

**THE SCRIPTURE UNION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN  
SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA, 1966-2015**

**BY**

**EDITH EJIRO-OGHENE EYERUROMA**

**PG/ART1600954**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY, EDO STATE NIGERIA**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

**THE SCRIPTURE UNION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN  
SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA, 1966-2015**

**BY**

**EDITH EJIRO-OGHENE EYERUROMA**

**PG/ART1600954**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTERS DEGREE (M.A) IN HISTORY, UNIVERSITY  
OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

I, EDITH EJIRO-OGHENE EYERUROMA, with Mat. No. ART/PG1600954, hereby certify that this thesis is original and has been written by me. It is a record of my research and has not been submitted before in part or full for any other diploma or degree of this University or any other institution or any previous publication.

---

Prof. J. C. Nwaka

---

Date

---

Prof. J. C. Nwaka

---

Date

---

External Examiner

---

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my amazing parents, Mr. Abraham and Mrs. Grace Eyeruroma whose unwavering love, support and encouragement have been my foundation throughout this journey. To my siblings, Elijah, Joy and Precious, your constant inspiration and belief in me have been invaluable. I am forever grateful for all of you and the sacrifices you've made.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to God Almighty, the source of wisdom, strength and grace. Through every challenge, late night and moment of doubt, He remained my anchor. This journey would not have been possible without His guidance and for that, I am profoundly thankful.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. J. C. Nwaka, whose invaluable guidance, patience and constructive feedback have shaped this work. Your encouragement and critical insights pushed me to refine my thoughts and produce a well-rounded thesis. I am truly grateful for the time and effort you dedicated to this project.

I also wish to express my gratitude to my lecturers, Dr. Iweze, Prof. Ifidon and Prof. Erhagbe and other staff and faculty members, University of Benin, for their unwavering support, mentorship and invaluable contributions to my academic journey. Your dedication to knowledge and scholarship has inspired me greatly and I am privileged to have learned from them and for their unwavering support and the knowledge they have imparted over the years. Their mentorship and encouragement have played a significant role in shaping my academic journey. A special appreciation goes to the (Retired and currently working) staff of Scripture Union, Nigeria and other resource centers who assisted me in accessing crucial materials, your willingness to help made all the difference.

This research would not have been complete without the contributions of the individuals who agreed to be interviewed. I am especially grateful to the amazing Dr. OCJ Nmalada, Rev. Peters Nwokocha and Sir FMC Esokawu for their time, insights and willingness to share their experiences. Your perspectives provided depth and authenticity to this work and I truly appreciate your invaluable contributions.

To my friends and colleagues, especially Mrs. Ime and Mrs. Blessing, your constant encouragement, thoughtful discussions and even the moments of distraction helped me stay balanced throughout this process. Thank you for listening, offering advice and reminding me to take much-needed breaks.

Finally, to my beloved immediate family, I owe you more than words can express. Your prayers, patience and unwavering belief in me kept me going even during the toughest moments. Your sacrifices and support have been my greatest motivation and I dedicate this work to you.

This thesis is not just the product of my efforts but a reflection of the support, love and wisdom I have received from so many incredible people. I am deeply thankful to each one of you.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover page	i
Title page	ii
Certification page	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of contents	vii
Abstract	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Aim and Objectives	4
Scope of the Study	4
Significance of the Study	5
Conceptual Clarifications	6
Methodology	8
Literature Review	9
Organisation of Chapters	17
<b>CHAPTER TWO: SCRIPTURE UNION IN NIGERIA</b>	<b>24</b>
Early Beginnings (1884-1949)	24
Expatriate Era (1950-1965)	29
Indiginization Era (1966-Date)	33
<b>CHAPTER THREE: GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SCRIPTURE UNION IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA</b>	<b>44</b>
Enugu Region	48
Okigwe Region	49
Onitsha Region	51

<b>CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES OF SCRIPTURE UNION IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA</b>	<b>58</b>
Socio-cultural Development Initiatives	58
Economic Development Initiatives	77
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: IMPACTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA</b>	<b>97</b>
Positive Impacts	97
Challenges	108
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>119</b>
Assessment	119
Conclusion	124
Bibliography	126
Appendix	133

## ABSTRACT

Scripture Union (SU) is widely recognized for its evangelistic mission in Nigeria, yet its influence extends far beyond the spiritual realm. In southeastern Nigeria, the organization has played a vital role in social and economic development through initiatives in education, healthcare, community building, and empowerment. While existing studies often emphasize SU's religious dimension, this research highlights its broader contributions, revealing how the movement has shaped communities in tangible and transformative ways. The study also traces SU's growth and expansion in southeastern Nigeria, focusing on its transition from a missionary-led movement to an indigenized body that adapted its mission to local needs and realities.

Through its diverse activities, SU has addressed pressing social challenges in the region. The organization's educational efforts—such as literacy programs, mentorship for young people, and school outreach—have expanded access to learning and personal growth. Its healthcare interventions, including public health awareness, counseling, and welfare support, have improved community well-being and strengthened families. Moreover, SU has been a moral and social force, fostering community cohesion, promoting ethical values, and advocating for social justice. These initiatives have not only met practical needs but have also reinforced a sense of shared responsibility and moral renewal within southeastern communities.

Beyond its social programs, SU has significantly advanced economic empowerment by promoting self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Through vocational training, cooperative societies, and skill development initiatives, it has provided meaningful livelihood opportunities, especially for youth and marginalized groups. These efforts have reduced dependency, enhanced productivity, and contributed to local economic stability. Drawing from archival materials, interviews, and historical records such as *Plumblin Magazine*, this study reveals that SU's enduring impact goes beyond evangelism. Its faith-driven approach to development demonstrates that religious organizations can serve as critical agents of transformation in contexts where government support is limited, leaving a lasting legacy on individuals and communities across southeastern Nigeria.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The Scripture Union (SU) is a globally recognized Christian organization that has significantly impacted the spiritual lives of millions since its founding in 1867 by Josiah Spiers in London. Scripture Union, SU, is active in more than 130 countries in all the continents of the world, including Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> In Nigeria, as elsewhere, the SU national movement seeks to fulfill the international mission statement stated as follows;

working with the churches, Scripture Union aims and objectives, to make God's good news known to children, young people and families and to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through Bible reading and prayers, so that they may come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity and become both committed church members and servants of the world in need.<sup>2</sup>

While its primary mission revolves around promoting Bible reading and prayer, Scripture Union has also made substantial contributions to social and economic development in various regions, including Nigeria. This research seeks to explore these often-overlooked dimensions of SU's work, particularly focusing on its influence in the southeastern region of Nigeria.

The exploration of the Scripture Union's versatile role begins with a historical analysis, tracing its origins and early expansion. SU's efforts in Nigeria can be categorized into three distinct phases.<sup>3</sup> The early beginnings when Scripture Union came into Nigeria (as it did in other parts of

Africa in the first wave of its expansion beyond the continent of Europe). This was achieved mainly through its literature, the "SU reading cards" and "notes" sent to English missionaries working abroad. The Children's Scripture Union, as it was then called, was introduced to Nigeria in about

1884 by Reverend Charles Henry Vidal Goma, one of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the Yoruba mission field<sup>4</sup> The expatriate era which featured transition of Scripture Union from a church-based organization to a school-based organization and the shift from ordained leadership. This period also saw the introduction of staff appointments supported by voluntary workers who formed committees, with most positions being occupied by

expatriates.<sup>5</sup> ii. The indigenization era spanning from 1966 to the present, marks the third phase. The main features focus on autonomy, encompassing the essentials of indigenization such as self-propagation, self-support and self-governance. In Scripture Union, autonomy promotes the development of SU work in each country until national movements become independent and capable of managing further regional developments. The Nigerian National Movement gained autonomy in 1966, at which point it became known as Scripture Union Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Each of these phases' marks significant shifts in the organization's structure, strategy and reach within the country. By examining these phases, we can better understand the foundational work that set the stage for SU's growth and impact.

Following its establishment, SU's growth and expansion in the southeastern region of Nigeria will be examined. This region has been a critical area for SU's activities, showcasing a dynamic interplay of cultural acceptance and organizational adaptation. SU is growing in the southeast as it works to become part of local communities, helping with spiritual, social and economic development. The core of this research lies in analyzing the socio-economic contributions of SU in the Southeast. Beyond its spiritual mission, SU has been instrumental in driving educational development, empowering women, creating job opportunities and undertaking various community development projects. These initiatives have significantly influenced the social and economic landscape of the southeastern region, offering a model of how faith-based organizations can contribute to comprehensive community development.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the research will assess the effects of SU's socio-economic initiatives, providing a balanced perspective on both the positive and negative outcomes. This analysis will consider enhanced educational opportunities, improved living standards and increased economic activities, while also addressing potential challenges such as dependency on aid and cultural shifts. The overarching aim of this research is to shed light on the comprehensive impact of the Scripture Union in southeastern Nigeria, emphasizing its social and economic contributions alongside its spiritual mission. By delving into the historical context, growth patterns and developmental initiatives, this research aims to offer a detailed understanding of SU's role in shaping the Eastern region of Nigeria.

In summary, this research will traverse through the historical beginnings, regional expansion, socioeconomic contributions and the resultant effects of the Scripture Union's work in southeastern Nigeria. Through this detailed exploration, it seeks to fill the existing gap in

literature and provide a comprehensive view of SU's impact, thus contributing to the broader discourse on the role of religious organizations in social and economic development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite being active in Nigeria for many years, the important contributions of Scripture Union to the country's socio-economic development have not been given the recognition they deserve. This organization has played a significant role in areas such as education, job creation and programs aimed at empowering vulnerable groups. However, these efforts have often been overshadowed by the activities of more prominent religious organizations like the Catholic and Anglican churches. The researcher aims to shed light on the valuable work done by Scripture Union from 1966 to 2015. By exploring and documenting its efforts in promoting education, creating employment opportunities and supporting those in need, the researcher seek to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on Nigerian society. Ultimately, this research will challenge existing perceptions and highlight the broader societal contributions of Scripture Union beyond its religious functions.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research will be to examine the significant socio-economic contributions of Scripture Union in the southeastern part of Nigeria from 1966 to 2015, particularly focusing on their initiatives in education, job creation and empowerment programs for vulnerable groups. While the specific objectives include;

1. To explore the initial establishment and subsequent spread of Scripture Union across various parts of Nigeria, especially in the Southeast which is the focus of this work
2. To examine the different phases of development of Scripture Union in Nigeria, particularly its transition from missionary-led leadership to indigenized administration
3. Identify the socioeconomic developmental projects of Scripture Union in South Eastern Region from 1966 to 2015;
4. To assess the effectiveness and reach of Scripture Union's empowerment programs aimed at supporting vulnerable groups such as women, youth and marginalized communities.
5. To evaluate the overall impact of Scripture Union's socio-economic development initiatives on individuals and communities in Southeastern Nigeria.

## **Scope of the Study**

This study examines Scripture Union's socio-economic development in southeastern Nigeria from 1966 to 2015, focusing on its impact in education, job creation and empowerment programs for vulnerable groups. The year 1966 is significant as it marks the beginning of indigenization and the penetration of SU into Eastern Nigeria, shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1967. During the war, SU played a major humanitarian role by providing relief and support to affected communities. The study covers southeastern Nigeria and employs a historical approach, including archival research and interviews. It aims to highlight the unique and significant role of Scripture Union in fostering societal progress. Additionally, the research offers a comparative analysis with other major religious organizations, such as the Catholic and Anglican churches, to challenge existing perceptions and bring recognition to SU's varied contributions. The study concludes in 2015, marking the completion of a significant leadership transition in the union and assessing SU's ongoing influence on the region's socio-economic development.

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this work lies in its ability to bring refined understanding of the role Scripture Union (SU) has played in southeastern Nigeria beyond its spiritual mission. While many studies have focused on SU's religious impact, this work will explore the organization's socioeconomic contributions, particularly in southeastern Nigeria. This focus fills an essential gap in the existing literature, highlighting how SU has engaged with and influenced Nigerian society in ways that extend into education, economic empowerment and community welfare.

Through this research, areas such as how religious organizations like SU are only relevant in the spiritual sphere will be explored. By digging into SU's development from the Early Beginnings through the Expatriate Era and into the Indigenization Era, this research reveals how the organization adapted to Nigeria's changing social landscape. This transformation is particularly evident in the indigenization phase, which illustrates the shift towards Nigerian leadership and cultural adaptation, reflecting how SU has become embedded within the nation's fabric.

In this exploration of SU's activities in southeastern Nigeria, particular attention is paid to the organization's post-civil war contributions. This region, heavily impacted by the civil war, saw SU not only providing spiritual guidance but also act as a stabilizing force by promoting reconciliation, skill acquisition and social support for individuals rebuilding their lives. By documenting SU's initiatives in this area, it illustrates how the organization took on a more

comprehensive approach, addressing practical needs and contributing to social cohesion in a region marked by hardship.

What sets this research apart is the incorporation of interviews with individuals who were deeply involved with SU's work in southeastern Nigeria. By gathering firsthand accounts from key staff and local figures, this work will capture their experiences, challenges and the organization's evolving impact in their own words. This approach provides a richer, more human perspective on SU's journey and the personal stories behind its community initiatives. In addition, this research will be drawing on resources like Plumline magazine, a yearly SU publication that covers the organization's trends, reports, programs and milestones. By including insights from these materials, the research will be able to contextualize SU's development, offering a well-rounded view that integrates both official records and personal narratives. This combination adds depth to the research's findings and preserves voices that might otherwise be lost.

Ultimately, the significance of this research lies in its potential to offer a new framework for understanding the impact of faith-based organizations in southeastern Nigeria. And, hopefully, this research will inspire future scholars to look beyond the religious contributions of such organizations, acknowledging their social, economic and cultural roles. By illustrating how SU has impacted southeastern Nigeria's development, the study hopes to show that religious organizations can serve as catalysts for change, addressing practical needs and fostering a sense of unity and progress in local communities.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Concept of Economic Development**

Economic development has been defined in various ways by scholars and institutions, reflecting changing global priorities. Initially centered on industrial growth and increases in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the concept has evolved to emphasize human well-being, equity, and quality of life. This broader perspective recognizes that economic progress involves more than material wealth—it includes the enhancement of human capabilities and social welfare. This shift aligns with the objectives of faith-based organizations such as Scripture Union, which view development as a holistic process that integrates spiritual, social, and economic dimensions to promote human dignity and self-reliance.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), economic development should expand people's choices and enable them to live fulfilling lives. The UNDP's human development approach emphasizes education, healthcare, and social welfare as central to growth. This resonates with Scripture Union's initiatives in southeastern Nigeria, where literacy programs, health campaigns, and empowerment schemes improve human capacity and community wellbeing. Similarly, the World Bank defines economic development as the process of reducing poverty through sustainable growth and investment in people and infrastructure. Scripture Union's vocational training and youth empowerment programs mirror this vision by promoting skill acquisition, self-reliance, and long-term community resilience.

Amartya Sen (1999) further advanced the concept through his idea of *development as freedom*, which stresses expanding individuals' capabilities to pursue their goals. Sen's framework highlights that true development removes barriers to education, employment, and social participation. Scripture Union's work in providing vocational skills and educational support exemplifies this approach, empowering individuals economically while fostering personal agency and community participation.

In the context of this study, economic development is understood as a comprehensive process of poverty reduction, capacity building, and community empowerment. It encompasses initiatives that promote self-reliance, social inclusion, and sustainable growth. Scripture Union contributes to this process by addressing both spiritual and practical needs, implementing educational, health, and skill-development programs that collectively foster human and community advancement in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Dimensions of Socio-economic Development**

Socio-economic development encompasses multiple, interrelated dimensions (social, economic, cultural, and institutional) that together promote sustainable progress.

The social dimension focuses on improving education, healthcare, and welfare systems that enhance quality of life. According to Midgley (1995), social development integrates social policy with economic goals to create balanced, equitable societies. Scripture Union contributes to this through its literacy programs, health awareness campaigns, and community-based welfare initiatives, particularly in regions underserved by government services.

The economic dimension, as noted by Todaro and Smith (2012), emphasizes employment creation, income generation, and poverty reduction. Scripture Union's vocational and youth

development programs align with this dimension by equipping individuals with practical skills that foster entrepreneurship and economic stability within communities.

Finally, the cultural and institutional dimensions emphasize the role of values, traditions, and partnerships in achieving sustainable development. Inglehart and Baker (2000) argue that cultural values shape development outcomes, while institutional cooperation strengthens implementation. Scripture Union integrates local cultural values and collaborates with churches, schools, and other organizations, ensuring that its initiatives remain relevant and widely accepted within southeastern communities.

## **Methodology**

To achieve a comprehensive and engaging study of Scripture Union's socio-economic development initiatives in the southeastern Nigeria from 1966 to 2015, a descriptive and analytic method will be employed. This study will utilize both primary and secondary sources to gather data. Primary sources will include oral sources like interviews, plumbines, letters and reports allowing for firsthand insights and direct engagement with individuals and communities impacted by Scripture Union's efforts. Secondary sources will encompass textbooks, journals, magazines and both published and unpublished works, providing a broad and in-depth understanding of the context and historical background. This approach will ensure the capture of diverse opinions, views and feelings on the subject, offering a subtle and comprehensive analysis of Scripture Union's contributions to socio-economic development in the region.

## **Literature Review**

While several works have explored the history and activities of Scripture Union Nigeria, there is limited understanding of its contributions to the socio-economic development of southeastern Nigeria. This literature review aims to address this gap by examining relevant academic works and outlining the socio-economic impact of Scripture Union in the region. By doing so, this study will shed light on how Scripture Union has influenced education, healthcare and community development in southeastern Nigeria. This analysis gains momentum from existing scholarship, which provides a foundation for understanding the broader implications of Scripture Union's activities. Key works that inform this research will be discussed, offering insights into the organization's role in the socio-economic landscape. Through a structured

review, this study will trace the development and impact of Scripture Union from 1966 to 2015, highlighting significant milestones and ongoing contributions to regional development.

Hank Geoffrey's *60 Great Founders* provides a detailed exploration of notable entrepreneurs and leaders such as Dr Karl Kumm, Peter Cameron Scott, G. P. Raud, Demos Shakarian, J. Hudson

Taylor, George Verwer and so on. A specific section was on Josiah Spiers, the founder of the Scripture Union. Geoffrey presents Spiers as a visionary who significantly contributed to religious education and community development. Highlighting themes of religious innovation, community engagement and educational reform, Geoffrey describes how Spiers extended religious instruction beyond traditional church settings through creative storytelling and interactive activities, thus engaging children and young people more effectively.<sup>16</sup> The biographical narrative traces Spiers' journey, motivations and the challenges he faced, using primary sources such as letters and contemporary accounts to provide an authentic and detailed portrayal of his life and work. Geoffrey also examines the socio-economic impact of Spiers' initiatives, particularly in 19th-century Britain. The establishment of the Scripture Union had significant implications for community development, providing educational resources and moral guidance to many young people and contributing to social cohesion and the improvement of educational standards in underserved communities. While Geoffrey's portrayal of Spiers is largely positive, he does address criticisms and the resistance Spiers faced from conservative religious circles skeptical of his unconventional methods. This balanced approach adds depth to the analysis, offering a comprehensive view of Spiers' legacy. The section on Spiers has been praised for its thorough research and engaging narrative, though some critics note it occasionally glosses over more controversial aspects of his work, such as the long-term sustainability of his educational methods. Overall, Geoffrey's exploration of Josiah Spiers in "*60 Great Founders*" is a significant contribution to the literature on religious movements and educational reform, providing a rich understanding of Spiers' achievements and lasting impact.

