher motivation is the key turnaround strategy for addressing the poor learning and subsequently the poor results in these subjects in our schools.

The Award for this year is in seven (7) subjects: Mathematics, English Language, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Economics and Fine Arts. Each subject has three winners, with the first prize winner receiving N250,000; the second, N150,000 and the third N100,000. This year, a total of 145 teachers, made up of 25 English, 28 Mathematics, 25 Biology, 25 Chemistry, 19 Physics, 17 Economics and 6 Visual Arts teachers attended the selection test out of 276 that were invited.

The modalities for assessment of schools for the award include:

- appraisal of the learning environment,
- availability of laboratories (for the science subjects) and libraries,
- the score of the school in external examinations.
- assessment of the teacher based on his productivity and professional competence in his teaching subject area.



The final screening test for selection of the winning teacher is in two parts. The first part is an aptitude test for just 40 minutes, based on the WAEC/NECO curriculum. The second part is an oral examination meant for those who pass reasonably well in the written test.

In order to strengthen the excellence of the award, the first, second and third prizes can only be merited if a contestant scores at least 70%, at least 60%, and at least 50% respectively in the final results. This explains the absence of first prizes in Biology and in Chemistry this year.

Another category in the award is the Grand Mentor Teachers' Award, through which the Foundation challenges past winners to produce their kind through regular mentoring of other teachers in their subject areas who may reside within their neighbourhood. The mentor must himself scale through the written test, in addition to his field performance, before being considered for the award. The Grand Mentor award attracts N500, 000. Of the number of mentors that attended the screening test, four (4) were successful each in English, Biology, Physics and Mathematics. There is no grand mentor in Chemistry this year; the only mentor who attended could not meet the requirements.

Mr. Chairman, Guest of Honour, Guest Speaker, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to present these winners for award of prizes at the appropriate time during this programme. I also wish to state that for both the Excellent Teachers' Award and the Grand Mentors' Award, the screening process and the written and oral tests were handled according to preset rules and procedures with transparency and integrity. The expert examiners were two per subject and were carefully selected consultants from the University of Uyo. They did an excellent job and deserve our commendation. We also acknowledge the remarkable cooperation received from the Principals of the teachers who attended the screening tests.

May I acknowledge the contribution of our Foundation's new Program Coordinator, Mr. Aniedi Amos, who came on board early this year. He has been handling his duties with



commitment. I will also like to appreciate the work of Emem Nkereuwem and Clement Warrie in anchoring a series of radio programs that highlighted the core mission of Inoyo Toro Foundation, for some weeks this year.

Our Appreciation

On behalf of the Award Committee, I wish to always appreciate the founder and Board of Trustees of the Inoyo Toro Foundation for this vision and their continuous commitment to this noble project which has impacted positively in the performance of some of our students in public examinations. The Board deserves our commendation and thanks for this platform for service.

We also thank his Excellency, Governor Udom Emmanuel, for his government's investment in education at all levels in the State. We are grateful to the Hon. Commissioner for Education and the Permanent Secretary as well as the Chairman, members, Permanent Secretary and Directors of the State Education Board. We also thank Principals of Schools for their support which led to a smooth selection process during the year. At the end of the recent State Education Summit suggestions were proffered towards charting a new course in education delivery in the State. I do hope the Government and other stakeholders will closely study the outcome of that Summit for implementation. The Foundation is also grateful to the Consultants from the University of Uyo for setting, administering and marking the aptitude test in situ and with integrity.

Conclusion

We have noticed some improvement in the performance of some of the teachers in some of the subjects under consideration. However, I will still plead with our teachers to aim at mastery of their subject areas. Our public schools are not performing up to expectation because of the non-commitment of some of our teachers who appear to possess better credentials than some of those in the private sector of Education. The school authorities



and educational managers should sit up, raise the tempo of the school and cause teachers to be conscientious and diligent in their duties. Our teachers should note that:

“Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding”

- William Arthur Ward, author of Fountains of Faith

It is therefore imperative for teachers in our public schools to rise and be committed to their duties and teach for children to be inspired enough to facilitate positive change.

We congratulate you for being teachers and mentors of Akwa Ibom youths, the future leaders of our State and nation.

For the students who are present in this programme, I wish to encourage you to take your studies seriously and in particular, try to heed the counsel of this Foundation's external mentors who have themselves made their mark in the society. Don't take them for granted!

Finally, for the Award winners, I hope you will not rest on your oars. There is a lot more work to do now to prove your worth and maximize your potential. This award may only be a spring board to higher heights and an open door to other numerous opportunities.

Congratulations!

Thank you and may God bless everyone!

Dr. Enobong E. Joshua