# Ben and Victoria Ononeze Foundation

# Organisational Description

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# Name of charity

Ben and Victoria Ononeze Foundation

#  National location of office in England

P O Box 129

Ferryhill,

County Durham

DL16 9DQ

England

United Kingdom

# Objectives of the Foundation

# The relief of sickness and the preservation of health among people residing in Imo State, South Eastern Nigeria by the provision of free primary healthcare services in particular but not limited to medical consultations, eye checks, health education, advice and further referrals.

* The relief of poverty and financial hardship among people living in Imo state, South Eastern Nigeria by the provision of micro-finance loan funding to individuals in, or at risk of, poverty or financial need to enable them to establish their own businesses to provide for themselves and their families.

# How the Foundation delivers its objectives

The Foundation aims to delivers its vision and objectives through:

* To provide health information to local people so that they are better able to look after their health. Promote self-care and simple hygiene measures
* To improve awareness of common health issues and things to do to help prevent them and reduce their effects on health and wellbeing
* To provide free medicines for some of the most common diseases (e.g. diabetes, malaria, typhoid fever, high blood pressure, arthritis) investigatory tests and eye checks and glasses.
* To help beneficiaries to access local health services (e.g. specialist consultation and investigations)

Free primary health care include:

* Health talks on a range of health topics (personal and food hygiene, healthy eating, risk factors for diabetes, cancer and stroke and the importance of early detection and diagnosis)
* De-worming children
* Free mosquito nets
* Medical consultations with free medicines for common illnesses (e.g. malaria, diabetes, hypertension, rheumatic pains, arthritis) and vitamins.
* Investigatory blood tests for common health indicators (e.g. blood sugar and lipids) and diseases (e.g. malaria and HIV)
* Free eye test and glasses
* Onward referral to and practical and financial support with specialist health care. For example, specialist medical investigations, operations to remove cataracts and minor surgeries.
* Maintenance clinic to provide free medicines for the poorest

# How do the services provided by the Foundation fit with the wider

#  statutory provision of healthcare in Nigeria

In Nigeria, there is no National Health Service available to the citizens. Health Care Insurance is available to a limited number of people employed by certain organisations. This means that the majority of individuals are responsible for their own health care. The very poor cannot afford to pay for medical care, and charity organisations such as Ben and Victoria Foundation or individual philanthropists are able to provide some assistance. The national and state governments are encouraging organisations and individuals, especially those abroad, to engage and assist in charitable health provision in local communities.

The Foundation works with volunteer registered health professionals working in local health facilities (state and private), who are able to offer support to enable people who attend medical outreach to access further specialist investigations and treatments in local health facilities. For example, we provide practical and financial support for heart scans, biopsies, treatment for glaucoma and cataract operations. The Foundation is negotiating with private and state health care providers in the area for access to their facilities for certain investigations, operations and treatments. One of the trustee (Dr Christopher Nwokorie) and a volunteer who is an ex-State Director of Nursing lead this work, including support with maintenance treatment for a small cohort with absolute need. Both are also involved in other community health activities. The Foundation work is therefore complimenting state and private care provision.

# How the Foundation carry out the charity purpose of the provision of

#  small loans and microfinance arrangements to individuals.

Many people in communities in Nigeria live in poverty and are mostly petty traders and subsistence farmers. The majority are women (often widows), who are struggling to feed their large families and are not eligible to borrow from banks. Some of them have been victims of loan sharks who have made their situation worse. The beneficiaries (mainly women) are identified from a list compiled by community and church leaders who know them well. The trustees and leaders then assess the suitability of those on the list and agree on a short list and interview potential beneficiaries.

By providing these women with small interest free loans, the Foundation is able to assist them in engaging in meaningful petty trading and farming which help them to feed their families. There is no doubt that the small interest free loans have transformed some of these families, for example they are now able to feed their children and send them to school.

The loans are interest free and beneficiaries pay back in mutually agreed regular amounts and time period. The beneficiaries have to meet all the criteria which are:

* Widows/persons living in poverty
* Bread winners in their households
* Involved in a small scale trade or farming activity
* Have reputable people in the community to act as guarantors for loan

The trustees working together with community and church leaders agreed to start with a loan amount of 50,000 (Nigerian currency Naira). We agreed that this amount was a good starting point and sufficient enough to support beneficiaries in their small businesses.

Beneficiaries complete and sign a simple application in which they agree to the following terms and conditions:

* They accept the loan and the individually agreed monthly (or quarterly) repayments arrangements.
* Agree the date of first repayment
* They will use loan for their trade or farming
* Guarantor signs form to state that s/he supports applicant suitability for loan

A Coordinator liaises with loan beneficiaries, monitor activities, ensure repayments and provides regular updates. There are no indications to date of any misuse of loans. In fact, some beneficiaries paid off their loans with a year and were able to access a second loan. The Coordinator supports Trustees and community leaders in making these decisions.

# Who deliver the Foundation activities and services

The Foundation deliver its activities and services directly via volunteers – it does not currently employ any staff. It recruits health care professionals through professional contacts. All are practicing registered medical, nursing and allied health practitioners:

* Medical Doctors (general and specialists)
* Registered Public Health Specialist
* Registered Nurses
* Optometrists
* Biomedical Scientists/Laboratory Technicians
* Pharmacists

Non-health care volunteers are community and church leaders and workers. The majority of the volunteers are from the local area who want to help local people.

The two day outreach sessions start with an induction session on the running of activities and highlighting potential risks and how to manage them.

# How the Foundation organisation is funded, allocate funds to activities

# or services, monitor the operations, activities and expenditure of volunteers and verify and account for the end use of funds

Currently the Foundation services and activities are funded from personal funds from trustees Benjamin Ononeze (BO & VO) for the following.

* Purchase of medicines
* Purchase of consumables
* Refreshments, food and transport fares for volunteers.
* Token gifts for volunteers e.g. soaps, deodorants, shower gels and body creams.
* Food and water for beneficiaries – food bought and prepared by volunteers
* Free small loans to individuals for small scale trading and farming

Activity and expenditure monitoring:

* Trustees and volunteers meet at the end of the first day to review activities, agree follow up investigations where required. Also review stocks and arrange for further purchase of medicines and eye glasses (usually runs out).
* Meeting on the second to review activities over the two days on the learning – numbers who attended, what went well, challenges and opportunities
* Trustees (BO & VO) meet to review expenditure
* Trustees (BO & VO) review financial support to facilitate access to local health services for identified individuals, in collaboration with trustees and volunteer medical practitioners

# Safeguarding

All health talks and one to one consultations happen in open spaces. In the few cases where privacy is required, a chaperone is provided. In addition, the outreach sessions start each day with talks on potential risks (crowd control and medical emergencies) and how to mitigate and manage them.

The Foundation has a Safeguarding Framework (attached) outlining how it will operate in a manner that safeguards beneficiaries. The Trustees have highlighted in the framework their commitment to safeguarding and to implement the procedures as written in the framework. We will seek to formalise a working safeguarding policy as soon as practicable, in particular with respect to where activities are provided, any new activities and in developing partnerships with local and state agencies.