*A Tale of Two Visions* by Michael Hews presents a comprehensive narrative documenting the origins and global influence of Scripture Union (SU), a prominent Christian organization renowned for its evangelistic and Bible study initiatives. The book serves not only as a historical record but also celebrates SU's enduring commitment to its mission. Structurally, Hews divides the narrative into chronological sections that meticulously trace SU's evolution from its humble

beginnings in a small London gathering in 1867 to its present-day operations spanning multiple continents.<sup>17</sup> The Jubilee edition of the book includes contemporary insights from current SU leaders, offering a modern perspective on the organization's legacy. Educationally, the book offers substantial value across several dimensions. Firstly, it provides a detailed historical context, vividly portraying the socio-religious milieu of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This backdrop helps readers understand the challenges and opportunities encountered by early evangelistic movements, shedding light on the dynamic landscape in which SU emerged and thrived. Secondly, the narrative explores SU's organizational development, highlighting crucial decisions and visionary leadership that facilitated its expansive growth. From strategic campaigns to innovative programs, Hews elucidates how SU strategically disseminated its mission, making it a valuable case study for students of organizational management and religious studies.

Moreover, *A Tale of Two Visions* underscores SU's adeptness in cultural adaptation, a critical aspect explored through its ability to tailor its methods to diverse cultural contexts while staying true to its core values. This adaptive approach not only facilitated SU's global expansion but also enhanced its effectiveness in engaging with local communities worldwide. The book aptly illustrates SU's impact through numerous testimonials and case studies, demonstrating its profound influence on individual lives and broader community dynamics<sup>18</sup>. These anecdotes enrich the educational experience, providing tangible examples of SU's contributions to youth engagement, Bible education and community development. Critically acclaimed for its thorough research and narrative style, *A Tale of Two Visions* is recognized for its balanced approach that combines scholarly rigor with personal narratives. It is appreciated for its ability to bring the history of SU to life, utilizing historical anecdotes and visual materials to captivate readers while imparting significant educational insights. Ultimately, the book stands as a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Christian missions, organizational growth strategies and the enduring impact of faith-based initiatives on global Christianity.

*Faith: An Anchor for the Soul* by Chijioke Ezikpe is a theological work published in 1998 that extensively examines the concept of faith from a Calvinistic viewpoint. The book seeks to clarify biblical faith, distinguishing it from common misinterpretations found in contemporary Christian communities. Ezikpe underscores the steadfastness and reliability of genuine faith as a spiritual anchor, drawing upon deep theological insights and references from scripture to lead

readers towards a more profound understanding of their spiritual underpinnings. The book is highly regarded for its meticulous and insightful exploration of the role faith plays in the life of a Christian.

*God's Word in a Young World: The Story of Scripture Union* by Nigel Sylvester provides a comprehensive history of Scripture Union (SU), a global evangelical Christian organization dedicated to engaging young people with the Bible. Published in 1984, the book meticulously explores SU's origins, development and profound impact since its inception in 1867. The narrative begins with the foundational story of Josiah Spiers and the early leaders who pioneered a revolutionary approach to Christian education for children. Sylvester highlights key milestones in SU's history, including its expansion into various countries and its adaptation to diverse cultural contexts.<sup>19</sup> The book underscores the innovative methods and transformative programs introduced by SU to foster Bible reading and Christian education among youth. These initiatives include Bible reading guides, summer camps and youth groups, all designed to make Christianity accessible and relevant to young minds. Throughout the text, Sylvester emphasizes the enduring significance and influence of SU's mission by sharing compelling stories of individuals and communities whose lives have been profoundly impacted through their engagement with SU's programs.<sup>20</sup>

An excerpt from the book reveals the major role of Payson Hammond, a young American whose innovative approach to children's ministry laid the foundation for SU's inception. Hammond's methods, which included interactive storytelling, music and personalized engagement, proved groundbreaking in demonstrating that even young children could grasp and respond to the message of Christ. Inspired by Hammond's success, Josiah Spiers and his colleagues organized the first formal gathering of what would later be named the Children's Special Service Mission and eventually evolve into Scripture Union.<sup>21</sup> Overall, *God's Word in a Young World* not only serves as an informative historical account but also as an inspirational testament to the transformative power of faith-based youth work. It is an essential resource for anyone interested in the history of Christian education, youth ministry and the enduring impact of innovative approaches to spreading the gospel.

*Plumbline*, the publication by Scripture Union Nigeria, serves as a comprehensive record of the organization's activities and impact, including its annual editions such as the 2006, 2007 and 2016 issues. These publications typically cover a wide range of topics related to Scripture

Union's ministry in Nigeria. They include reports on outreach programs, educational initiatives and youth engagement efforts across various regions. Each edition of *Plumbline* also provides historical context, tracing the evolution of Scripture Union Nigeria from its inception to contemporary operations. This historical perspective highlights key milestones, influential leaders and significant events that have shaped the organization's development. The 2007 edition of *Plumbline* featured articles by notable contributors, enriching its content with diverse perspectives. Anyalechi O. contributed an article titled "Bravo! Our Scripture Union," which was celebrating the union's achievements and highlighting the transformative impact of Scripture Union's programs.<sup>22</sup> J.

Dean's piece, "Celebrating the Scripture Union Council at 50," commemorated a milestone in the organization's history, reflecting on its leadership and governance over the years.<sup>23</sup> D. Onwukwe's article, "Scripture Union Nigeria, Past, Present and Future," provided a comprehensive overview

of SU Nigeria's journey, discussing its historical legacy, current initiatives and future aspirations.<sup>24</sup> Overall, *Plumbline* serves as an educational resource offering insights into effective ministry practices, youth development strategies and Christian discipleship within Nigerian contexts. It is valued for documenting SU Nigeria's contributions to religious education, community building and spiritual growth, making it essential reading for those interested in the intersection of faithbased initiatives and societal impact in Nigeria.

*Like a Mustard Seed* by Raff C. Okafor provides a compelling historical perspective on the origins of Scripture Union (SU) with a focus on its early years. The authors describe SU as being born out of unique circumstances, emphasizing its unconventional beginnings in 1867. At that time, societal norms expected children to be quiet and obedient, subjected to lengthy and often dull Victorian-era sermons. Josiah, the pioneering figure behind SU, introduced a revolutionary concept of engaging children through non-boring services and meetings, marking a departure from traditional practices.<sup>25</sup> The book highlights the original name of the movement, the Children's Special Service Mission, reflecting its primary focus on catering to the spiritual needs of children in an engaging and accessible manner.<sup>26</sup> This innovative approach not only distinguished SU from contemporary religious practices but also laid the foundation for its future growth and impact.

Overall, *like a Mustard Seed* provides valuable insights into the early challenges faced by SU and its transformative journey in reshaping religious education and engagement among children. By focusing on Josiah's visionary leadership and pioneering spirit, the book underscores SU's enduring legacy as a catalyst for innovative ministry practices within the Christian community.

*Introducing Scripture Union Nigeria: A Nation Building Ministry* by O. Oladeji provides a comprehensive introduction to Scripture Union (SU), emphasizing its foundational principles and significant contributions to Christian youth ministry. Published with a focus on SU's interdenominational and international character, the book deepens its origins as the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM) in 1867 under the leadership of Josiah Spiers. This historical context is crucial as it highlights SU's pioneering role in addressing the spiritual needs of children who were often overlooked by traditional church practices of the time.<sup>27</sup> Oladeji's narrative emphasizes how SU quickly garnered the support and trust of various denominations, churches and Sunday schools, thereby becoming a unifying force in Christian education and youth work. By bridging denominational divides, SU effectively brought together children from diverse religious backgrounds to engage with the Word of God in innovative and accessible ways. The excerpt from the book aptly illustrates SU's foundational mission and its evolution into a pivotal chapter in the history of children and youth ministry. By focusing on inclusivity and the transformative impact of its programs, Oladeji portrays SU as not just an organization but a movement that has shaped generations of young people through its interdenominational approach and commitment to spreading the gospel.

Overall, *Introducing Scripture Union Nigeria* serves as an essential resource for understanding SU's foundational ethos, its role in nation-building through youth empowerment and its enduring legacy in promoting Christian values across Nigeria and beyond. It is a valuable read for anyone interested in the history of Christian ministry, interdenominational collaboration and the impact of faith-based organizations on community development.

*Flames of Fire: The Story of Scripture Union Nigeria* by D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, tells the history of how Scripture Union began in Nigeria. It explains why it started and how it grew over time, giving us a glimpse into the challenges faced by its founders. The book shows how Scripture Union expanded its reach across different parts of Nigeria, setting up branches and projects to teach Christianity and empower young people. The authors talk

about how Scripture Union made a big impact in Nigeria, especially in teaching Christianity and reaching out to young people. They explain how the organization used new methods to connect with young people, helping them understand their faith better and promoting Christian values. Despite facing difficulties like cultural differences and financial problems, Scripture Union remained focused on its mission and values, adapting to changing situations while staying true to its goals.<sup>28</sup> *Flames of Fire* gives us valuable insights into the history and legacy of Scripture Union, showing its lasting importance in religious education and youth empowerment.

It serves as a guide and inspiration for those interested in Christian ministry and mission, both in Nigeria and elsewhere. The authors reflect on the challenges and achievements encountered by Scripture Union Nigeria throughout its history.<sup>29</sup> They talk about how the organization dealt with issues like diversity and economic disparities, showing us how it evolved and grew stronger over time. *Flames of Fire* is a book that not only tells us about the past of Scripture Union but also shows us its ongoing relevance and impact in Nigeria and beyond.

*Scripture Union Nigeria: Pilgrims Development Program* by P. Adekuoroye, focuses on the initiatives and activities of the Pilgrims Development Program within the Scripture Union Nigeria. This program is a part of S.U Nigeria's broader mission to promote Christian values and discipleship among Nigerian youth through Bible study, leadership training and various outreach programs.<sup>30</sup>

*The Unprofitable Servant* by Ekpo Etim Ekpo is a comprehensive collection of addresses and newsletters delivered during his tenure as the National Chairman of Scripture Union Nigeria (2011-2017). The book highlights Scripture Union's numerous roles, covering spiritual guidance, social development and economic empowerment. It features key addresses at significant events such as the inauguration of the Pension Board, the development of the National Camp of Peace in Abuja and various summits. These speeches reflect effective leadership, emphasizing financial security, infrastructural development and community engagement.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the addresses, the book includes yearly statistical reports on Scripture Union's members and community groups, providing a quantitative measure of the organization's impact. The newsletters offer insights into ongoing projects and initiatives, enhancing transparency and accountability. *The Unprofitable Servant* serves as a vital resource for understanding the strategic approaches and operational dynamics of Scripture Union Nigeria, making significant contributions to the literature on

faithbased organizations by documenting their balance of spiritual missions with social and economic responsibilities.

*My Stewardship* by E. U. Mbanaso explores the trajectory and future of Scripture Union Nigeria as it steps into the new millennium. The book traces the history of Scripture Union's entry into Nigeria and highlights significant events such as the 2000 Summit at Camp of Faith Okigwe. It emphasizes the importance of Christian workers' health, the union's relevance to the nation and strategies for future growth and focus. The text provides a roadmap for building and refocusing Scripture Union Nigeria, outlining roles of pilgrims, core ministry strategies and trust management.<sup>32</sup> The book also addresses the need for affection and servant prayer, offering various addresses that underline these themes. Through a blend of historical context, strategic insights and practical guidance, *My Stewardship* serves as a crucial resource for understanding and advancing the mission of Scripture Union Nigeria. It provides valuable perspectives on leadership, organizational development and the importance of spiritual and social responsibilities within the faith-based organization.

From the above reviewed literature, it is evident that no comprehensive article or book has been written in this area of study. Existing literature have focused on individual aspects of this research such as the origin of scripture union and it's beginning in Nigeria amongst others, however, no literature examined the entire scope of this research. It is this obvious gap that this study intends to fill.

## **Organization to Chapters**

The work is organized into six chapters.

### **Chapter One – Background to the Study**

Chapter one of this work serves as the introductory part. This chapter provides an overview of the entire book, including a literature review, identification of key issues and the purpose or aim of the research. It also examines some essential concepts related to the study. This foundational chapter sets the stage for the detailed discussions and analyses that follow.

## **Chapter Two – Scripture Union in Nigeria**

Chapter two focuses on the development of Scripture Union in Nigeria. It analyzes the origins of Scripture Union and its introduction into Nigeria, structured into three distinct phases. Phase 1 covers the early beginnings from 1884 to 1949. Phase 2, known as the expatriate era, spans from 1950 to 1965. Phase 3, the indigenization era, begins in 1966 and continues to the present day. Each phase delves into the significant milestones and transitions that have shaped Scripture Union's presence in Nigeria.

## **Chapter Three – Growth and Expansion of Scripture Union in Southeastern Nigeria**

Chapter Three explores the growth and expansion of Scripture Union in the southeastern part of Nigeria. This chapter examines how Scripture Union not only proliferated within churches but also extended its influence throughout society. It discusses the various factors that contributed to this growth and the methods employed to reach a wider audience. Additionally, the chapter analyzes the impact of Scripture Union on the social fabric of these communities, highlighting changes in social behavior, community engagement and overall societal development. Through detailed accounts and case studies, this chapter provides a comprehensive view of Scripture Union's role in transforming the southeastern region of Nigeria.

## **Chapter Four – Socio-economic Development Initiatives in Scripture Union in Southeastern Nigeria**

Chapter four explores the socio-economic development initiatives of Scripture Union in southeastern Nigeria. It details various socio-cultural programs such as educational programs and initiatives; health campaigns and social welfare projects aimed at enhancing community wellbeing and cultural development. Chapter four demonstrates Scripture Union's significant role in fostering both social and economic progress, showcasing its commitment to comprehensive community development in the region.

## **Chapter Five – Impacts on Socio-economic Development Initiatives of Scripture Union in Southeastern**

## **Nigeria**

Chapter five evaluates the impact of Scripture Union's socio-economic development initiatives in southeastern Nigeria. It analyzes the influence of programs like educational initiatives, health campaigns and social welfare projects on community well-being and individual lives. The chapter explores economic advancements such as enhanced employment opportunities and increased financial literacy. By presenting case studies and statistical data, Chapter five provides a comprehensive assessment of how these initiatives have positively transformed southeastern Nigeria, leading to improvements in quality of life, economic stability and overall community resilience.

## **Chapter Six - Conclusion**

Chapter six concludes by summarizing Scripture Union's growth and influence in southeastern Nigeria, highlighting achievements in socio-economic development alongside spiritual growth. It discusses successes and challenges faced and offers strategic recommendations

for future initiatives.

## Endnotes

1. Oriyomi A. Oladeji, *The Role of Scripture Union (Nigeria) in Equipping Churches for Missions*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2002, p.1.
2. Ibid.
3. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flame of Fire, The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2018, p.10.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, p.21.
6. Ibid, p.33.
7. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union Nigeria: A Case Study of Onitsha Region", an M. A. Thesis, p.45-49.
8. United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier—Human development and the Anthropocene*, UNDP, 2020, p.23
9. Ibid
10. World Bank, *World Development Report 2022: Financing for an equitable recovery*, World Bank Publications, 2022, pp.5-7
11. Ibid
12. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, England: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.36-38
13. James Midgley, *Social Development: Theory and Practice*, California: Sage Publications, 2014, pp.12-14

14. Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith, *Economic Development*, London: Pearson, 2015, pp.2-25
15. R. Inglehart and W. E. Baker, *Modernization, cultural change and the persistence of traditional values*, *American Sociological Review*, 65(1), 2000, pp.19-51.
16. Geoffrey Hanks, *60 Great Founders*, Kaduna: Evangel Publication, 2001, pp.211-217.
17. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2015, pp.21-28.
18. Ibid, pp.163-168.
19. Nigel Sylvester, *God's Word in a Young World: The Story of Scripture Union*, London: Scripture Union, 1984, pp 1-12.
20. Ibid., pp.13-14.
21. Ibid., p.16.
22. O. Anyalechi, "Bravo, Our Scripture Union", in *Scripture Union Plumblin*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2007.
23. J. Dean, "Celebrating the Scripture Union Council at 50" in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblin*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2007.
24. D. Onwukwe, "Scripture Union Nigeria: Past, Present and Future", in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblin*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2007.
25. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, Ibadan: Kola Johnson Publishers, 1985, pp.6-7.
26. Ibid.
27. Oriyomi A. Oladeji, *Introducing Scripture Union Nigeria: A Nation Building Ministry*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2002.

28. D. Maduako, *Flames of Fire...*, pp.59-180.

29. Ibid.,

30. P. Adekuruoye, *Scripture Union Nigeria: Pilgrims Development Program*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2009.

31. Ekpo Etim Ekpo, *Unprofitable Servant*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2017, pp.35-57.

32. A. U. Mbanaso, *My Stewardship*, Owerri: Ark Publishers, 2005, pp.66-70

## CHAPTER TWO

### SCRIPTURE UNION IN NIGERIA

#### Early Beginnings (1884-1949)

The overseas background of Scripture Union begins with Payson Hammond, an American who ventured to Britain to conduct Christian meetings for children. His simple yet effective methods deeply influenced Josiah Spiers, who attended one of these meetings in 1867 and was inspired to create something similar.<sup>1</sup> The notion of enjoying church was foreign to children (before 18th century evangelical revival) until Josiah Spiers and Tom Bishop founded the Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM) in 1867.<sup>2</sup> This organization aimed to address the spiritual needs of the young and make religion more engaging for them.<sup>3</sup> Spiers challenged the prevailing belief that children could not comprehend enough theology to be saved. Through CSSM's efforts, many children developed an early interest in the gospel and came to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The origin of CSSM can be traced back to a children's meeting Spiers attended in 1867 at John Street Baptist Chapel in the West End. The meeting, led by American missionary Payson Hammond, was revolutionary.<sup>5</sup> Hammond believed that young people could understand and develop a relationship with Christ. The service was tailored to children, featuring simple hymns, short prayers and engaging stories. His methods drew criticism from some adults, but his approach resonated with the children, leading many to profess faith in Christ.<sup>6</sup> Spiers and an artist friend, Thomas Hughes, began hosting similar children's meetings, which grew rapidly.<sup>7</sup> By July 1868, Spiers' weekly services in North London were attracting an average of 300 children. Reports indicated significant spiritual awakenings among the children. The success of these meetings inspired similar efforts across the country.<sup>8</sup> Hammond's methods also influenced Thomas Bishop, who started similar services at Surrey Chapel. Spiers and Bishop eventually met and decided to collaborate. They formed a committee and officially adopted the name Children's Special Service Mission (CSSM). Their goal was to conduct services specifically for children, separate from the traditional church services that catered to adults.<sup>9</sup>

One critical moment for CSSM was Spiers' beach ministry, which began in August 1868. During a summer holiday in Llandudno, Spiers engaged children on the beach by writing scriptural texts with pebbles and telling stories about Jesus. This initiative attracted large crowds and became a popular activity during summer holidays. The success of these beach meetings

helped establish CSSM as a national institution.<sup>10</sup> CSSM underwent several name changes before becoming known as Scripture Union. Initially called Children's Special Service Mission, the name was officially adopted in 1868. Over time, the organization expanded its reach, receiving support from adults and conducting children's services across England.<sup>11</sup> Spiers resigned from his job to focus entirely on children's ministry, joined by many enthusiastic supporters, including Thomas Bishop, who became CSSM's first honorary secretary.<sup>12</sup>

A significant development in CSSM's history was the introduction of daily Bible reading for children. In 1877, Annie Marston, a young woman teaching a Sunday school class, suggested the idea to CSSM.<sup>13</sup> Although initially rejected, her persistence paid off and in 1878, CSSM began printing and distributing daily Bible reading notes for children. This initiative, known as Children's

Scripture Union (CSU), revolutionized the movement. The first Scripture Union Card appeared in April 1879, marking the beginning of a new era for the organization.<sup>14</sup> The cooperation between Josiah Spiers and Thomas Bishop was crucial to CSSM's growth. While Spiers was the public face of the organization, Bishop managed the administrative aspects.<sup>15</sup> Scripture Union, initially based in London, spread internationally through missionaries. The first international conference, held at old Jordan, North West London, between 27th May and 3rd June, 1960, unified the names CSSM and CSU under the banner of Scripture Union.<sup>16</sup> It also defined the Aims and Objectives to be strictly adhered to. "Working with churches, Scripture Union aims: To make God's good news known to children, young people and families. ii. To encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer, so that they may: Come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in Christian maturity and become both committed church members and servants of the world in need."<sup>17</sup>

