

**Welcome Address by the Chairman, Award Committee of Inoyo Toro  
Foundation, at the 11<sup>th</sup> Teachers' Award for Excellence, Held at  
Le Méridien Ibom Hotel and Golf Resort, Uyo  
on Friday, November 02, 2018.**

*Protocol*

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Award Screening Committee of the Inoyo Toro Foundation, I am delighted to welcome you to this Eleventh Award Ceremony of the Foundation. At this event, we seek to appreciate and celebrate our teachers who have excelled during the year in the prime profession of teaching.

The aims of the **Foundation** include, 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 students of public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, 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. We believe that teacher motivation is critical in addressing the apathy exhibited in the teacher's work experience and will subsequently enhance performance and service delivery in our schools. According to Aristotle, Education is *an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity*. It should therefore be highly priced and jealously guarded. In the words of Elder Nkereuwem Ikon, who represented the Hon. Commissioner for Education at the Screening test this year, "*teachers are touch bearers, they must therefore uphold all that is right with the right standard*".

This year the Award is for six (6) subjects: Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Economics and Visual Arts. In each subject the first prize winner receives ₦250,000; the second, ₦150,000 and the third ₦100,000.

This year 203 persons made up of 194 teachers and 9 principals were invited. However, only 109 teachers, made up of 24 English, 22 Mathematics, 15 Biology, 22

Chemistry, 19 Physics, 6 Economics and 1 Visual Arts teachers, and eight (8) school principals, attended the selection test.

The modalities for preliminary assessment of schools for the award include:

- appraisal of the learning facilities and environment,
- availability of modestly equipped laboratories (for the science subjects) and libraries,
- the score of students of the school in the final external examinations (at least 80% at credit level and above) .
- 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 based on the WAEC/NECO curriculum. The second part is an oral interaction between the resource persons and those who pass reasonably well (at least 40%) in the written test.

In order to strengthen the excellence of the award, the first, second and third prizes can only be achieved 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 prize in Economics and Mathematics. It is very sad and appalling to note that no teacher could score up to 50% in the English test and orals. Thus, this year there is no prize in English Language. History had no contestant as the three teachers invited never turned up. This subject was first featured in 2013 and was suspended due to lack of sponsorship. We do hope more teachers will be interested in the teaching of this *endangered* subject.

In the Grand Mentor Teachers' Award category, the mentor must himself scale through the written test (at least 50%), in addition to his field performance indices, before being considered for the award. In addition, he must produce a prizewinner, to qualify. The Grand Mentor award attracts ₦500, 000. Of the number of mentors that attended the screening test this year, four (4) were successful each in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. There is no grand mentor in English this year as no mentor could scale the initial requirements in the screening test.

In 2016, the Foundation also instituted the **Principal's Award**, which is aimed at rewarding the efforts of exceptional public school heads, who have distinguished themselves in pushing the academic advancement of their institutions. Ten principals were selected through an instrument generated in collaboration with the State Secondary Education Board. The Foundation visited the shortlisted principals

to appraise their submission using well articulated performance indices. Nine of them scaled that hurdle with different scores and were invited to the screening test, though only eight responded. Consideration was given to practical management and administrative competence. The three of them who scored 50% and above in the test were further subjected to oral interaction with two consultants. The best principal emerged after this.

Your Excellency, Chairman of the occasion, Respected Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, these winners will be presented for award of prizes at the appropriate time during this programme. I also wish to state that the screening process and the written and oral interactions were handled according to preset rules and procedures with transparency and integrity. The expert examiners were carefully selected consultants from the academia and the public sector. We need to commend the excellent job done by these resource persons.

### **Our Appreciation**

On behalf of the Award Screening Committee, I wish to 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. Some of these beneficiaries are now graduates in various fields of study. The Board deserves our commendation for this novel platform for service.

We profoundly thank his Excellency, Governor Udom Emmanuel, for his massive investment in education at all levels in the State through the provision of basic infrastructure and the recruitment of teachers, and for his commitment to the Foundation's project. We appreciate the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Barr. Onofiok Luke, for always identifying with the Foundation over the years. We are grateful to the Hon. Commissioner for Education, who is becoming one of our mentors, and the Permanent Secretary, as well as the State Secondary Education Board, for providing the needed data on schools and facilitating our entry to schools. We also thank principals of schools for their support, which led to a smooth selection process during the year. The Foundation is also grateful to the Consultants for their honest and selfless services to the Foundation. We thank all our collaborators and sponsors.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we wish to state that the Screening Committee and the Foundation's Board of Trustees consider as worrisome the current apparent decline in the

performance of some of the teachers in some of the subjects. The Committee is putting in place measures to strengthen the *Grand mentor* award category for effectiveness and fulfillment of our objectives. The candidate for Grand Mentor award will subsequently be required to achieve at least 60% in the mentoring aspect of the scoring. The Foundation is also exploring modalities for organizing retraining and refresher programmes to address these deficiencies. However, this will need the sponsorship of the Government and concerned citizens of this State.

It is observed that public schools are not performing optimally because of non-commitment of some of the teachers and school heads. Educational managers should brace up to their responsibilities. The supervising government departments should strengthen their machinery for proper and effective supervision and honest appraisal of all sectors of the school system. The teachers should note that our children would excel to whatever height in their academics if given the proper mentoring by their teachers.

I congratulate teachers who are mentors of Akwa Ibom youths, the future leaders of our State and nation. Please create curiosity as you teach so that they will continue the learning process as long as they live and so actualize their dreams.

I also wish to urge the students who are present in this programme, not to be distracted by myriads of today's youthful enticements and preoccupations but to take your studies seriously. Boldly take hold of your future and do not settle for mediocrity. The Bible instructs, *Study to show yourself approved unto God, so you won't need to be ashamed in future. Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding*, and studying facilitates deeper understanding. In particular, try to heed the counsel of your teachers as well as our Foundation's external mentors who have themselves made their mark in the society. Don't take them for granted!

Finally, for the Award winners, as I congratulate you, you should realize that this is the beginning of a new journey in the mentorship enterprise. There is a lot more work to do now to prove your worth and maximize your potential. This award provides an open door to other numerous opportunities. Take hold of these squarely!

Congratulations!

Thank you and may God bless everyone!

**Dr. Enobong E. Joshua**