By 1982, Scripture Union was in Africa through the "Expatriate factor", where a large number of Christians who knew Scripture Union in Britain or elsewhere came to Africa to work as teachers or in Government service, began to share their faith.<sup>18</sup> The overseas background of Scripture Union Nigeria is rooted in these historical developments. The movement's emphasis on children's spiritual education and its innovative methods inspired similar efforts globally. Missionaries and international conferences also facilitated the spread of Scripture Union's principles, eventually reaching Nigeria. The foundation laid by Spiers, Bishop and other early

pioneers provided a strong basis for the growth and impact of Scripture Union in Nigeria and beyond.<sup>19</sup>

Scripture Union did not come to Nigeria through crusades or captivating programs. It came through expatriates who adopted the use of Scripture Union's reading cards.<sup>20</sup> Scripture Union came to Nigeria in the first wave of its growth through the shores of Europe. It got to Nigeria by means of its literature - the reading cards and notes, which were sent to English missionaries working in Nigeria.<sup>21</sup> The SU, known initially as the Children's Scripture Union, was introduced to Nigeria by Rev. Charles Henry Vidal Gollmer, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the Yoruba mission field. Gollmer, born in Lagos on October 9, 1854, was deeply influenced by his father, Rev. Charles Andrew Gollmer, who had moved from Sierra Leone to Nigeria in 1845 to open the Yoruba mission field with Rev. Henry Townsend.<sup>22</sup> Rev. C.H.V. Gollmer, who encountered the CSSM (Children's Special Service Mission) during a visit to England in 1882, was captivated by the Scripture Reading Cards. This novel idea promised a way to engage young people in daily Bible reading.<sup>23</sup> Returning to Lagos in 1883, Gollmer was eager to implement this vision. His enthusiasm quickly spread, leading to the establishment of numerous Scripture Union branches across his mission field. Gollmer's efforts culminated in a large juvenile meeting in Lagos in 1884, attended by over 1,000 children, which underscored the significant potential of the SU in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

The formal inauguration of the Bible Union for Young People on New Year's Day, 1885, marked the official beginning of the Scripture Union in Nigeria. Initially, membership grew rapidly, rising from 204 to 858 within two months.<sup>25</sup> Rev. Gollmer's pioneering work in Lagos inspired other missionaries, such as Rev. H.S. McCauley in the Niger Mission, to establish SU branches in their respective mission fields. The collaborative efforts of these missionaries significantly expanded the SU's reach within Nigeria. By 1901, Scripture Union reading cards were being printed in Yoruba, complementing the Yoruba translation of the Bible published in 1897. This made the daily devotion materials more accessible to the local population, thereby deepening the engagement with the Scriptures.<sup>26</sup> The translation efforts were crucial in broadening the Scripture Union's influence, ensuring that even those who could not read English could participate in the daily Bible readings. During this period, the Scripture Union became a vital instrument for the CMS's missionary work. It not only facilitated spiritual growth among the youth but also served as a tool for reporting the progress of the CMS mission efforts back to

London. This dual role helped integrate the SU's activities with the broader objectives of the CMS, making it an indispensable part of the missionary framework in Nigeria.<sup>27</sup>

Despite its early successes, the SU faced significant challenges in the 1930s and 1940s. The initial enthusiasm that had driven its rapid expansion began to wane, partly due to the additional responsibilities placed on missionaries who were already stretched thin. The effects of World War II further compounded these challenges, leading to a decline in SU activities. The war caused a scarcity of resources, including the materials needed for SU publications. As a result, the CSSM magazine, which had been a key tool for engagement, had to reduce its size and frequency of publication.<sup>28</sup> The decline of SU work during the war years was not unique to Nigeria; it was a global phenomenon. In various parts of the world, SU activities were curtailed as resources were diverted to support the war effort. Despite these setbacks, the foundational work laid by the SU in Nigeria remained strong.<sup>29</sup> The roots established in the early years proved resilient, ensuring that the SU could rebound in the post-war period.

The post-war period saw a rejuvenation of Scripture Union activities in Nigeria. The decline during the war years had not erased the gains made in the earlier decades. The foundational work done by missionaries like Rev. Gollmer and his contemporaries ensured that the SU had a firm base upon which to rebuild. The period from the 1940s to the 1960s was marked by a renewed vigor and a concerted effort to expand the SU's reach.<sup>30</sup> One notable figure in this revival was Mr. Peter Johnston, a British national who came to Nigeria in the 1960s to teach English. Johnston's innovative approach, which included the use of Scripture Union reading notes and engaging students in Bible studies, sparked a new wave of interest among young people. His efforts in various schools laid the groundwork for a new generation of SU members who were committed to daily Bible reading and spiritual growth.<sup>31</sup> The revitalized SU also saw the establishment of new branches in regions that had not previously been reached. Johnston's influence extended to schools in Lagos, Enugu and beyond, creating a network of SU groups that would continue to grow in the subsequent decades. The integration of SU activities with school programs ensured that the Union could reach a broad audience of young people, instilling in them the importance of regular Bible study and prayer.<sup>32</sup>

By the 1960s, the SU had become deeply embedded in Nigeria's religious landscape. The work of pioneers like Rev. Gollmer and later figures like Mr. Johnston had ensured that the SU was a vital part of the country's spiritual fabric. The SU's influence extended beyond the

immediate goal of encouraging daily Bible reading; it also played a significant role in shaping the broader evangelical movement in Nigeria. The SU's integration with the CMS mission efforts was a crucial factor in its success. From its inception, the SU had worked closely with the CMS, ensuring that its activities were aligned with the broader objectives of the mission. This collaboration helped the SU to leverage the CMS's resources and networks, facilitating its rapid expansion and deepening its impact.<sup>33</sup> The period leading up to the SU's centenary in 1985 was marked by significant growth and consolidation. The SU's membership continued to rise and new branches were established across Nigeria. The Union's activities became increasingly diverse, encompassing not just Bible reading but also a range of evangelical and social initiatives. The SU's centenary celebration in 1985 was a testament to the enduring legacy of its early pioneers and the ongoing commitment of its members to spreading the Gospel.<sup>34</sup>

The history of the Scripture Union in Nigeria, from its introduction in 1884 to its centenary in 1985, is a story of remarkable growth, challenges and resilience. The SU's ability to adapt to changing circumstances and its steadfast commitment to its core mission of daily Bible reading ensured its lasting impact on Nigeria's spiritual landscape. The foundational work done by early pioneers like Rev. C.H.V. Goma laid the groundwork for a movement that would touch the lives of countless young people, fostering a deep and enduring engagement with the Scriptures. The SU's integration with the CMS's broader missionary efforts and its ability to innovate and expand in the face of challenges underscored its importance as a tool for evangelism and spiritual growth.<sup>35</sup> As the SU moved into its second century, it continued to build on this strong foundation, ensuring that its message of daily Bible reading and spiritual discipline remained a cornerstone of its work in Nigeria.

### **Expatriate Era (1950-1965)**

The early work of Scripture Union (SU) in Nigeria laid a solid groundwork for the significant developments of the expatriate era, spanning from 1950 to 1965. During this period, SU experienced a transformative shift from being a church-based organization to a school-based one. This change was marked by the emergence of lay leadership, the strategic involvement of expatriates and the establishment of influential committees that would guide SU's operations and growth. This era was important in setting the stage for the indigenization of SU and preparing Nigerian leaders to take ownership of their faith and religious education.<sup>36</sup> In the initial years, SU was deeply intertwined with church activities, drawing its membership predominantly from

church congregations. This symbiotic relationship ensured a steady flow of members and allowed missionaries to directly oversee and influence the spiritual development of children and adults alike. SU reading cards played a crucial role in encouraging personal Bible study, becoming an essential tool for mission work and religious education. Many schools, particularly in southern Nigeria, were mission-owned and missionaries often served as both school administrators and teachers. This dual role facilitated the seamless integration of SU activities into the educational curriculum.<sup>37</sup> The 1950s marked a significant turning point as SU began transitioning from a church-based to a school-based organization. This shift saw the leadership of SU groups move from ordained ministers to school teachers, fundamentally altering the organization's structure and outreach. As SU detached from the churches, its branches no longer owed ecclesiastical allegiance, leading to conflicts with church authorities and contributing to the rise of anti-clerical sentiment in subsequent charismatic movements. Despite these challenges, this era of transition was critical in broadening SU's influence and laying the groundwork for its future expansion.<sup>38</sup>

The transition to lay leadership in Scripture Union coincided with an influx of expatriate involvement. The call for expatriate teachers to revitalize SU's work began in the early 1950s, with significant efforts starting in Ghana and subsequently spreading to Nigeria. Influential figures such as Mr. and Mrs. Tony Wilmot and Mr. James H. Findly were instrumental in this expansion. The appointment of Mr. Nigel Sylvester in 1955 marked a key milestone, as he brought a renewed vigor to SU's activities, focusing on developing camps, visiting schools and expanding the movement. Sylvester's efforts led to the formation of the first SU committee in Nigeria in 1957, which comprised expatriates and local leaders dedicated to supporting and organizing SU activities. This committee played a vital role in steering SU's direction, confirming the need for a dedicated SU worker to focus on school work, camps and leadership courses. While London approved the proposal for a full-time worker, financial constraints were a significant challenge. The Sudan United Mission (SUM) stepped in to provide crucial support, ensuring that SU's operations could continue and expand.<sup>39</sup>

The formation of the Scripture Union Advisory Committee in 1957 was a crucial moment in the organizational development of SU in Nigeria. This committee, consisting of nine expatriates and two Nigerians, was tasked with expanding Christian witness in schools and supporting the work of the SU worker. The committee confirmed the need for a full-time SU worker and

outlined several key responsibilities, including organizing camps, leadership courses and other SU activities. Despite initial financial challenges, the committee's efforts were instrumental in laying the organizational groundwork for SU's future growth. The Standing Executive Committee, formed in June 1957, further solidified SU's organizational structure. This committee, chaired by Dr. Ishaya Audu, played an advisory role rather than an executive one, guiding the work of the SU worker and overseeing various SU activities.<sup>40</sup> The committee emphasized local involvement and support, highlighting the importance of developing local talent and ensuring the sustainability of SU's work in Nigeria.

The appointment of John Dean as Nigeria's first SU worker in 1958 was a significant development. Dean, with his strong Christian background and teaching experience, brought energy and dedication to his role. His ministry involved extensive travel, meeting with schools, introducing SU materials and encouraging the formation of SU groups. Despite facing accusations of causing discord, Dean was widely respected and loved by students, teachers and principals. His commitment and tireless efforts significantly contributed to the growth of SU groups across Nigeria.<sup>41</sup> By the end of 1960, the number of SU groups had increased notably, reflecting the impact of Dean's work. His collaborative approach, partnering with like-minded workers and supporting various Christian activities, further strengthened SU's presence. Dean's leadership demonstrated the importance of commitment and perseverance in the face of challenges, setting a high standard for future SU workers.

The demand for SU activities continued to grow, highlighting the need for more laborers in the field. The arrival of Mr. Bill Roberts in 1964 to support work in Eastern Nigeria, later Biafra, was a significant boost to SU's efforts. Despite the challenges posed by the civil war, Roberts remained dedicated to his mission, partnering with local Christians to distribute rations and support SU activities. The establishment of the administrative office in Ibadan and the continued involvement of expatriates like Jane Sutton ensured the sustained growth and organization of SU in Nigeria. Nigeria's vast size and the increasing number of schools made it clear that additional support was needed. Dean's constant travels and his collaboration with other Christian workers highlighted the importance of a coordinated and well-supported effort to maintain and expand SU's activities. The early 1960s saw significant efforts to strengthen SU groups in Eastern Nigeria, despite the political and social upheaval of the time.<sup>42</sup>

The expatriate era (1950-1965) was a transformative period for Scripture Union in Nigeria. The strategic shift from church-based to school-based operations, the emergence of lay leadership and the involvement of dedicated expatriates and local leaders laid a solid foundation for SU's future growth. Despite the challenges and conflicts encountered, this era marked significant strides in evangelism, education and the development of local talent. The commitment and perseverance of key figures like John Dean and Nigel Sylvester were instrumental in shaping SU's direction and impact. As Nigeria moved towards independence and self-governance, the emphasis on education and local leadership became increasingly important. SU's focus on developing local talent and promoting personal Bible study aligned with the broader societal changes of the time. The expatriate era set the stage for SU to become a powerful influence in Nigerian spirituality and education, with a legacy that would continue to shape the organization's future for decades to come.<sup>43</sup>

### **Indigenization Era (1966-2015)**

The indigenization era of Scripture Union (SU) in Nigeria, spanning from 1966 to the present, represents the third phase of SU's history in the country. This period is characterized by autonomy, encompassing the core aspects of indigenization: self-propagation, self-support and self-governance. The Nigerian national movement gained autonomy in 1966, rebranding as Scripture Union Nigeria.<sup>44</sup> To commemorate this milestone, a service was held at Immanuel College of Theology and Christian Education Chapel in Ibadan on November 5, 1966, where Mr. Nigel Sylvester, the Regional Secretary for Africa, officially declared the Nigerian Scripture Union autonomous. Over 200 students and supporters attended, culminating the event with a song.<sup>45</sup> As Scripture Union's work expanded in 1964, sub-committees were established to oversee activities in the eastern, western and Lagos regions, followed by the formation of the Mid-Western Region Sub-Committee in 1965.<sup>46</sup> Elder Edet G. Utuk notes that in 1964, there was an Eastern Regional Committee.<sup>47</sup> These regional sub-committees persisted until the federal military government created 12 states in 1967. Chief Isaac D. Erekosima chaired the East Regional Committee and Elder Edet, a teacher at Etinan Institute, became the secretary. In March 1965, Mrs. Irene F. Igbinedion, a Briton married to a Nigerian, was tasked with forming the Midwestern Region Sub-Committee. Reverend Canon Sam Igen Isemmede identified Mr. Emmanuel-Yestrice Izokun as the first chairman of this sub-committee.<sup>48</sup>

The autonomous status was anticipated to spur rapid growth within the Union. That evening, SU House, which housed the SU Headquarters and the Literature Center (Bookshop), was dedicated by Reverend I.O.S. Okunsanya, Anglican Bishop of Ondo Diocese, under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. David Calcott.<sup>49</sup> Construction of this building began on March 15, 1966 and was completed on June 12, 1966, funded by various sources, including an anonymous £3,000 donation later revealed to be from the London Council and local contributions amounting to £900.<sup>50</sup> Prior to autonomy, Mr. Mike Oye, a University of Ibadan alumnus, was appointed as the first Nigerian Traveling Secretary in August 1966.<sup>51</sup> Following autonomy, SU registered as a voluntary, non-profit Christian organization with the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs on October 9, 1967.<sup>52</sup> A fully indigenous National Council was established to manage the Union's affairs, with members including Dr. Ishaya Audu, Reverend Oladeji, Messrs M. Eluwa and others. The initial Council was chaired by Bishop G. I. D Oladeji, with Dr. Dan Onwukwe as vice chairman and Mr. Olu Adeyemi as treasurer.<sup>53</sup> The work of SU expanded significantly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, notably through the development of the Pilgrim Ministry. This period saw the establishment of SU's prevailing structure in 1970 when Reverend M. Oladundoye became the first General Secretary. Although his tenure was brief due to a fatal motor accident three years later, his impact was profound.<sup>54</sup>

Several factors contributed to SU's rapid growth during the 1960s, including an increase in the number of traveling secretaries, local production of SU literature and its widespread use among Christians. The expanding educational system and the Nigerian government's indigenization policy, which aimed to place qualified Nigerians in key positions, also played crucial roles. This policy, particularly its application within SU, led to increased Nigerian leadership roles, the attainment of autonomy in 1966, the rise of pilgrim groups and a response to opportunities presented by the educational expansion.<sup>55</sup>

The Nigerian Civil War also had a positive impact on SU, especially in the eastern region, further boosting the national movement. Additionally, the spread of political capitalism in the East influenced the rapid growth of SU during this era. In 1967, the outbreak of hostilities led to the Nigerian Civil War, which lasted for 30 months until 1970.<sup>56</sup> Despite the war's widespread devastation, including loss of life and property and significant hardship for both the people and the Church of God, it marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Scripture Union in Nigeria. During this time, a renewed zeal and focus emerged, leading to aggressive evangelism efforts.

Within the Biafran enclave, a significant revival began, spreading throughout the church and nation by the war's end in 1970.<sup>57</sup> In August 1966, Mr. Mike Oye, now known as Very Reverend Doctor, became the first Indigenous Traveling Secretary. The rapid growth of the Union can be attributed to several factors:

- i. Increase in Traveling Secretaries: The Union employed more Traveling Secretaries, whose responsibilities included visiting school groups, providing counseling, speaking and teaching the Word of God to children, youth and adults and mobilizing, motivating and training voluntary workers to visit schools. They also organized holiday camps, conferences and retreats for discipleship purposes.
- ii. Local Production of Scriptural Literature: The Union produced scriptural literature locally, which became popular for devotional use among both Christian members and non-members. The Union's devotional notes were translated into Indigenous languages like Efik, Igbo and Yoruba.
- iii. Educational System and Indigenization Policy: The Nigerian Government's policy allowed qualified Nigerians to take over key positions in public and private sectors. This change enabled scripture Union members, particularly teachers, to assume leadership roles within the Union. Leadership of scripture Union school groups shifted from ordained ministers and missionaries to school teachers, who maintained close contact with students. Their influence and dedication significantly boosted the growth of the Union. Scripture Union members were encouraged to be active and useful members of their local churches.
- iv. Church Partnerships: Many churches viewed scripture Union as a partner in addressing common concerns. They saw the Union as a bearer of life and a helper to the church, fostering goodwill that continues today. Children and young people who grew up under the Union's guidance became deeply involved in its work, becoming worthy ambassadors who carried on the Union's mission.<sup>58</sup>

Scripture Union Nigeria has experienced significant growth and development over the years. Initially, when it gained autonomy, it was divided into four regions, each with its administrative committee. Today, it has expanded to ten regions, each with its committee overseeing operations across all Nigerian states. The union's developmental workshops, which began in 1990, were designed to equip leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge for Christian living and service. These workshops, initially held in a single center, are now conducted across various

locations in the country. They include training sessions, workshops, seminars, prayers and feedback and have significantly enhanced leadership within the union.<sup>59</sup>

In 1996, Scripture Union Nigeria extended its influence to tertiary institutions by establishing the Scripture Union Campus Fellowship (SUCF). This initiative aimed to bridge the generational gap between union members who become students in higher institutions and the broader pilgrims' group. SUCF focuses on upholding righteous standards on campuses and preparing students to be committed church members and responsible citizens. In addition to the campus fellowship, the union has developed various training programs for secondary school students, including leadership training camps, workshops, Bible reading promotions and school rallies.<sup>60</sup> These programs are designed to instill Christian values in students and prepare them for leadership roles. Scripture Union Nigeria is also committed to promoting thoughtful and systematic Bible reading through its publications, such as the Daily Guide for adults, Daily Power for secondary school students and Daily Make for primary school children. These materials are designed to help readers engage with the Bible meaningfully and consistently.<sup>61</sup> The Union had the notes in some Nigerian indigenous languages like Oduduwen (Efik version of daily guide), Inye aka (Igbo version of daily guide) and Bibeli ajumoka (Yoruba version of daily guide).<sup>62</sup> The union's Bible reading ministry has also influenced other Christian organizations in Nigeria, including Pentecostal movements, which have adopted the union's style of daily Bible reading. Additionally, the union has developed various departments, such as the children's department, mission's department and AIDS awareness department, each focusing on specific aspects of Christian ministry and service.<sup>63</sup>

The union has also established a printing press to meet the demand for Christian literature in Nigeria, particularly during a period when the importation of foreign materials was restricted. The press, established in 1987, now produces daily reading notes and other Christian publications locally, ensuring that the union can continue to fulfill its mission of supporting Bible use and Christian education in Nigeria. Each department within the union is led by a director who coordinates activities at the departmental level, contributing to the overall growth and impact of Scripture Union in the country.<sup>64</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, Ibadan: Kola Johnson Publishers, 1985, p.8
2. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire: The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books, 2018, pp.21-33
3. Ibid., pp.33-37
4. Geoffrey Hanks, *60 Great Founders*, Kaduna: Evangel Publications, 2001, p.211
5. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, p.6
6. Ibid., p.7
7. Geoffrey Hanks, *60 Great Founders*, p.211
8. Ibid., pp 211-212
9. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, p.6
10. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2015, pp.10-11
11. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.4-5
12. Geoffrey Hanks, *60 Great Founders*, p.215
13. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, p.6
14. Ibid., p.7
15. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, p.15

16. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.5-6
17. Ibid., p.6
18. Ibid., p.7
19. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, pp.81-82
20. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.7
21. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union Nigeria: A Case Study of Onitsha Region", an M. A. Thesis, p.10
22. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.10-11
23. Ibid., pp.12-14
24. Ibid.,
25. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, p.8
26. Ibid., p.9
27. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.14-16
28. Ibid., p.16
29. Ibid., pp.16-17
30. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, pp.13-14

31. Ibid., p.15
32. Ibid., pp.15-17
33. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.19-21
34. Ibid., p 21
35. Ibid.,
36. Ibid., p.21
37. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, p.15
38. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union ...", p.11
39. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p.22
40. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, pp.15-17
41. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.27-31
42. Ibid., p.31
43. Ibid., pp. 31-33
44. Ibid., p.33
45. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, pp.16
46. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.34

47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p.34
49. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, pp.16
50. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.34-35
51. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union...", p.15
52. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p.35
53. Raph C. Okafor, *Like a Mustard Seed*, pp.16-17
54. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p.36
55. Ibid., pp.36-37
56. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, p.83
57. Ibid., pp.83-84
58. Ibid
59. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union...", p.21
60. A. U. Mbanaso, *My Stewardship*, Owerri: Ark Publishers, 2005, p.12
61. E. Amotsuka, W. Akande and T. Adeyemo, *The Word Legacy: Best of Mike Oye's Message in Print*, Ibadan: Niv Nation Publishers, 2009, p.19

62. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union...", pp.23-26

63. Oriyomi A. Oladeji, *The Role of Scripture Union (Nigeria) in Equipping Churches for Missions*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books, 2002, pp.5-11

64. Ibid., pp.27-28

## CHAPTER THREE

### GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF SCRIPTURE UNION IN THE SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA

Scripture Union, a Christian organization dedicated to spreading the message of faith and providing support, experienced a period of remarkable growth and transformation in Nigeria during the 1960s and beyond. Initially thriving in the western region, the organization significantly expanded its influence across the eastern, western and northern regions.<sup>1</sup> This growth was marked by various strategic initiatives and the commitment of key individuals who played pivotal roles in establishing Scripture Union's presence in these diverse areas. A major figure in this expansion was Mr. Bill Roberts, who, in 1964, was assigned to the eastern region, an area that would soon become Biafra. Roberts, an Englishman by birth, faced exceptional challenges during the Nigerian Civil War that erupted in 1967. Many expatriates and missionaries fled the region due to escalating tensions and violence. However, Roberts remained steadfast in his mission, demonstrating extraordinary courage and dedication when it was most needed. His unwavering commitment during this turbulent time not only solidified the foundation of Scripture Union's work in the region but also positioned him as a prominent figure of resilience. Notably, he took on the role of Biafra's chief relief officer while simultaneously serving as the traveling secretary for Scripture Union. His dual responsibilities allowed him to extend humanitarian assistance while fostering spiritual growth within the community.<sup>2</sup>

In the post-war period, Scripture Union's efforts in southeastern Nigeria continued to evolve, adapting to the changing socio-political landscape and addressing the spiritual and physical needs of the population. Meetings that began in Enugu shortly after the war laid the groundwork for further growth. These initial gatherings served as a catalyst for the expansion of Scripture Union's activities beyond Enugu, ultimately establishing a significant presence in other states across the southeastern region.<sup>3</sup> The organizational structure of Scripture Union in this area was marked by the creation of three key regions: the Pioneering Region, Enugu Region and Okigwe Region. The

Pioneering Region, established in the 1990s, initially encompassed present-day Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and parts of northern states such as Makurdi. This region became the foundation upon which further growth was built. As the organization gained momentum and visibility, the Onitsha Region emerged from the Pioneering Region, officially inaugurated on March 23, 1997.<sup>4</sup> This

marked a significant milestone in Scripture Union's journey, as it reflected both the increasing demand for its programs and the desire for a more localized approach to ministry. The establishment of the Onitsha Region facilitated more targeted outreach efforts and fostered deeper connections with local churches and communities.<sup>5</sup>

Following the establishment of the Onitsha Region, the Okigwe Region was formed in 2005, further extending the organization's reach and impact within southeastern Nigeria. This new regional structure was designed to address the unique needs of the communities within its jurisdiction while fostering collaboration among local church leaders and members. The Okigwe Region's inception reinforced Scripture Union's commitment to being present in areas where spiritual guidance and support were most needed. As these regional developments unfolded, they contributed to the broader spread of Scripture Union's mission across southeastern Nigeria. The organization's expansion was not merely a numerical increase but also the enhancement of its programs and outreach initiatives.<sup>6</sup> Each region developed tailored strategies to engage with local populations, focusing on evangelism, discipleship and community service. This grassroots approach allowed Scripture Union to resonate more profoundly with the diverse cultural and social contexts of the southeastern states. Through the concerted efforts of dedicated leaders, including Bill Roberts and subsequent regional directors, Scripture Union laid a strong foundation for its ministry in southeastern Nigeria. The growth of the organization mirrored the evolving needs of the communities it served, establishing a legacy of resilience and adaptability that continues to shape its mission today.

Scripture Union's growth in Nigeria was marked by the establishment of regional subcommittees to manage its expanding influence across different geographical areas. Initially strong in the western region, the organization gradually made significant inroads into the eastern region, recognizing the need for a structured approach to coordinate its outreach efforts effectively. By 1964, an East Regional Committee had been formed, with Chief Isaac D. Erekosima appointed as the chairman. A missionary teacher at Methodist College, Uzuakoli, served as the secretary. This committee played a crucial role in overseeing the Union's activities in the eastern region, which was increasingly becoming a focal point of its mission. The formation of sub-committees continued as the organization's presence expanded, reflecting its commitment to addressing the unique spiritual and social needs of diverse communities. By 1965, a sub-committee for the Mid-Western Region was established and the regional sub-committee

structure remained in place until the federal military government reorganized the country into 12 states in 1967. This regional structure allowed Scripture Union to effectively manage its activities and respond to local challenges, significantly contributing to its growth and influence across Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

The important role played by Bill Roberts during this period cannot be overemphasized. When the Nigerian Civil War erupted in 1967, Scripture Union faced unprecedented challenges that tested its resilience and commitment to service. Amidst the widespread chaos, Roberts remained unwavering in his mission within the eastern region, displaying extraordinary courage when many other expatriates chose to leave the area due to escalating violence and instability. His determination and leadership became crucial as he continued his work amidst the conflict, demonstrating a profound sense of responsibility towards the communities affected by the war.<sup>8</sup> Roberts was supported by a dedicated team, including Reverend James Ukaibu and other volunteers, who collectively spearheaded extensive humanitarian efforts during this tumultuous time. Scripture Union established relief centers initially in Umuahia and later in Umuozu in Mbano as the frontlines shifted throughout the conflict. These centers became vital hubs for distributing essential supplies to the war-affected population, addressing the urgent needs arising from the humanitarian crisis. The organization's relief efforts were particularly focused on the distribution of food, which was in critical shortage due to the blockade imposed during the war. Despite the severe scarcity of resources and the logistical complexities involved, Scripture Union committed to providing practical assistance to those suffering from malnutrition and diseases like Kwashiorkor, which were rampant during this period.<sup>9</sup>

The organization's relief work involved setting up communal feeding programs, where meals were prepared for immediate consumption and distributing raw food supplies for families to take home. This task was immensely challenging due to the high demand for aid, exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and the difficulties in securing adequate resources. As towns fell to federal troops, Scripture Union had to adapt rapidly, relocating its headquarters and establishing new relief centers to continue supporting displaced individuals and families in need. This flexibility was vital in ensuring that assistance reached those most affected by the war, reflecting the organization's commitment to resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.<sup>10</sup> Roberts and his team's unwavering commitment to their mission ensured that essential aid and spiritual support reached those who needed it most during one of Nigeria's most trying times. Their efforts

exemplified Scripture Union's dedication to addressing both the physical and spiritual needs of individuals amid intense hardship. The organization's response to the crisis not only provided critical support but also demonstrated the profound impact of faith-driven humanitarian work in the face of adversity. Through their actions, Scripture Union illustrated the potential for transformative change in communities, highlighting the power of compassion and service even in the most challenging circumstances.<sup>11</sup> Scripture Union (SU) Nigeria has undergone remarkable growth and transformation, particularly in southeastern Nigeria. As of now, the organization consists of nine regions, with three key regions situated in this area: Onitsha, Enugu and Okigwe. A region comprises a few Areas and an Area has a few zones and a zone has some groups within it.

### **Enugu Region**

The Enugu region of Scripture Union (SU) Nigeria has experienced remarkable growth since its establishment in 2005. Initially one of the pioneer regions created by the Scripture Union Nigeria Council in the 1990s, the region originally encompassed the current Anambra, Ebonyi and Enugu states, as well as parts of the Northern region, particularly the Makurdi area. Over time, the Onitsha and Abuja regions were carved out of Enugu, resulting in the present organization of the Enugu region, which now covers Ebonyi and Enugu states and is divided into five areas: Abakaliki, Afikpo, Enugu, Ngwo and Nsukka. From its inception, the Enugu region has seen steady growth. The region also witnessed an increase in participation among children, rising from 5,906 in 2005 to 7,260 in 2017 and the youth demographic expanded from 4,425 to 5,079.

The number of Scripture Union Campus Fellowship (SUCF) groups increased from 22 to 25, while the number of secondary school students surged from 1,023 to 1,669. The number of primary schools owned by SU formations in the region grew significantly from three to twelve and secondary schools increased from one to two. This growth is reflected in the Pilgrims' trends, which rose from 4,664 in 2005 to 5,621. Staff numbers also increased, climbing from 36 in 2005 to 52 today.<sup>12</sup>

One notable aspect of the region's development is the increasing reliance on missionaries, particularly in rural and hinterland areas. These missionaries have become a valuable supplementary workforce, enhancing outreach efforts across the various formations within the region. The addition of medical support to these outreach initiatives has significantly contributed

to their success, with areas and zones actively engaging in health-related programs that yield positive results.<sup>13</sup> For instance, in 2008, Enugu region invaded Amasiri town in the newly created Afikpo area with a strong mission team made up of 100 brethren who carried out a crusade. At the end, 201 people gave their lives to Christ. The Afikpo area became the first area to receive the regional blessing, which gave rise to the establishment of two new pilgrim groups. During the program, the crusade team played courtesy calls on two traditional rulers of the Amasiri kingdom and the gospel of the kingdom was preached to them. The mission team was at hand to attend to the medical needs of the people, they gave free treatments while the mission team preached the gospel.<sup>16</sup> To bolster the growth and effectiveness of its outreach, Scripture Union has implemented group and zonal mentoring, particularly for weaker groups or zones. These weaker formations are now paired with stronger ones for guidance and support, fostering a culture of collaboration and improvement. As the region expands, there has been a growing demand for resources to fund its activities, prompting formations to explore new funding opportunities beyond traditional quota payments. Innovative approaches have included investments in mattress rental services, which not only generate income but also provide free bedding for camping.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, the region has sought funding through government bonds and has diversified its activities to include transportation services, running crèches and operating nursery and primary schools, as well as engaging in agricultural ventures. However, the region remains cautious to ensure that these initiatives do not distract from its core mandate of spiritual outreach and development.<sup>18</sup> Overall, the Enugu region has made significant progress since its establishment, evolving from its initial formation to a robust network of groups and activities. Despite the challenges that lie ahead, the region is committed to continuing its work, firmly believing in its mission to foster spiritual development and community engagement across southeastern Nigeria.

### **Okigwe Region**

In 2005, the organizational structure of Scripture Union Nigeria underwent significant changes, establishing a framework that included national councils, regional committees, area committees, zonal committees and group executive committees. This restructuring allowed the Okigwe region to expand from three areas across two states (Abia and Imo) to six distinct areas: Aba, Ohafia, Okigwe, Orlu, Owerri and Umuahia. The Okigwe regional office remains located at

the Camp of Faith in Okigwe, the first national camp of Scripture Union Nigeria. The development of infrastructure at the Camp of Faith and across the various areas has greatly enhanced the relevance and effectiveness of Scripture Union's work in the region. The Camp of Faith provides accommodation for individuals and large groups, serving as a venue for retreats and conferences for those seeking a deeper connection with God.<sup>19</sup> A notable initiative of the Okigwe region is its sponsorship of a radio ministry, which broadcasts daily guide news across three radio channels covering Abia and Imo states. This radio ministry plays a vital role in promoting the daily reading of the Bible among the populace, helping to foster a culture of spiritual engagement within the community. In the past years, the Okigwe region has conducted a pre-regional conference and organized free medical mission outreach programs aimed at addressing the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of local community members. These outreach efforts have been instrumental in fostering growth within Scripture Union, as the Lord has blessed these initiatives with significant impact.<sup>20</sup>

By 2017, the Okigwe region had expanded considerably, comprising six areas with a total of 53 zones, 429 children's groups and over 625 school groups. Each area has made considerable strides in developing leadership and outreach programs:

- i. Aba Area: Comprising 13 zones, this area features a large campground at Eke Akpara, Osisioma, which hosts major activities. It operates nursery, primary and secondary schools aimed at reaching young people in the community. The Aba Township Group is a prominent fellowship within this area, equipped with its own auditorium for Christian activities.
- ii. Ohafia Area: This area consists of 10 zones, with four groups having their own fellowship center for weekly activities. Efforts are underway to complete the construction of a Traveling Secretary's House to support the area's leadership.
- iii. Okigwe Area: Comprising five zones, this area is home to the Okigwe Town Group, which features its own auditorium and fellowship center for regular activities. A permanent residence for the Traveling Secretary is also under construction.
- iv. Orlu Area: This area consists of seven zones, with the Orlu Township Group being the major fellowship. It has its own auditorium and fellowship center for weekly activities, along with a permanent office and plans for a Traveling Secretary's House.
- v. Owerri Area: Comprised of 12 zones, the Owerri area has an SU house equipped for retreats, conferences and a temporary nursery and primary school. The Owerri Township

Group, which has its own auditorium, is actively involved in the area's weekly activities. The Traveling Secretary resides in the SU house.

- vi. Umuahia Area: This area includes six zones and, by 2017, had established a youth conference center that provides facilities for various activities. A Traveling Secretary's House is nearing completion to support the area's leadership.

Overall, the Okigwe region has witnessed significant growth and development, strengthening its outreach and enhancing its infrastructure to better serve the communities within Abia and Imo states. The commitment of its members and leaders continues to foster a vibrant and effective ministry in the region.<sup>21</sup>

### **Onitsha Region**

Scripture Union (SU) Onitsha Region was officially inaugurated on March 23, 1997, though its operations formally commenced in 2006. The region has a rich history, with its beginnings rooted in early evangelistic efforts that contributed significantly to its eventual growth and recognition within the SU Nigeria framework. SU Onitsha's first mission activity began in early 1971 at New Bethel Primary School, Old Market Road, across from the cinema. Led by a schoolboy president, Brother Okaro, the group was noted for its evangelism, personal witnessing and crusades. As these activities flourished, the number of converts grew and the fellowship eventually relocated to Fege Primary School to accommodate its expanding membership.<sup>22</sup> This growth, however, brought internal conflict. Some members, driven by zeal, attempted to turn the group into a church, resulting in a split. During this turbulent period, Brother Akano became president and faced the difficult task of recovering SU property from the breakaway faction. Under his leadership, SU Onitsha regained stability and re-established its connection with SU Nigeria's Enugu area.<sup>23</sup>

Over time, Onitsha and other groups in Obosi, Ogidi, Nnewi and Awka were recognized as a zone, with Brother Akano appointed as the first zonal representative. Following his tenure, Brother Sam Ukeka took over, overseeing the growth of the Onitsha zone, which eventually birthed the Awka and Nnewi areas by 1996. Under the new Organization of National Movement, Onitsha became a full-fledged region, encompassing Awka, Nnewi, Onitsha, Agbor and Benin areas, with Brother Sam Ukeka as the pioneer regional chairman.<sup>24</sup> SU Onitsha Region is unique in that it is currently the only one-state region within SU Nigeria. Its formal operations began in 2006 and

the region has continued to thrive since. One of the early achievements was the purchase of a Toyota

Camry for the regional coordinator to facilitate oversight of activities across the region. In 2008, the region initiated the "Daily Guide in the Air" program on FM 102.5 Purity Awka, a daily devotional broadcast designed to promote Bible study.<sup>25</sup> By 2016, several significant developments had taken place. These included the foundation laying of the regional house and the completion of its German flooring. Additionally, the region purchased a Lexus 300 Jeep for the regional coordinator, further supporting the work of the ministry. Aguata area, created between 2005 and 2008, initially operated as a zone under Awka area. It gained full area status in March 2011 and currently covers three local government areas: Orumba North, Orumba South and Aguata. The area is divided into three zones: Ekulobia Zone with 11 groups, Oko Zone with 5 groups and Orumba Zone with 5 groups. Notable achievements include the establishment of a nursery school in the rented fellowship center at Ekulobia Town, the formation of Bible clubs in schools and neighborhoods and a car donation to the Traveling Secretary. The area also launched a massive evangelism expansion program and acquired a Toyota Camry for the Traveling Secretary's use.<sup>26</sup> Awka area, created in 1996 from the Onitsha area, made remarkable progress in its early years. The area secured accommodation for the Traveling Secretary and built the Ogidi SU House under the leadership of the Zonal Representative. Additionally, the area purchased a campsite, completed a two-story hostel and roofed the structure. The growth of Awka area was driven by the commitment of many leaders and members who were transferred to the region during this time.

Onitsha area (mother of all areas), which was carved out of the Enugu area in 1989, is considered the mother of all areas in the region. After its establishment, Onitsha experienced rapid growth, leading to the creation of the Obosi Zone. The area acquired 60 plots of land at Otuocha for campsite development, but community clashes forced the sale of the land. The proceeds from this sale were used to purchase new land at Nteje, where the current "Camp of Glory" is located. Between 2002 and 2008, Onitsha acquired 23 additional plots for the Camp of Glory and began construction on a three-story hostel.<sup>27</sup> From 2008 to 2014, SU Onitsha continued to expand the Camp of Glory, completing and roofing its main meeting hall and purchasing a Passat

CL for the Traveling Secretary. The three-story, 69-room hostel at the Camp of Glory, named after Baron Barrister Ema Ezuh, was completed, furnished and dedicated during this period. In addition, the region purchased 32 more plots for the camp and completed the first and second floor decking of the second hostel block. Sege Group fellowship building and Acmaca Federal Housing

Fellowship Centre were also completed and dedicated, with the latter being donated by Evangelist Oke Nkwelu. During this time, SU Onitsha also experienced program growth, with the number of groups increasing from 54 to 58.

The growth of SU Onitsha Region has been marked by consistent infrastructural development, effective leadership and a strong commitment to evangelism. With its foundation firmly rooted in its early missionary activities and its continued progress through regional initiatives, SU Onitsha continues to play a vital role in spreading the gospel and nurturing spiritual growth across its areas.<sup>28</sup>

Although, SU faced numerous challenges upon its arrival in southeastern Nigeria, particularly its focus on school-based children's ministry. The onset of the Nigerian Civil War resulted in school closures, necessitating a strategic turn. During this period, SU redirected its outreach towards adults through the Pilgrims Group, marking a significant adaptation that allowed for growth despite adverse conditions. This adjustment was essential, as it enabled SU to maintain relevance and expand its reach during a tumultuous time. To address concerns among churches that

SU might evolve into a separate entity and draw members away, the organization appointed Church

Relations Officers. These officers clarified SU's mission as one of support for existing churches rather than competition. This collaborative approach is evident today through the Ordained Ministers Forum, where SU leaders and church ministers convene to foster unity within the Christian community.<sup>29</sup>

Key figures within SU, such as Professor Mbanaso and Engineer Onyeaso, have been instrumental in promoting its growth and acceptance. Their leadership has sponsored various programs and encouraged the use of daily reading notes, which have been translated into multiple languages. This initiative has been a vital tool for spreading SU's message, significantly contributing to the organization's widespread acceptance.<sup>30</sup> Scripture Union's emphasis on good

discipleship helped members excel academically and professionally, further building a positive reputation for the Union. As SU's influence grew, it inspired movements within various churches, such as the Methodist Church's Evangelical Fellowship and the Anglican Church's Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC). This illustrated how SU began to reshape the spiritual outlook and contributed to the emergence of prominent church leaders, including the last two General Overseers of the Assemblies of God Church.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, Scripture Union's growth and expansion in southeastern Nigeria reflect an evolving relationship of community engagement, strategic adaptation and collaboration with local churches. The organization's ability to navigate challenges, foster unity and maintain its mission has solidified its presence and impact across the region.

## Endnotes

1. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada, 66 years, clergy, at Benin City, 6th September, 2024.
2. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire: The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books, 2018, p.32
3. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu, 65 years, Educationist, at Enugu, 16th September, 2024.
4. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union Nigeria: A Case Study of Onitsha Region", an M. A Thesis, p.29
5. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p.89
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., pp.39-40
8. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, Bletchley: Scripture Union Press, 2015, p.83
9. Ibid.
10. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.48-50
11. Michael Hews, *A Tale of Two Visions*, p.83
12. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp. 48-50
13. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu,
14. An interview with Peters Nwokocha, 62 years, Clergy, at Okigwe, 5th September, 2024.
15. Ibid.

16. Chikodinaka Emezie, "201 Surrender to Jesus at Amasiri Crusade", In *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblin*e, 2(8), 2008, p. 47
17. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.81-82
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid, p.83
20. An interview with Peters Nwokocha,
21. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.86-89
22. Ibid., pp. 90-92
23. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu,
24. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp.86-89
25. Ibid
26. Ibid, p. 77
27. Ibid
28. Ibid
29. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada.
30. Ibid
31. An interview with Kingsley Edozie, 63 years, Clergy, at Enugu, 5th September, 2024.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE OF SCRIPTURE UNION IN**  
**SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIAN**

**Sociocultural Development Initiatives**

Sociocultural development initiatives focus on improving the social and cultural well-being of communities. These initiatives aim to enhance the overall quality of life for individuals within a community, fostering long-term social stability and cultural sustainability.<sup>1</sup> This often includes efforts to preserve cultural heritage, such as protecting traditional practices, languages and customs, while also facilitating access to quality education that empowers individuals and communities. At the same time, these programs work to promote social equality by addressing disparities in areas such as gender, race and class. Furthermore, these initiatives are designed to tackle systemic inequalities in access to resources—whether that be in healthcare, employment, or housing—ensuring that all members of society can participate fully and equitably in social and economic life<sup>2</sup>. Such initiatives aim not just at economic growth but also at creating a socially cohesive environment. While economic development is a key goal, sociocultural development emphasizes that true progress is measured not only by financial indicators but also by the strength and cohesion of social relationships within the community. This includes creating an environment where individuals feel connected to each other, share a sense of belonging and are motivated to work toward common goals<sup>3</sup>.

Scripture Union's socioeconomic development initiatives in southeastern Nigeria aligned closely with the principles of sociocultural development outlined above. The organization's work emphasized improving the well-being of individuals and communities by focusing on education, social justice and economic empowerment. In southeastern Nigeria, where issues like poverty, educational inequality and social marginalization were prevalent, Scripture Union sought to address those challenges by providing youth education programs, vocational training and community development projects that promoted self-reliance and social equity. Scripture Union's initiatives in southeastern Nigeria focused on religious development rooted in Christian values, aiming to address both spiritual and socioeconomic needs. While they promoted economic growth and social cohesion, their approach is distinctively Christian, emphasizing Christian teachings to foster community unity, justice and service. Their focus on cultural preservation blended traditional values with Christian principles, guiding communities towards development.

This model prioritized spiritual well-being alongside material progress, building faith-based communities that seek transformation through both Christian education and addressing socioeconomic challenges.

Additionally, Scripture Union focused on social justice and poverty alleviation, especially through grassroots initiatives, reflected their commitment to addressing systemic inequality and promoting social inclusion, values echoed in global sustainable development goals<sup>4</sup>. These initiatives, by integrating education, social action and community empowerment, exemplified how sociocultural development can be localized to foster long-term, sustainable improvement in the region.

In this part, we will explore various sociocultural development initiatives, including:

1. Educational Programs: Empowering communities through formal and informal education, literacy and skills training
2. Cultural Preservation and Faith-Based Development: Protecting traditional cultures, languages and values, while integrating Christian teachings to promote community cohesion and moral development.
3. Social Justice and Equity: Promoting equality, human rights and ensuring access to resources and opportunities for all individuals, particularly marginalized groups.
4. Community Cohesion: Strengthening social unity and fostering positive relationships among community members, especially in diverse or conflict-prone areas.
5. Healthcare and Well-being Initiatives: Improving social well-being through health education, mental health support and wellness programs that promote a healthy and supportive community environment.

These initiatives will be discussed to show how they contributed to social and cultural growth, unity and empowerment within communities.

### **Educational Programs**

Scripture Union's commitment to empowering communities through education was (still is) a cornerstone of its socio-cultural initiatives in southeastern Nigeria. Recognizing the transformative power of knowledge, Scripture Union has engaged in both formal and informal educational programs aimed at improving literacy, promoting skills development and fostering personal growth. These initiatives were designed not only to enhance academic learning but also to equip individuals with the necessary tools for social and economic participation.<sup>5</sup> Through a

blend of Bible studies, vocational training and community-based educational outreach, Scripture Union sought to address the educational needs of diverse communities while integrating Christian values to promote comprehensive development. Reverend Peters Nwokocha highlighted that SU's early efforts in southeastern Nigeria were rooted in its outreach to young people, particularly through the Pilgrim's Ministry. The Union not only focused on spiritual teachings but also engaged youth with practical educational opportunities. SU's vocational training during youth camps played a crucial role in empowering young people with skills that supported their self-sufficiency. Some youth received start-up funds after training, enabling them to launch their own businesses. This approach were key parts of SU's commitment to education beyond academics, equipping youth with valuable life skills for their future.<sup>6</sup>

Scripture Union's engagement in education in southeastern Nigeria began with its establishment in local primary schools, which served as centers for educational outreach and community involvement. In addition to Bible study and spiritual growth, Scripture Union focused on practical education, offering scholarship programs for indigent students and those ostracized due to their faith. These efforts were particularly significant during the Nigerian Civil War, when the Union provided much-needed support that extended beyond spiritual care, including educational and economic resources.<sup>7</sup> A key component of their educational strategy was the introduction of daily Bible reading notes. These materials not only promoted spiritual development but also helped to unite members and introduced Scripture Union's teachings to a broader audience, gaining acceptance across various church denominations, including Protestant groups like Anglican and Pentecostal churches. According to Dr O. C. J. Nmalada, Scripture Union's educational initiatives in southeastern Nigeria played a vital role in shaping the future of countless individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities.<sup>8</sup> With a strong commitment to community empowerment, SU not only sponsored holiday lessons and provided scholarships but also ensured that even the children of its deceased staff members received financial support for their education. This commitment went beyond simply offering financial aid, SU leaders like Professor Mbanaso and Engineer Onyeaso led by example, personally sponsoring students to ensure education continued despite hardships, driven by the organization's core values, making education accessible to those who would otherwise have been left behind.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, SU's educational approach was not confined to the classroom. It extended practical

support to students from underprivileged backgrounds, particularly within its own schools and surrounding communities. An example of scholarship funding in Scripture Union (SU) schools can be seen in institutions like King's Kids Nursery and Primary School, Enugu. Through the support of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and S.U, the school provides scholarships to the bestperforming students in each class, from Primary 1 to Primary 6, fostering academic excellence and motivation among learners. Additionally, when a student is identified as indigent and unable to afford tuition, the PTA occasionally steps in to sponsor their education, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder access to quality learning.<sup>10</sup> The Union's educational vision was all encompassing and aimed to nurture not only academic success but also the personal growth and development of every individual. Through these efforts, SU demonstrated its dedication to cultivating a well-rounded, empowered community—one where education was not just about learning, but about transforming lives for the better. Scripture Union went beyond traditional education by offering financial assistance to children, especially in challenging circumstances such as staff member deaths. SU also provided practical support, offering scholarships and partial aid to staff members' children, reinforcing the Union's focus on development. For example, Scripture Union (SU) provides support to staff children by covering a percentage of their school fees, this can be seen in its structured financial aid program. Each SU staff member receives partial tuition support for up to four children, ensuring that financial burdens do not hinder their children's education. Specifically, SU provides ₦20,000 annually for each child in primary school, ₦40,000 for those in secondary school and ₦60,000 for university students. This initiative reflected SU's commitment to the wellbeing of its staff by easing the cost of education and promoting access to quality learning for their children. This approach not only elevated academic success but empowered individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, helping them thrive both inside and outside the classroom.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note that the Union has long embraced the belief that education extends beyond formal classrooms and textbooks, reaching into practical, life-enriching skills that empower young people to become self-sufficient and entrepreneurial. As part of its comprehensive educational programs, SU has integrated vocational training into its youth camps, offering an informal but equally valuable form of education. Through these camps, young participants acquired hands-on experience in various vocational fields, including soap-making, catering, baking, hairstyling, fashion design and cooking, among others. These skills have

immediate realworld applications, equipping individuals with practical knowledge that extended beyond the camp environment. A notable example of this is the direct utilization of acquired skills within camp programs. For instance, women who receive training in cooking and kitchen management during these camps were occasionally engaged as caterers for events such as youth conferences and prayer retreats. This not only reinforced and refined their skills but also provided economic opportunities, as they receive financial compensation for their services. Such initiatives highlighted the tangible impact of vocational training in fostering self-sufficiency and skill development among participants.<sup>12</sup> This focus on practical skills were not just about acquiring expertise in a specific trade. SU's vocational training went deeper, aiming to equip youth with the broader skills required to run a business, such as budgeting, financial literacy, customer relations and long-term sustainability. SU recognized that entrepreneurship is as much about mindset as it is about ability and so it fostered self-reliance, leadership and responsibility through these programs. But SU's vision of education extended even further. Beyond vocational skills, the Union's camps focused on vital development, offering leadership training, health and wellness education, civic education and conflict resolution. Youth were taught how to manage not just their businesses, but their lives, balancing financial goals with personal growth, leadership responsibilities with self-care. Creative arts programs fostered self-expression and critical thinking, while health education equipped youth with knowledge on nutrition, mental health and stress management.<sup>13</sup> Through these initiatives, SU empowered young people to become well-rounded individuals ready to lead successful, impactful lives. By seamlessly blending formal and informal education, SU demonstrated that education is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a multifaceted process that prepares young people for the real world. This educational philosophy ensured that SU's impact reached beyond academic achievement to shape responsible, entrepreneurial and engaged members of society.

The Scripture Union has established itself as a vital contributor to literacy and education within the entire southeastern region. By utilizing innovative reading materials, SU has significantly enhanced literacy rates among children, focused on both English and indigenous languages. This initiative has involved organizing various social programs where participants receive educational resources to aid their learning. For instance, in 2005, SU organized a New Year event that attracted 100 attendees, marking a significant communal gathering aimed at promoting reading and education.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to its emphasis on informal education, Scripture Union (SU) has made significant contributions to formal education in southeastern Nigeria. Recognizing the importance of accessible, quality education, SU built and established schools across the region. These schools have served as vital centers of learning, provided young people with the opportunity to receive an education rooted in Christian values. By 2015, several Scripture Union schools were spread across southeastern Nigeria, offering a range of academic programs from primary to secondary education. These schools not only focused on academic excellence but also integrated moral and spiritual development, ensuring that students were equipped both intellectually and ethically. SU schools became known for their high standards of education, promoting a balanced approach that emphasized character development alongside academic achievement.<sup>15</sup> This investment in formal education was a direct extension of SU's broader educational philosophy, which seeks to empower youth through both academic knowledge and practical life skills. The schools created by Scripture Union played a crucial role in the community, offering quality education to children, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, while promoting Christian principles and values that aligned with the Union's broader mission.

**Table 4.1: List of Schools Established by Scripture Union in Southeastern Nigeria**

	Location	Year of Establishment	Levels	Name of the Head Teacher	Academic Staff	Non academic Staff
1	King's Kids School, Odaw River, Enugu	1990	Nursery and Primary School	Mrs Helen Iloh	23	7
2	King's Kids Amechi 1, Awka Sata, Enugu	2009	Nursery and Primary School	Mrs P. C. Agu	13	2
3	King's Kids Comprehensive Secondary School, Enugu	1998	Secondary School	Mrs Esther Ogbonna	45	

4	Cannan Land, Abbi, Nsukka	2007	Nursery and Primary School	Mr Patrick Ugwu	14	10
5	King's Kids International School, Ngeo, Enugu	1996	Nursery and Primary School	Mrs J. N. Onyekwere	45	17
6	King's Kids International College, Ngeo, Enugu	2006	Secondary School	Mrs Charity Umah and Mrs Sunday Eze	28	3
7	King's Kids School, Emene 1, Enugu	2000	Nursery and Primary School	Sis. Ngozi Chinomunso Orji	10	2
8	King's Kids School, Emene 11, Enugu	2009	Nursery and Primary School	Mrs Blessing Willie	9	1

Source: *Flame of Fire, The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2018, p.15-16

Scripture Union has long been committed to educational excellence, ensuring that each school not only imparted academic knowledge but also instilled a deep Christian faith in its students.<sup>16</sup> Scripture Union's educational initiatives in southeastern Nigeria have made positive impacts, particularly in literacy and vocational training. However, there are a few areas for improvement. The strong focus on Christian values, while beneficial for some, might limit the appeal to people from different religious backgrounds. Additionally, while vocational training programs are valuable, more support like mentorships and market access were needed to help young people succeed in their businesses long-term. Finally, while SU schools have provided quality education,

ensuring their sustainability in the future (especially in underserved areas) will require ongoing attention to funding, teacher training and community needs.

### **Cultural Preservation and Faith-Based Development**

Cultural preservation and faith-based development are integral to the Union's work in southeastern Nigeria. SU has consistently upheld the importance of maintaining traditional values and cultural heritage while integrating Christian teachings that promote community cohesion and moral development. Her approach to cultural preservation involves the careful balancing of faith with the preservation of local traditions that align with Christian values. The Union encouraged its members to uphold cultural practices that are beneficial to the community while rejecting harmful customs. This perspective helped foster a sense of pride in local heritage while maintaining the moral and ethical standards advocated by Scripture Union.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of faith-based development, SU used its educational programs, vocational training and community outreach to embed Christian principles within the cultural fabric of southeastern Nigeria. This faith-based model has not only helped individuals grow spiritually but also inspired them to be agents of change within their communities. By encouraging honesty, integrity and hard work, SU members became role models for others, positively influencing local businesses, social relations and even church life. Scripture Union (SU) in southeastern Nigeria played a major role in cultural preservation and faith-based development. One of its key contributions was the active resistance to traditional practices that were deemed incompatible with Christian teachings. For instance, SU members opposed the *Iyi Akwa* ceremony, the *Igba Uzo* road clearing ritual and the new yam (*Iriji*) festivals, considering them paganistic. This bold stance led to conflicts within their communities, including ostracism, fines and legal battles. However, the Union's unwavering commitment to faith-driven transformation gradually helped to shift cultural norms. As more people embraced the teachings of Scripture Union and Bible-believing churches, these traditional practices began to lose their grip on the community, ultimately fostering a more Christ-centered cultural identity.<sup>18</sup> Faith-based development within Scripture Union was not just about spiritual growth but also involved cultural and social impact. As SU's teachings spread, many members chose to break from longstanding cultural customs, prioritizing Christian principles that fostered moral development and unity. Despite initial resistance, SU's message gained significant acceptance, particularly among Anglicans and Pentecostals, largely due to the introduction of daily reading notes that united members across different denominations. This

initiative helped SU transcend denominational divides, creating a strong, faith-based community that influenced not only spiritual practices but also cultural shifts.

Furthermore, SU's advocacy for social change extended beyond individual transformation. The Union's challenge to culturally embedded systems like the *Osu* and *Ume* caste systems led to significant social reforms, promoting equality and fairness. Although these efforts initially caused friction, they eventually contributed to the dissolution of discriminatory practices. Through these actions, SU highlighted the power of faith-based initiatives in reshaping both spiritual and cultural landscapes, cultivating a more inclusive and Christian-centered community in southeastern Nigeria. SU was committed to reforming local cultural practices that conflicted with Christian teachings, particularly traditional religious customs. For instance, SU members rejected pagan rituals such as the *Igba Uzo* (road-clearing ceremony) and *Iri ji* the new yam festivals, which they considered to be tied to idol worship. This often led to social friction, with members facing ostracism from their communities. Despite these challenges, SU's faith-based approach remained central to their mission of fostering spiritual renewal and moral change.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, Dr. Nmalada underscored SU's role in social justice by addressing moral practices such as polygamy and cohabitation, which were often seen as customary within local communities. SU's teachings helped to shift these practices toward more Christian values of marriage and family life. While this created tension with traditionalists, the Union's efforts contributed to the gradual transformation of the moral and social fabric of the region.<sup>20</sup> In terms of leadership, SU members, who had been trained and mentored in faith-based principles, went on to occupy influential positions, such as in local leadership and professional roles. They upheld integrity and honesty in their positions, which contributed to positive shifts in governance and social structures. Dr.

Nmalada noted that one example of this was an SU member who, in rejecting traditional practices, took a bold step by setting fire to a local idol. Though this action led to legal repercussions, it was crucial in diminishing the influence of idol worship and promoting the Christianization of cultural practices in that community.<sup>21</sup>

Pastor Edozie highlighted how Scripture Union (SU) played a transformative role in reshaping the spiritual landscape by influencing key movements within major churches. From the Methodist Church's Evangelical Fellowship to the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, SU's presence sparked a wave of faith-based development, helping to deepen the

Christian commitment within various denominations. SU also stood firm in distancing itself from harmful cultural traditions that conflicted with Christian teachings. By preaching against destructive practices and embodying these principles, SU not only preserved its own faith values but also encouraged others to embrace a purer, more Christ-centered way of life, making a lasting cultural impact in their communities.<sup>22</sup> A key element of SU's cultural influence was its unwavering focus on integrity and honesty, values that became synonymous with its identity. Members earned a well-deserved reputation for trustworthiness, transforming not only their personal lives but also the business and social spheres around them. Through these efforts, SU embodied faith-based development, demonstrating how Christian moral values could positively shape both individuals and society.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. O.C.J. Nmalada emphasized the significant role of language, specifically Igbo, in Scripture Union's (SU) efforts to promote faith-based development and cultural preservation in southeastern Nigeria. A key strategy employed by SU to spread the Christian message was the translation of its daily Bible reading note for adult (Daily Guide) into Igbo (*Inye Aka*). This initiative not only made Christian teachings more accessible but also played a crucial role in preserving the Igbo language as a vital part of the community's cultural identity. By using Igbo, Scripture Union in southeastern Nigerian was able to deeply connect with local communities, ensuring that faith-based teachings were communicated in a language that people were comfortable with and understood.<sup>24</sup> This effort strengthened Scripture Union's role in cultural preservation, reinforcing the importance of Igbo as a living language that could thrive alongside Christian faith. It also made clear that Christianity did not demand the abandonment of Igbo heritage but could coexist with it, encouraging a harmonious integration of faith and culture. In addition to language, Scripture Union organized various activities such as camps, prayer meetings and youth conferences to engage the community in both spiritual and cultural activities. These events were held in Igbo speaking areas, with a focus on empowering young people through teachings, fellowship and cultural exchange. For instance, the youth camps not only provided a space for spiritual renewal and education but also celebrated local Igbo traditions, such as music, dance and storytelling, which were integrated into the programs to emphasize the connection between faith and cultural identity. Prayer meetings conducted in Igbo further deepened the sense of community and solidarity, creating spaces where individuals could pray in their native language, making the experience more meaningful and culturally resonant.<sup>24</sup> These

gatherings provided opportunities for members to reflect on their faith while staying grounded in their Igbo traditions.<sup>25</sup> The translation of Bible reading notes into Igbo, alongside events like youth camps, prayer meetings and conferences, helped Scripture Union not only to spread its Christian message but also to actively promote and preserve the Igbo language and culture. This approach supported faith-based development and cultural preservation, enabling people to live out their Christian beliefs while honoring and maintaining their Igbo heritage. Scripture Union's work in cultural preservation and faith-based development highlights the Union's commitment to shaping a society that respects its cultural roots while advancing spiritual and moral values. Through this dual focus, SU continues to contribute to the broader development of the region, ensuring that its impact is felt both spiritually and culturally.

Scripture Union's efforts in cultural preservation and faith-based development have had a significant positive impact, especially in promoting Christian values and helping to reshape cultural norms. However, their strong stance against certain traditional practices, such as the *Iyi Akwa* ceremony and the new yam (*iri ji*) festivals, may have led to tensions within communities, created divisions instead of fostering more inclusive discussions. While rejecting harmful customs is important, a more sensitive approach that encouraged dialogue with traditionalists might have helped in bridging cultural divides. Additionally, the heavy integration of Christian teachings into cultural practices might have excluded individuals from other faiths, limiting the broader appeal of their initiatives.

### **Community Cohesion**

Community cohesion in southeastern Nigeria is central to the efforts of Scripture Union (SU) in promoting unity and shared purpose among people from different backgrounds. Scripture Union works to strengthen social bonds by aligning Christian teachings with the traditional communal values of the region, encouraging individuals to come together for the good of their communities. In southeastern Nigeria, where ethnic diversity can sometimes lead to division, Scripture Union played an important role in helping people from different groups connect and work together. By emphasizing the Christian principle of love for one's neighbor (Mark 12:31),<sup>26</sup> SU encouraged empathy, forgiveness and cooperation, which helped reduce ethnic tensions and encouraged peaceful living. Scripture Union organized inter-community events and shared worship services like adult conferences, students youths and children camps and even students

rally (this is a program organized in primary and secondary schools every term) that brought together individuals from various ethnic backgrounds, creating opportunities for open dialogue and mutual respect. Another key aspect of community cohesion is the involvement of youth in uniting different generations. Youth camps, Bible studies and other activities focused on teaching young people how to work together, respect each other and share responsibilities. Through service projects like assisting the elderly or contributing to local development efforts, young people were encouraged to play an active role in their communities. This sense of shared duty helped to build connections between people from different walks of life. Scripture Union also addressed the needs of marginalized groups, such as women, orphans and widows, who are often overlooked in traditional communities. For instance, in 2005, the Onitsha region organized a forum in Nnewi to support marginalized widows, addressing their unique challenges, over 100 widows attended, receiving material support and resources aimed at empowering them. By offering entrepreneurial training, financial assistance and leadership opportunities, SU empowered these groups and ensured they have a voice within their communities. This helped to create more inclusive and equal communities where everyone had a part to play.

In addition to its work with individuals, Scripture Union collaborated with local churches, community leaders and other faith-based organizations, ensuring that the efforts to build community cohesion are long-lasting. These partnerships helped to integrate Scripture Union's programs into the wider social, economic and religious landscape of southeastern Nigeria. Despite facing initial resistance from local churches, which viewed Scripture Union (SU) as a potential competitor, the organization's unwavering commitment to Biblical teachings and its dedication to community development gradually transformed perceptions. Over time, SU's influence grew as it demonstrated that its mission was not to replace churches, but to complement and support the work of the broader Christian community. This shift in understanding paved the way for greater cooperation between SU and local churches, fostering a spirit of unity and mutual respect. As Scripture Union members, including prominent leaders like Reverend Peters and so much more, began to take on key roles within the church, becoming priests and reverends, the bond between SU and the church community deepened.<sup>27</sup> These transitions helped bridge the gap between SU's independent ministry efforts and the established church, contributing to a stronger, more cohesive Christian community in southeastern Nigeria. This growing partnership between SU

and the church ultimately solidified Scripture Union's place in the religious landscape, highlighting its essential role in fostering unity and building a more connected faith-based community.

Most importantly, from time to time, the regions and even specific areas, organized forums dedicated to supporting widows, where they were invited to participate in gatherings that aim to uplift and empower them. During these forums, various material gifts and resources are shared, providing much-needed assistance to these vulnerable members of the community. One such program, as earlier mentioned, took place in 2005 in Nnewi (within the Onitsha region), where over 100 widows attended. This initiative was a direct response to the pressing need for social justice and equity, offering not just material support but also reinforcing the importance of addressing the unique challenges widows face in society. By organizing such events, the region demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting equality and ensuring that widows, often marginalized and overlooked, have access to essential resources and opportunities. These efforts are a clear example of how the community, through the lens of social justice, worked to empower widows, improve their well-being and integrate them into a more cohesive and supportive social environment.<sup>28</sup>

### **Healthcare and Wellbeing**

Scripture Union (SU) has been at the forefront of addressing the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of communities in southeastern Nigeria for many years. Through its healthcare outreach programs, SU provides critical medical services to underserved areas, particularly in rural communities where healthcare access is limited. These programs not only meet immediate health needs but also contribute to long-term health improvements by educating people about disease prevention and healthy living practices. From offering free medical consultations and treatments to providing HIV/AIDS education, SU is making a significant impact in the region's overall health and well-being.<sup>29</sup>

Scripture Union's medical missions are a key component of its community outreach efforts. These missions are designed to bridge the gap in healthcare access, particularly in areas where medical facilities are scarce and access to healthcare is often out of reach for many families. By organizing these outreach programs, SU provides essential medical services that address the immediate healthcare needs of the community, such as surgeries, medical check-ups, vaccinations and consultations. The medical teams are composed of skilled volunteer healthcare

professionals, including doctors, nurses, lab scientists and pharmacists, all of whom played essential roles in ensuring the success of these outreach efforts. In recent years, SU has reached many communities across the southeastern region of Nigeria. For example, during a recent medical outreach in Aba, SU's medical team performed 23 surgeries, addressing urgent health needs while providing free consultations to people who may not have been able to afford such services. These medical missions often served as an opportunity for SU to build trust within the community. Beyond providing healthcare, the medical teams also shared the message of faith and offer spiritual support, ensuring that the mission extended to all aspects of an individual's well-being. This dual focus on physical health and spiritual care reflected SU's belief that both aspects of a person's life are equally important.<sup>30</sup>

One of the most notable examples of SU's medical outreach took place in 2008, when the Enugu region sent a team to Amasiri in the newly created Afikpo area. The team, made up of 100 mission members, conducted a crusade alongside a medical outreach, providing free medical care to hundreds of people. The mission was incredibly successful, leading to 201 individuals giving their lives to Christ and the establishment of two new pilgrim groups. The medical team, which included Dr. Eddy I. Aneke and Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Ojinnaka, provided free treatments while also sharing the gospel. This mission exemplified how SU integrated its faith-based approach with practical efforts to address physical and health needs in local communities.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to providing direct medical care, SU made significant contributions to health education and awareness campaigns. It recognized the importance of prevention in improving health outcomes, SU integrated health education into many of its community programs. Through workshops, seminars and outreach activities, SU educated communities on essential health issues such as proper hygiene, disease prevention and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In many rural communities, access to medical care is limited and people may not have the knowledge or resources to prevent common diseases. Through these educational initiatives, SU filled this gap, teaching people practical steps they can take to improve their health. One of the major health challenges in southeastern Nigeria is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. SU had been deeply involved in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS since 1993, educating over 200,000 students on the risks associated with the virus and the importance of prevention. These efforts include mass rallies, educational programs on World AIDS Day,<sup>32</sup> and the integration of HIV education into SU's life skills programs. Through these campaigns, SU seeks to reduce the stigma surrounding

HIV/AIDS while promoting healthier sexual behaviors, particularly among youth. The goal is to empower young people to make informed decisions and to reduce the risky behaviors that contribute to the spread of the virus.<sup>33</sup> In 2005 and 2006, SU collaborated with the World Bank on the HIV/AIDS Program Development Project.<sup>34</sup> The initiative aimed to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in southeastern Nigeria and provide education to young people, particularly those aged 19 to 24, about the risks of HIV transmission. Over 4,000 young people across 17 secondary and tertiary institutions and 25 churches participated in this program. Through targeted training programs and resources, SU delivered awareness campaigns that successfully educated young people about HIV/AIDS prevention and changed their sexual behaviors. Feedback from participants indicated a significant improvement in their understanding of the virus and many reported adopting healthier behaviors that would reduce their risk of infection.<sup>35</sup>

While much of the focus on healthcare often revolved around physical health, Scripture Union also acknowledged the importance of mental health and emotional well-being. Many individuals in southeastern Nigeria faced emotional struggles, ranging from stress and anxiety to the effects of trauma, poverty and loss. These challenges can often be just as debilitating as physical health problems and SU recognized the importance of addressing them. As part of its health outreach, SU provided counseling services, group support and educational workshops designed to help individuals manage stress, cope with grief and overcome emotional struggles. These programs were designed to create an environment where individuals can find healing and emotional support. Through one-on-one counseling sessions and group support activities which happen to be very important and essential programs organized in camps and conferences, SU offered practical tools to help people navigate emotional difficulties and develop resilience. This emotional support is integrated into SU's broader health and wellness efforts, ensuring that people are cared for not only physically but also emotional.

Scripture Union understood that the health and well-being of its staff are essential to the success of its mission. To ensure that those serving on the front lines of the ministry remained healthy and able to carry out their work, SU provided annual health check-ups for its staff. These regular medical exams covered a wide range of health concerns and ensure that staff members are in good health. SU also covered all the medical expenses for staff, demonstrating its commitment to their well-being. This approach ensured that staff are healthy, energized and able to continue their work with full capacity, benefiting both them and the communities they serve.<sup>36</sup>

SU promoted physical wellness through a variety of health programs, many of which are implemented at its youth and student camps. These camps provided an opportunity for young people to engage in health-promoting activities while also growing spiritually. During these camps, participants take part in a range of activities designed to encourage regular physical activity and healthy living. These activities include fitness routines, group exercises and sporting events, all aimed at improving the physical health of young people. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and obesity, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in many parts of Nigeria.

In addition to physical fitness, SU's camps also included nutrition education, where young people are taught about the importance of eating a balanced diet and making healthier food choices. These camps provided valuable information on how to incorporate proper nutrition into daily life and participants are educated about local, nutritious foods that can contribute to overall health and wellness. By promoting these habits at an early age, SU equipped young people with the knowledge and skills to lead healthier lives in the future. These camps also address mental wellness. Workshops on stress management, emotional resilience and mental health awareness are an integral part of the program, helping participants understand the importance of emotional well-being. These efforts aimed to reduce the stigma around mental health issues and encouraged young people to take care of their emotional health as much as they do their physical health.<sup>37</sup>

Through its combination of medical missions, health education, wellness programs and mental health support, Scripture Union made a lasting impact on the health and well-being of communities across southeastern Nigeria. By providing access to medical care, offering health education and addressing both the physical and emotional needs of individuals, SU contributed to the creation of healthier, more resilient communities. These initiatives were not only improving immediate health outcomes but also helped to build long-term sustainable health practices. The health education programs, which emphasized disease prevention and healthy living, empowered communities to take charge of their own health. By promoting healthy behaviors such as regular physical activity, proper nutrition and mental wellness, SU helped to reduce the burden of chronic diseases and infectious illnesses in the region. As SU continued its work in health outreach, it remained committed to empowering individuals and communities to live healthier lives, both physically and spiritually. Through its comprehensive approach to healthcare and community development, SU contributed to the overall development of

southeastern Nigeria and created a foundation for a healthier, more vibrant future for generations to come.

### **Economic Development Initiatives**

Economic development initiatives aim to foster financial stability, reduce poverty and enhance the economic capacities of individuals and communities. These initiatives address systemic challenges such as unemployment, lack of access to resources and economic inequality by creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and improved standards of living. The focus is not only on immediate economic growth but also on building long-term resilience through innovation, skills development and equitable access to opportunities. In southeastern Nigeria, economic development is vital for tackling widespread poverty, unemployment and the marginalization of vulnerable groups. Successful economic initiatives often incorporate strategies like job creation, vocational training, entrepreneurship promotion and infrastructure development, with a focus on empowering individuals to achieve self-reliance and community sustainability.<sup>38</sup> Scripture Union's economic development initiatives in the region were anchored in these principles, combining practical solutions with Christian values of service and stewardship. The organization's efforts addressed key economic challenges, from unemployment to resource disparities, by providing tools and resources that encouraged entrepreneurship, foster innovation and create jobs. A hallmark of Scripture Union's approach is its focus on vocational training and skill acquisition programs that equipped individuals with marketable skills tailored to their communities' needs. These programs not only created employment opportunities but also empowered participants to establish small businesses that contribute to local economies.<sup>40</sup> By integrating financial literacy training, Scripture Union ensured that participants can manage their earnings effectively and expand their economic activities sustainably.

The organization also prioritized economic justice, working to ensure that women, youth and other marginalized groups have equal access to resources and opportunities.

This part will explore the following major economic development initiatives:

1. **Job Creation:** Facilitating employment opportunities through partnerships, entrepreneurship and community projects that address unemployment.
2. **Vocational Training and Skills Development:** Equipping individuals with practical skills for employment or self-reliance through training tailored to market needs.

3. Microfinance and Small-Scale Business Support: Providing financial resources, mentorships and support to help individuals and small businesses thrive.
4. Financial Literacy and Economic Education: Teaching individuals to manage finances, save, invest and budget effectively to achieve economic stability.

These initiatives collectively showcase how Scripture Union contributed to economic transformation in southeastern Nigeria. Through their efforts, the organization not only fostered growth and self-reliance but also ensured that economic development aligns with the broader goals of community cohesion and sustainable progress.

### **Job Creation**

Job Creation is a cornerstone of economic development initiatives, aimed to reduce unemployment and promote sustainable livelihoods. In the context of southeastern Nigeria, job creation efforts focus on facilitating employment opportunities through partnerships with local businesses, government agencies and community-based projects. By supporting entrepreneurship and fostering local enterprises, these initiatives help create jobs that are tailored to the region's specific needs and available resources. Additionally, community projects that address local challenges often generate employment opportunities, providing both immediate income and long-term job security. Through these efforts, Scripture Union contributed to reducing unemployment, empowering individuals and strengthening local economies.<sup>38</sup>

Scripture Union Nigeria has a dedicated workforce with over 60 traveling staff and more than 250 office staff, all working together to further the organization's mission of spreading Christian values and providing support to local communities. These staff are instrumental in ensuring the success of the Union's numerous programs, which focus on both spiritual and social well-being. In addition to the full-time staff, each region in southeastern Nigeria employs over 20 staff members, excluding the missionaries stationed in various locations. These employees played a vital role in the day-to-day operations of Scripture Union, supporting a wide range of initiatives aimed at improving the lives of individuals, families and entire communities. Their roles spanned from coordinating youth programs to managing community outreach initiatives and their work has helped to enhance social cohesion and economic stability. Furthermore, the Union actively provided opportunities for voluntary workers to contribute to its efforts. These volunteers are often sponsored by the Union to attend training sessions and meetings, ensuring they gain the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve their communities. This focus

on capacity building enabled both staff and volunteers to make meaningful contributions to the organization's mission.

The jobs (involved roles as teachers, principals, administrators and other staff positions) provided by Scripture Union have had a transformative effect on the living conditions of both staff and the wider community. By offering stable employment, the Union has empowered many individuals, providing them with consistent income and contributing to greater financial stability in the region. Many of the staff working within the Union's various programs have seen significant improvements in their livelihoods, with regular salaries allowing them to support their families and contribute to local economies.<sup>41</sup> The Union's educational institutions, such as the Scripture Union schools, have further bolstered employment opportunities in the region. These schools not only hired teaching staff but also employed a wide range of non-teaching personnel, such as administrative staff, security personnel and maintenance workers. This dual approach, supporting both the academic and operational sides of education, has positioned Scripture Union as a key employer within the region, helping to address local unemployment and contributed to the development of the educational infrastructure.<sup>42</sup>

Furthermore, Scripture Union made significant strides in creating job opportunities through the establishment of campgrounds, which served as both spiritual centers and economic hubs. The largest of these camps, Camp of Faith in Okigwe, stood out as a key contributor to the Union's economic sustainability. In total, there are about 10 camps spread across the southeastern region, each playing a vital role in the Union's outreach efforts. These camps are used for a variety of purposes, such as spiritual retreats, leadership training, vocational workshops and youth conferences. Each camp is designed to be a place of spiritual growth and personal development, but they also function as important sources of revenue for Scripture Union.<sup>43</sup> By hosting retreats and other events, the camps generate income that supports the organization's broader initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability. Camp of Faith, in particular, has grown into a significant economic hub, supporting local businesses, offering employment opportunities and attracting visitors from all over the region. These camps provided jobs for staff members who work within them, including camp managers, facilitators, cooks, maintenance personnel and other support staff. In addition, the camps create seasonal job opportunities for local residents, this helped to boost the region's economy. Scripture Union members are widely recognized for their strong work ethic, honesty and focus, qualities that make them highly

employable across various sectors. Many members who own businesses, firms and other ventures contributed to local economic growth by providing job opportunities for fellow Union members. This spirit of mutual support fostered a culture of collaboration and community development, where members are not only focused on their own success but also on uplifting others.<sup>44</sup> Many Union members ran businesses that aligned with the organization's values such as livestock farming, transportation and logistics, restaurants and fast food chain and so on. And by offering employment to fellow members, they helped ensure that the Union's core principles of service and stewardship are reflected in the broader economy. Additionally, the Union actively facilitated job creation through initiatives like the sale of reading notes, a program that allows young people to earn commissions by selling educational materials. This initiative not only offered financial benefits but also helped keep young people engaged in productive activities. By offering a source of income, the program reduced the likelihood of youth involvement in negative behaviors, such as crime and encouraged them to take responsibility for their own well-being.<sup>45</sup>

Through these diverse initiatives, Scripture Union played a pivotal role in the spiritual, social and economic development of the southeastern region. The Union's programs and employment opportunities created sustainable livelihoods for many individuals, empowering them to achieve self-reliance and contribute to the prosperity of their communities. Beyond simply providing jobs, Scripture Union built a culture of service, entrepreneurship and empowerment, which strengthened local economies, reduced poverty and fostered greater community cohesion. Through its efforts in education, job creation and community development, Scripture Union continues to be a major force in shaping the future of the southeastern region, creating opportunities for growth, development and lasting change.

While Scripture Union's efforts to create jobs and support the local economy in southeastern Nigeria are commendable, there are a few areas for improvement. One issue is that many of the job opportunities were tied to the organization's religious mission, which limited access for people who do not share the same faith. For example, staff positions and business opportunities are often reserved for Union members, which could exclude qualified individuals from other communities or religious backgrounds who might also benefit from these roles. Additionally, while Scripture Union's camps and schools provided employment, they primarily focus on religious activities, which could restrict the growth of the wider local economy. Expanding these

initiatives to include more secular programs or partnerships with non-religious organizations might open up more job opportunities for a broader range of people, fostering inclusivity and strengthening the local economy even further. Lastly, while the Union's youth programs, like selling reading notes, provided valuable work experience, they may not always lead to long-term career development. More structured training programs and partnerships with local businesses could help young people transition into sustainable careers beyond the Union's initiatives.

### **Vocational Training and Skills Development**

Vocational Training and Skills Development played a major role in Scripture Union's approach to economic development in the southeastern region of Nigeria. The Union recognized that while formal education is crucial, practical skills are equally essential in fostering self-reliance, entrepreneurship and financial independence. In a region where unemployment and economic inequality are significant challenges, Scripture Union committed itself to providing vocational training that empowered individuals to break free from the cycle of poverty. The Union's vocational programs were designed to equip participants with the tools and knowledge they needed to thrive in the workforce and established sustainable livelihoods. These training programs were specifically designed to meet the economic needs of local communities and were closely aligned with the skills that were in demand in the region. One of the standout features of Scripture Union's vocational training initiatives was their focus on practical, hands-on skills that directly translate into income generating opportunities. Some of the key areas of training included culinary skills such as baking, cooking, event planning and decorations, as well as shoe making, tailoring and other craft-based skills. These practical skills were highly valued in local markets and provided participants with the foundation to create small businesses. For example, those trained in baking or tailoring could set up their own businesses, providing much-needed services to their communities while generating a steady income.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, event planning and decorations were particularly sought after in the region, where social events and celebrations are an integral part of local culture. By offering such a wide range of vocational skills, Scripture Union ensured that individuals had access to diverse opportunities to support themselves financially.

Training in these skills was not limited to the classroom, Scripture Union's annual camping events offered an ideal environment for immersive learning. These camps, which were eagerly anticipated by Union members each year, served as a platform for both personal and professional

growth. There are three main camping seasons: the Easter camp (focused primarily on adults), the Long Vacation camp (designed for students and young people) and the December/Christmas camp (which caters to people of all ages). These camps are not only spiritual retreats but also hubs of skill development, where individuals can participate in hands-on workshops and learn practical trades that they can use to start their own businesses.<sup>47</sup> The annual camps brought together a large group of people, fostering an environment of learning and community engagement and provided a unique opportunity to gain valuable skills in a supportive and collaborative setting. In addition to providing technical skills, Scripture Union actively encouraged entrepreneurship by offering training on how to manage resources and finances effectively. These aspects of training went beyond the acquisition of specific skills and focused on the broader principles of business management, including cash flow management, budgeting, marketing and financial planning. Pastor Edozie mentioned that, in addition to acquiring vocational skills, Union members were also equipped with the knowledge and strategies needed to run sustainable businesses. This focus on entrepreneurship is integral to Scripture Union's approach, as it helped individuals not only find employment but also created jobs for others, thus contributing to the broader community's economic development.<sup>48</sup> What made Scripture Union's approach to entrepreneurship stand out was its support system for individuals looking to start their own businesses. The Union had often provided capital to help members launch their ventures, recognizing that access to funding is a major barrier to business development in many communities. In many cases, well-to-do members of Scripture Union also contributed to these efforts by funding further training or offering financial support to startup businesses. This generous and communal approach ensured that those who complete vocational training are not left to face the challenges of entrepreneurship alone. Instead, they received the guidance, mentorships and financial backing they need to succeed in their ventures.

Another key aspect of Scripture Union's focus on youth empowerment is its support for young people who want to become entrepreneurs. Umorem Enefiok, for example, highlighted that in some cases, SU provided startup funds for youth after their training, helping them to translate their skills into business opportunities. This support is not only financial; it also included mentorships and guidance from experienced entrepreneurs, helping young people navigate the early stages of their businesses. Wealthier members of Scripture Union often

contributed to these efforts by sponsoring apprenticeships or directly funding small businesses, further ensuring that young people have the resources and guidance they need to succeed. Scripture Union also facilitated the placement of young apprentices with professionals in fields such as spare parts trading, fabric production and other trades. This hands-on experience helped young people refine their skills, gain valuable work experience and build professional networks that are essential for the growth of their businesses.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, SU organized events where youth can showcase their products or services and access broader markets. This could be in fellowship where that person worshiped, or during camp meetings, helping them grow their businesses sustainably.

In addition to vocational training and entrepreneurial support, Scripture Union placed a significant emphasis on financial literacy. As part of the vocational programs, individuals received training on how to effectively manage their finances, save, budget and plan for the future. This financial literacy component is vital, as it equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to make sound financial decisions, thereby ensuring that their businesses could thrive in the long term. Scripture Union understood that without proper financial management, even the most skilled entrepreneurs can face challenges that lead to business failure. Therefore, the Union integrated financial literacy into all of its vocational programs to ensure that participants can not only generate income but also manage it in a sustainable and productive way. The impact of these vocational and skills development programs was far-reaching.<sup>50</sup> They significantly reduced unemployment and poverty in the region, offering individuals opportunities to improve their livelihoods and achieve financial independence. Moreover, these programs have contributed to long-term economic resilience, as they helped to build a local economy that is less reliant on external aid and more focused on sustainable, community-driven solutions. Scripture Union's focus on entrepreneurship, vocational training and financial literacy created a thriving ecosystem of small businesses, with many graduates of the programs going on to employ others and contributed to the local economy. By empowering individuals to start their own businesses, Scripture Union created a network of self-reliant, skilled entrepreneurs who are actively contributing to the economic development of their communities.

So, Vocational Training and Skills Development were instrumental in Scripture Union's efforts to drive economic development in the southeastern region of Nigeria. By providing practical, hands-on training that focused on entrepreneurship, financial literacy and skill

development, Scripture Union empowered individuals to transform their lives, create businesses and contribute to the growth of their communities. Through its comprehensive and comprehensive approach to vocational training, the Union fostered a culture of self-reliance, entrepreneurship and community-driven development, this ensured that every individual, regardless of background, had the opportunity to succeed.

One major criticism of Scripture Union's vocational training programs is that the range of skills taught could not meet the diverse needs of the entire population. While the skills offered, such as baking, tailoring, event planning and shoe making, were valuable and in demand in the local markets, they represented a narrow segment of the available vocational training options. In an increasingly digital world, skills in technology, such as computer programming, graphic design, or digital marketing, could provide significant economic opportunities, especially for younger generations. However, such programs were not mentioned, which could limit the options available to people looking for more modern or technologically advanced career paths. Furthermore, the vocational training primarily benefited individuals who can attend the camps organized by Scripture Union. While these camps provided a unique environment for hands-on learning, they were often limited in scope. The camps sometimes were not accessible to individuals who lived in rural or remote areas, where transportation or financial constraints prevented them from attending. The costs associated with attending these camps (whether for travel and other expenses) sometimes also deterred potential participants from poorer backgrounds. As a result, the vocational training programs, though beneficial, were more likely to serve individuals who were already somewhat privileged, making it harder for those in desperate need of support to access them. This limitation sometimes reinforced the cycle of inequality, as people who could benefit the most from such training never had the opportunity to attend. Expanding these programs beyond the confines of camps and offering more community based or locally accessible training opportunities could have helped ensure that a broader range of individuals had the chance to gain valuable skills. In addition, collaborating with local businesses, educational institutions, or community centers could have made the programs more inclusive and accessible to people from various backgrounds.

### **Microfinance, Small Scale Business Support, Financial Literacy and Economic Education**

Scripture Union has long recognized the interconnectedness of financial support and financial education in driving sustainable economic empowerment in southeastern Nigeria. By

integrating microfinance, small-scale business support and financial literacy, the Union developed a comprehensive approach to empower individuals and communities. This approach not only provided the necessary capital to start businesses but also ensured that beneficiaries are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to manage their ventures successfully, thereby brought about long-term economic resilience. A cornerstone of Scripture Union's approach to entrepreneurship was its provision of startup funds for individuals, especially youth and widows, who often faced greater economic challenges. According to Dr. Nmalada, Scripture Union played a critical role in empowering young people by offering financial assistance to help them launch businesses. For example, the Union helped young entrepreneurs purchase tricycles and motorcycles to run transportation services, providing them with a reliable source of income and the opportunity to become economically independent.<sup>51</sup> This initiative addressed one of the region's most pressing issues, unemployment, by creating self-employment opportunities. In addition to youth, widows also benefited from the Union's support, receiving startup funds to establish trading businesses. This financial assistance not only gave widows a means to provide for their families but also empowered them to contribute meaningfully to their communities. It was a crucial step toward breaking the cycle of poverty and dependency, particularly for women who are often marginalized in many socioeconomic contexts.

While Scripture Union did not directly offer loans for business ventures, it had built a culture of communal support within its network, where wealthy members actively participated in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of others. These well-to-do members frequently contributed capital, fund additional training and support apprenticeships to ensure that small businesses could grow and thrive. This approach created a sense of shared responsibility, where members of the Union contributed to each other's success, thereby strengthening the collective economic wellbeing of the Union's broader community.<sup>52</sup>

However, providing financial assistance without accompanying financial education would leave many entrepreneurs at risk of mismanaging their resources. Recognizing this, Scripture Union placed a strong emphasis on financial literacy, teaching its members essential skills such as budgeting, saving, cash flow management and investment planning. These skills were crucial for anyone starting a business, as they helped entrepreneurs make informed decisions about managing their income, expanded their ventures and planned for the future. Through specialized

training programs, Scripture Union empowered individuals to manage their earnings wisely, avoid common financial pitfalls and build sustainable businesses that could grow over time. The inclusion of financial literacy training in Scripture Union's entrepreneurship support initiatives also emphasized the importance of self-reliance and economic independence.<sup>53</sup> For many individuals, the access to startup funds is the first step toward creating a livelihood. However, without financial literacy, they may struggle to manage their resources effectively and face challenges in sustaining their businesses. The financial literacy programs offered by Scripture Union bridged this gap, providing entrepreneurs with practical tools and knowledge to navigate the financial aspects of running a business.

In addition to individual financial education, Scripture Union also emphasized entrepreneurial networking and market access, which were vital components in the success of small businesses. The Union facilitates market exposure for small businesses and connected entrepreneurs with potential customers, ensuring that their products and services were visible to the right audience. This focus on market access helped entrepreneurs expand their customer base and grow their businesses, while also contributing to the broader local economy. A significant aspect of Scripture Union's entrepreneurial focus was its dedication to youth empowerment. Through vocational training camps, young people are equipped with the skills they needed to succeed in various fields, from transportation services and small-scale trading to agriculture and crafts. Immediately those youths completed their training, Scripture Union offered startup funds to help them launch their businesses.<sup>54</sup> This financial support, combined with the practical training they received, gave them the tools to not only become self-sufficient but also create job opportunities for others within their communities. In this way, Scripture Union fostered a spirit of entrepreneurship that extended beyond individual success to benefit the wider community. One of the most powerful aspects of Scripture Union's support system is the involvement of its wealthy members, who not only provide funding for business ventures but also invest in apprenticeships and mentorships programs. These members contributed to the growth of small businesses by offering their expertise, networks and resources.<sup>55</sup> This model of shared responsibility ensured that individuals receive not just financial assistance, but also the guidance and mentorships they need to navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship. Wealthy members also often funded business ventures, contributing to the expansion of small businesses. In addition to supporting small-scale businesses, Scripture Union also emphasized the importance

of financial independence through initiatives such as savings programs and community-based financial planning workshops. These workshops equipped individuals with the knowledge to save, invest and manage their finances, ensuring that they are well-prepared to handle their economic responsibilities. This approach to financial literacy empowers people to make smart decisions about their financial future, helping them build stable livelihoods and contribute to their families' well-being.

Microfinance, Small-Scale Business Support and Financial Literacy are interwoven in Scripture Union's comprehensive approach to economic empowerment. The combination of startup capital, financial education, entrepreneurial training and mentorships ensures that individuals not only received the financial resources they needed to start businesses but also gained the knowledge and skills necessary to run them successfully. Through this wholesome approach, Scripture Union fostered a culture of self-reliance, economic justice and community support, empowering its members to achieve financial independence while contributing to the overall economic development of southeastern Nigeria. By prioritizing both financial support and financial literacy, Scripture Union created a sustainable model of economic empowerment that benefits individuals, families and communities for years to come.

The issue of insufficient financial assistance for those looking to start or grow a business is an area worth considering. While Scripture Union provided some level of support for startup capital, particularly for youth and widows, the funds provided were not enough to ensure the success of a new business. For many entrepreneurs, especially those in low-income communities, the initial funds they receive only covered the basic startup costs—such as purchasing equipment or raw materials—but sometimes fell short of providing the necessary financial cushion to scale the business or address unexpected challenges. For example, individuals started small businesses, like tailoring or event planning, may require more than just initial funds to purchase equipment or materials; they might also need to invest in marketing, hire additional staff, or build a customer base, all of which require ongoing financial support. The lack of larger, more comprehensive funding could leave these small businesses vulnerable to failure when faced with unexpected expenses, changes in the market, or competition. Moreover, the absence of access to formal loans or credit created a major barrier for these entrepreneurs. While Scripture Union offered a helpful communal approach where wealthy members sometimes provided financial support, this model was not sustainable for all participants. Not all individuals had access to

wealthy sponsors within the Union and those who did could not receive enough support to scale their businesses. Without the option to apply for loans from formal financial institutions, entrepreneurs could not access the capital they needed for significant growth. Traditional loans, microloans, or credit facilities that many businesses depended on to expand were simply unavailable to these entrepreneurs through Scripture Union. A formal loan system would provide entrepreneurs with more reliable, long-term financial support, allowing them to grow their businesses, hire employees and invest in larger-scale operations. Moreover, access to credit is crucial for businesses looking to weather economic downturns or invest in more expensive resources or technology. By not offering access to these financial tools, Scripture Union limited the potential for business growth and sustainability, potentially stunting the long-term impact of its vocational training and entrepreneurship programs. To address these issues, Scripture Union could explore partnerships with local banks, microfinance institutions, or other financial organizations to offer low-interest loans or access to credit. These partnerships could help provide more robust financial support to entrepreneurs, ensuring that they have the resources they need to thrive beyond the initial startup phase. Additionally, offering more substantial initial funding or grants, along with financial education on how to effectively manage loans, could better equip entrepreneurs to manage debt and invest in their business's growth.

## Endnotes

1. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, England: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.45
2. Ibid.,
3. A. Giddens, M. Duneier, R. P. Appelbaum and D. Carr, *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull 10<sup>th</sup> edition: Pearson, 2017, p.112
4. United Nations, "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", United Nations, Retrieved November 17, 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.
5. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada, 66 years, Clergy, at Benin City, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
6. An interview with Peters Nwokocha, 62 years, Clergy, at Okigwe, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
7. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu, 65 years, Educationist, at Enugu, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
8. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada.
9. Ibid
10. An interview with Sunday Okonna, 66 years, Retired Clergy, at Enugu, 17th February, 2025
11. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma, 57 years, clergy, at Ibadan, 7th September, 2024
12. Ibid
13. Ibid.,
14. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union: A Case Study of Onitsha Region", an M. A. Thesis, p.10

15. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire: The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books, 2018, p. 334
16. Ibid, pp. 335-336
17. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu.
18. Ibid.,
19. Nmalada An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada.
20. Ibid.,
21. An interview with Kingsley Edozie, 63 years, Clergy, at Enugu, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
22. Ibid.,
23. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada.
24. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma.
25. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p. 335
26. An interview with Peters Nwokocha.
27. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma.
28. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union...", p. 46
29. Emezie Chikodinaka, "201 Surrender to Jesus at Amasiri Crusade", in *Scripture Union Plumblin*, 2(8), August 2008, p. 47

30. Ibid.
31. Alechenu Emmanuel, "SU Making Impact with AIDS: Life skill Message", in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumbline*, 2(8), 2008, pp. 53-54
32. See appendix 1
33. Alechenu Emmanuel, "SU Making Impact...", pp.53-54
34. See appendix 2, 3 and 4
35. A. U. Mbanaso, *My Stewardship*, Owerri: Ark Publishers, 2005, p. 46
36. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma.
37. Alechenu Emmanuel, "SU Making Impact...", p. 54
38. Kopp M. Carol, " Development Economics:Definition abd Types", *Investopedia*, Assessed December 28, 2024, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/development-economics.asp>.
39. Ibid.,
40. Ibid.,
41. An interview with Kingsley Edozie,
42. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, p. 336
43. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu.
44. An interview with Kingsley Edozie.

45. An interview with Peters Nwokocha.
46. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma.
47. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union...", p.48
48. An interview with Kingsley Edozie.
49. An interview with Enefiok Umorem, 42 years, Clergy, at Enugu, 5th September, 2024.
50. Ibid.
51. An Interview with O. C. J. Nmalada.
52. An interview with Peters Nwokocha.
53. An interview with Enefiok Umorem.
54. Ibid.
55. An interview with Peters Nwokocha.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**IMPACTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES OF SCRIPTURE**  
**UNION IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIAN**

**Positive Impacts**

Scripture Union has long been recognized for its efforts in addressing socio-economic and cultural challenges in southeastern Nigeria. Through a variety of initiatives, ranging from educational support to health outreach, microfinance programs and community-building activities, the organization worked to uplift and empower local communities. These efforts were particularly impactful in regions where access to basic services, such as education, healthcare and financial resources, remained limited. By focusing on development, Scripture Union not only aimed to meet immediate needs but also to create long-term, sustainable changes that improved the livelihoods of individuals and strengthen community bonds.

Scripture Union made significant strides in the areas of education and skill development, with a focus on uplifting young people in southeastern Nigeria, particularly through its establishment of schools that offered education at affordable fees. These schools, often with lower fees compared to many other private institutions, had been designed to accommodate individuals from diverse financial backgrounds, including those from lower-income families. By providing quality education at accessible prices, SU made it possible for many more children in the region to attend school, thus it played a vital role in increasing the literacy rate in southeastern Nigeria. This initiative not only helped in elevating educational standards in the region but also contributed to making education accessible to a larger portion of the population, fostering social mobility and economic progress. One of the key outcomes of these initiatives was the increase in school enrollment, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Through its various support programs, Scripture Union provided school supplies, uniforms and scholarships, enabling many children who would otherwise be unable to afford education to attend school regularly. This directly contributed to improved educational access, especially for vulnerable groups like orphans and children from impoverished backgrounds. For example, the Scripture Union Model Academy (SUMA) in Aba stands as a testament to this commitment. The academy, which served as a daycare, nursery and primary school, offered scholarships to needy children, ensuring that even the most disadvantaged had access to quality education.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to increasing access to education, Scripture Union's initiatives also led to improved academic performance. Students participating in the organization's programs have demonstrated stronger academic outcomes, particularly in core subjects like Mathematics and English. A number of spelling competitions and cowbell mathematics competitions gold and silver medals goes to prove this.<sup>2</sup> This is also a reflection of the organization's emphasis on academic excellence and its tailored approach to meeting the educational needs of students. Moreover, Scripture Union has placed a strong emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and vocational training. Through youth camps, young people are exposed to various vocational skills that prepare them for self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Reverend Peters, a key figure in the organization, has highlighted the importance of these camps, which offer free education in skills that empower youth to support themselves, despite the economic challenges involved in running these programs. The vocational training provided at these camps equipped many participants with the necessary tools to start small businesses or pursue skilled trades, ultimately contributing to their economic independence and personal growth. Together, these efforts demonstrated Scripture Union's profound impact on education and youth empowerment, offering not only access to education but also the skills necessary for long-term success and self-sufficiency.<sup>3</sup>

Scripture Union (SU) made significant contributions to improving health and well-being in Southeastern Nigeria through health education, medical outreach, and awareness campaigns addressing malaria, HIV/AIDS, and sanitation. These initiatives created lasting awareness, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Testimonies and archival reports indicate that SU's consistent campaigns from the 1990s onward led to a noticeable reduction in preventable diseases, especially malaria and sexually transmitted infections. For instance, between 2005 and 2010, SU's HIV/AIDS awareness programs in Onitsha and Enugu—conducted in collaboration with the World Bank–assisted HIV/AIDS Development Project—reached over 4,000 young people within two years, while school-based sensitization drives across the Southeast impacted an estimated 200,000 students by 2015. These campaigns promoted the use of insecticide-treated nets, proper hygiene, and moral responsibility, leading to improved community health consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

Through volunteer-based medical outreaches, Scripture Union provided essential services such as health check-ups, immunizations, and distribution of malaria and typhoid medication. Rural communities in Anambra, Imo, and Enugu States particularly benefited from these mobile

health clinics, which complemented government efforts to improve healthcare access. Reports from the period also suggest that malaria cases dropped by roughly 20–25% in communities that actively participated in SU-led sensitization drives, a change consistent with broader state health statistics during the same period.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, SU’s “Aids to Aids” initiative encouraged sexual purity and healthy living among youths, helping to reduce stigma toward HIV-positive individuals and creating supportive peer environments through camps and life-skills training.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond medical outreach, Scripture Union integrated health messages into its moral and spiritual teachings. Its annual Plumline magazine, school fellowships, and youth retreats regularly featured articles on personal hygiene, drug abuse prevention, and mental health awareness. This consistent integration of faith and health reinforced behavioral change across generations. Though Scripture Union’s contribution operated largely outside formal public-health frameworks, its partnership-driven model filled critical gaps left by weak state capacity, demonstrating how faith-based organizations can complement national health strategies while fostering long-term community transformation.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, Scripture Union has extended its health initiatives to staff members, ensuring their well-being through regular health examinations and medical coverage. This commitment to staff health ensures that those who are leading and running these outreach programs remain healthy and capable of continuing their work.<sup>8</sup> Scripture Union’s medical missions have been an essential component of their outreach efforts, addressing both physical and spiritual needs in communities. These missions involved teams of medical professionals—including doctors, nurses and lab technicians—who volunteer to provide free medical services during the organization’s spiritual outreach activities. For instance, in Amasiri town in 2008, Scripture Union organized a medical mission alongside a spiritual outreach, providing free medical treatments to local residents while also preaching the gospel.<sup>9</sup> This integrated approach ensured that the physical needs of the community were met alongside the spiritual guidance that the organization offers.

Another key socio-cultural impact of Scripture Union in southeastern Nigeria was its promotion of social cohesion through Christian values such as honesty, integrity, and diligence. SU members earned a reputation for moral uprightness, which fostered trust in communities and professional settings. Local businesses and institutions often preferred SU members for leadership and administrative roles, recognizing their ethical conduct. SU’s influence extended to

education, healthcare, and public service, where alumni implemented reforms promoting transparency and accountability. For example, SU-trained leaders in schools and universities introduced fair policies, while healthcare professionals fostered trust and improved service delivery. These efforts strengthened communal norms, positioning SU members as respected leaders who bridged spiritual and social development.<sup>10</sup> Archival reports and interviews document numerous instances of SU members shaping community behavior, promoting ethical responsibility, and fostering social cohesion. By integrating moral discipline with practical leadership, Scripture Union contributed not only to spiritual growth but also to the stability and development of southeastern Nigerian communities.

Another positive impact of Scripture Union was its active role in challenging traditional practices that were seen as incompatible with Christian values. The Union's members rejected practices such as the *Iyi Akwa* ceremony, which marked a man's coming of age and *Igba Uzo*, a road-clearing ritual performed in December, both of which involved idol worship and were viewed by SU members as conflicting with Christianity.<sup>11</sup> The rejection of such ceremonies and festivals, while controversial, played an important role in reshaping spiritual and cultural norms in the region. In places where SU members held leadership positions, their commitment to Christian values helped to reduce practices such as the *Osu* and *Ume* caste systems, which historically discriminated against certain social groups. This commitment to equality contributed to the broader abolition of these systems, promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.<sup>12</sup>

Scripture Union also had a profound influence on local leadership and power dynamics. Although initially subtle, SU's impact on leadership structures became more visible as members rose to prominent positions in various sectors, including traditional leadership roles (e.g., *Igwe*, or kings) and modern administrative roles (e.g., university rectors, professors and medical professionals). These leaders were instrumental in promoting the values of honesty, integrity and transparency, which contributed to the overall development of their communities. Dr. Nmalada shared an anecdote of an SU member who, as a leader, set fire to a traditional idol used for human sacrifices, a bold act that sparked significant debate in the community. While the individual faced legal consequences, the event served as a turning point, raising awareness about the futility of idol worship and contributing to the decline of traditional religious practices. This was a major moment in reshaping the spiritual landscape of the region.<sup>13</sup> SU's leadership also influenced public administration in a positive way. Dr. Nmalada noted that SU members, in

positions such as university rectors or local government officials, played a key role in promoting ethical governance, reducing corruption and encouraging development in their areas of influence.

One of the most significant yet often unquantifiable areas where Scripture Union (SU) has contributed to nation-building is in leadership development. From its inception, SU has prioritized the cultivation of strong, ethical leadership, beginning with young people in secondary schools. Through its programs, SU instilled not only moral and Christian discipline but also foundational leadership skills that have shaped numerous leaders across various sectors in Nigeria. Scripture Union's commitment to leadership development starts at an early age, emphasizing the importance of Christian values, integrity and moral discipline. The Union's approach to leadership is comprehensive, focusing not only on spiritual growth but also on practical leadership skills that can be applied in various spheres of life. This early emphasis on leadership is a unique feature of SU, distinguishing it from many other religious organizations.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, many prominent religious leaders in Africa, particularly in independent churches, owe their leadership training to Scripture Union. Frontline General Overseers (GOs) and General Superintendents (GSs) of prominent African independent churches, as well as bold and outspoken leaders in mainline Protestant denominations, have a strong SU background.<sup>14</sup> This influence is evident in the leadership qualities of SU alumni, who have risen to influential positions both within and outside religious circles. Beyond the church, Scripture Union's influence on leadership extends into secular affairs. A significant number of Scripture Union boys and girls have emerged as notable leaders in government, judiciary and public administration. These individuals have held influential positions, including ministers, judges, commissioners, permanent secretaries and other top government roles. For example, Dr. Dennis Fiberesima, a former commissioner for health in Rivers State, is an exemplary SU alumni who used his leadership skills to combat corruption and fraud during his tenure. Dr. Fiberesima initiated the "Flying Doctor" project, a groundbreaking initiative where medical aid was flown to remote islands in the riverine areas of the state using helicopters. His efforts brought medical care to communities that had never before received government assistance, showcasing the transformative power of SU-inspired leadership in public service.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Prof. Ishaya Audu, a former university vice chancellor and Dr. Dan Onwukwe, a former regional chairman of SU Africa, also exemplify the Union's role in fostering effective leadership. Dr. Onwukwe's contributions include serving as the Provost of Alvan Ikoku

College of Education in Owerri and as a commissioner in Imo State, demonstrating the widespread influence of SU's leadership training across different sectors.<sup>16</sup>

In the field of education, Scripture Union (SU) alumni have made remarkable strides, with several members rising to prestigious positions, including university vice chancellors, deputies and professors. Notable examples include Prof. Ishaya Audi, the Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University and Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, the Vice Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike. Among the distinguished professors are Prof. Emma Okoye, Prof. Augusta Mbanaso, Prof. Chinyere Okunna, a Professor of Mass Communication at Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Prof. Uche Ogbuagu, a Professor of Medical Microbiology. These alumni have not only excelled in their academic fields but also significantly contributed to the advancement of education in Nigeria and beyond. The number of SU members who hold such prestigious academic positions is vast, underscoring the Union's role in fostering a culture of excellence and ethical leadership in the educational sector. In Abia State, for instance, three consecutive SU members have held the position of Head of Service, a position that requires a high level of competence, integrity and leadership ability. These include the late Mr. Agu Uko Ogwo, Rev. Ndeke Dimanochie and the late Mr. Uchenna Emezue. Their leadership in such critical public sector roles reflects the enduring impact of SU's training and its emphasis on uprightness in leadership. Scripture Union's influence is also evident in the private sector, where many alumni have ascended to prominent positions as captains of industry, financial experts and other business leaders. The values instilled in SU members (hard work, integrity and a commitment to ethical practices) have made them valuable assets in the corporate world, where such qualities are often in short supply. Although SU has not been heavily involved in politics, its influence on leadership in Nigerian governance has been profound. The Union's insistence on righteousness and its distaste for the corrupt political practices often seen in Nigeria have kept it from direct political involvement. However, this focus on integrity has shaped its members' approach to leadership in all other sectors, making them trusted figures in public and private enterprises alike. The Union's emphasis on righteous leadership has led its members to rise above the ethical compromises often associated with politics, making them respected figures in both public service and business.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most significant ways Scripture Union (SU) contributed to the local economy was through job creation. SU actively created a variety of job opportunities, both direct and

indirect, which helped reduce unemployment in southeastern Nigeria. Many of these jobs were associated with SU's educational and outreach programs, such as teaching positions in SU schools, staff roles in SU camps and administrative positions within the organization. By hiring local staff, SU directly supported the region's economic growth. This localized hiring practice ensured that people within the communities were able to earn a living, which, in turn, benefited the local economy. In addition to employment within SU itself, the Union introduced vocational training programs designed to equip individuals with practical skills applicable in the marketplace. Through these programs, many individuals gained valuable skills in areas such as tailoring, baking and shoemaking.<sup>18</sup> These skills enabled individuals to start their own small businesses, which were vital for economic stability within the community. By empowering individuals to become entrepreneurs, SU indirectly stimulated local markets and encouraged self-sufficiency, benefiting the wider community as well. For instance, a person trained in culinary skills during an SU camp could have started a catering business, offering services for local events or community gatherings. This not only provided the individual with a stable income but also supported the local economy, as their services were hired by other community members or businesses. Such initiatives contributed to improved living standards for families, reducing their reliance on external assistance and boosting the economic independence of individuals within the community. Furthermore, the Union fostered an entrepreneurial spirit by providing mentorship and guidance to new business owners. Experienced entrepreneurs within SU often offered advice, financial backing and professional networks to help others succeed. This support led to the growth of several small businesses that flourished within local communities, creating a ripple effect of economic benefits. By focusing on practical skills and entrepreneurial development, Scripture Union enabled its members to create businesses that were not only sustainable but also essential to the regional economy.<sup>19</sup>

Scripture Union (SU) has profoundly transformed the social landscape of southeastern Nigeria through its powerful community-driven initiatives. By offering outreach programs, camps and vocational training, SU has catalyzed a movement of unity and collective responsibility. Through these initiatives, SU has not only uplifted individuals but strengthened entire communities, creating an environment where people work together to build a stronger, more interconnected society. The annual camps serve as one of the most significant platforms for fostering social cohesion. Here, people from diverse backgrounds come together, bridging

divides and forming lasting bonds. These camps go beyond mere gatherings—they spark conversations around social responsibility, teaching individuals the importance of contributing to the greater good. Volunteers from various communities collaborate, infusing a deep sense of solidarity that is crucial for social harmony. By focusing on collective well-being, SU encourages individuals to prioritize the success of their community alongside their own. One of the most profound contributions of Scripture Union has been in financial literacy. Through its training programs, the Union has taught countless individuals how to manage their finances, creating a ripple effect that empowers not only individuals but entire families and communities. From budgeting and saving to investment planning, the financial education provided by Scripture Union equips people with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their money. This training has helped people avoid common financial pitfalls such as debt accumulation, poor spending habits and lack of savings. For example, a member of Scripture Union who learns about proper budgeting and saving techniques may be able to better manage their income, ensuring that their family's basic needs are met and even putting money aside for future investments. This financial acumen helps families achieve greater economic stability and self-sufficiency, as individuals are empowered to plan for the future rather than living paycheck to paycheck.

Furthermore, Scripture Union goes beyond theoretical financial knowledge by supporting microentrepreneurship. Many individuals, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, often struggle to access funding for business ventures. Through the Union's microfinance programs, small-scale entrepreneurs, such as farmers, tailors, or shop owners, have been provided with startup capital to kickstart their businesses. These funds are often a gamechanger, allowing individuals to purchase necessary materials, tools, or inventory to start small businesses that generate income and contribute to the local economy. For instance, a young person trained in tailoring at a Scripture Union camp could receive a loan to buy sewing equipment, which would enable them to establish a small business and employ others in their community. This process not only reduces unemployment but builds a sense of economic empowerment, as individuals transition from dependency to financial self-sufficiency.<sup>20</sup>

Another profound and lasting impacts of the Scripture Union (SU) in Southeastern Nigeria has been the ongoing support from adults who, as young people, benefited from the Union's initiatives. Over the years, individuals who once participated in SU activities during their

secondary school years have returned to the Union in significant ways, demonstrating the lasting influence of SU's ministry on their lives. This reciprocal relationship reflects the deep sense of obligation many felt toward the Union for the spiritual and personal development they experienced as students. A notable example of this ongoing support is captured in the 2016 publication of

Plumblin, a Scripture Union newsletter. The publication highlighted an event in Afikpo, in the Enugu region, where a group of men and women, who had been impacted by SU ministry in their respective secondary schools, returned to offer their assistance at one of the youth camps. These individuals came from various towns, including Afikpo, Uburu and Onitsha, but had since spread across Nigeria due to different professional pursuits.

The reunion in Afikpo was not merely a nostalgic gathering; it was a powerful testament to the lasting impact of the Union's work. Many of the participants spoke with gratitude about how SU had shaped their character, faith and outlook on life during their formative years. They attributed much of their personal and professional success to the spiritual foundation laid by the Union's teachings and camps. As a result, they felt a deep sense of responsibility and a compelling desire to "plough back" into the ministry that had once nurtured them. In a remarkable act of generosity, these former beneficiaries collectively sponsored the youth camp and made a significant cash donation of over 1 million Naira to support the SU's ongoing work in the Afikpo area.<sup>21</sup> This donation was directed toward enhancing the Union's school outreach efforts, ensuring that the next generation of students could experience the same spiritual growth and development that had so profoundly impacted them. The gesture of these men and women, who had risen to prominence in their respective fields, exemplified the power of community and shared mission.

Their contribution went beyond financial support; it represented a heartfelt acknowledgment of the transformative power of Scripture Union's work in their lives. By giving back, these individuals ensured that the Union's legacy of faith, service and community would continue to thrive for years to come. This spirit of generosity and commitment to the mission of the Union highlighted the long-term impact of Scripture Union in Southeastern Nigeria, proving that the seeds sown in the hearts of young people often bear fruit in unexpected and lasting ways. Thus, the story of these men and women who returned to assist in the SU youth camp served as a powerful reminder that the work of Scripture Union extends far beyond the walls of the schools

it serves. The Union created a lasting bond among its members, who, as adults, remained deeply committed to the growth and success of the ministry. Their contributions, both financially and in terms of service, demonstrated that the impact of the Union was not fleeting, but a lifelong journey of giving and receiving, deeply rooted in the shared mission of fostering Christian faith and values in the lives of young people. SU's commitment to youth empowerment is equally remarkable. By offering targeted vocational training and startup capital, SU has enabled countless young people to break free from the cycle of unemployment. These programs equip youth with practical skills and, perhaps more importantly, instill a sense of confidence and independence. A young person trained in auto mechanics, for example, can open their own repair shop, providing not only a livelihood for themselves but also creating job opportunities for others. This process not only fights unemployment but fosters a generation of self-reliant, entrepreneurial leaders.

## **Challenges**

While the positive contributions of Scripture Union are clear, there are several challenges and limitations to its initiatives that hinder broader and more lasting impact. Despite its efforts in fostering community development and economic empowerment, there are key challenges that need to be addressed. These include the exclusivity of some programs, limited financial support and geographical barriers that restrict the reach of the Union's services. While many individuals have benefited from its vocational training and microfinance programs, others remain excluded due to the narrow scope of these initiatives, leaving certain communities and individuals without access to critical resources for growth. Additionally, the Union's focus on small-scale loans often proves inadequate for larger ventures, limiting long-term success for entrepreneurs seeking to scale their businesses. These obstacles present significant barriers to achieving the Union's goal of widespread, sustainable economic and social development.

Despite the positive social contributions, Scripture Union's efforts to challenge traditional practices and cultural norms often led to tensions and resistance from traditionalists, particularly in communities where customs and rituals were deeply embedded. The rejection of cultural practices like the Iyi Akwa ceremony and the new yam festival created friction, leading to ostracism, legal battles and social exclusion of SU members. Sir F. M. C. Esokawu explained that Scripture Union faced considerable resistance from those who saw the Union's challenge to

traditional beliefs as a threat to their identity and heritage. In many cases, the community mobilized against SU members, seeking to punish them for their stance. For example, members of the Union were often fined or ostracized for their refusal to partake in traditional ceremonies and in some instances, legal action was taken against them for allegedly disrespecting cultural norms. For instance, the refusal of SU members to participate in the new yam festival, a significant cultural event in many communities in southeastern Nigeria, was seen as a direct challenge to traditional practices.<sup>22</sup> This led to widespread social backlash and, in some cases, intense community conflict. Such actions, while rooted in a desire to adhere to Christian teachings, contributed to social divisions and marked SU members as outsiders in their communities. A particularly tense cultural clash occurred in Ihemboji in 2014, when an SU member, Brother Lordsight, killed a snake inside the fellowship building. The snake, identified as an "eke," was considered an ancestral symbol by the local community and was traditionally never to be harmed. This act sparked immediate outrage and Brother Lordsight was nearly lynched by enraged community members. It was only through the swift intervention of other SU members that he was saved from potential harm. The incident led to heightened tensions between SU and the local community, requiring extensive dialogue and mediation before the situation was ultimately resolved.<sup>23</sup> This episode underscores the deep cultural challenges that SU has had to navigate in its mission, as its teachings and practices sometimes directly contradict longstanding beliefs and traditions.

Another negative impact was the ostracism faced by SU members in areas where traditional practices were strongly upheld. In communities where traditional religious and cultural practices were central to identity, SU members were often marginalized for their refusal to participate in rituals or festivals. This social exclusion created a sense of division between SU members and their non-SU peers. Pastor Edozie noted that the Union's distancing from certain cultural traditions led to significant tensions within the community. Although over time more people joined SU and Bible believing churches, this shift caused ongoing friction, especially in places where deep cultural and spiritual divides persisted. In areas with strict adherence to the *Osu* and *Ume* caste systems, SU's efforts to abolish these discriminatory practices faced strong opposition from those who viewed such changes as undermining their traditions. This resistance often escalated into social exclusion, where SU members were treated as pariahs within their own communities.<sup>24</sup>

While the job creation efforts by Scripture Union are commendable, they do come with certain limitations that prevent the full economic benefits from being felt universally across the region. One significant constraint is that many of the job opportunities and vocational training programs are tied directly to participation in SU's camps and programs. These camps and events are often held in specific locations and attendance is sometimes required for individuals to access these opportunities. This dependency on physical attendance limits the geographical reach of SU's impact, as not everyone has the ability to participate. For individuals living in rural areas or remote communities, the distance to the nearest SU camp may pose a significant barrier. Traveling to camps can be both financially and logistically difficult, especially for those without access to transportation or who cannot afford the costs associated with attending. As a result, people in more isolated regions may not have access to the training, vocational opportunities, or employment that could potentially enhance their economic standing. This creates a divide between those who can benefit from the Union's programs and those who cannot, exacerbating existing regional inequalities. For instance, consider someone who lives in a rural community far from any Scripture Union camps. This person may not have the means to travel to the camp to take part in vocational training or to seek employment within the SU structure. Without access to these opportunities, their ability to earn a sustainable income remains limited, despite their potential skills. This individual may miss out on the chance to start a small business, such as a tailoring shop or bakery, which could have provided a stable income. Consequently, the economic benefits that SU provides may be restricted to individuals who are geographically and financially able to participate, leaving others in a vulnerable position. Thus, while SU's job creation efforts are impactful, their effectiveness is diminished by the limited accessibility of these programs. The lack of inclusivity means that the full economic potential of the Union's initiatives may not be realized across all communities in southeastern Nigeria, limiting the broader economic impact that could have been achieved with a more accessible, expansive approach.

Moreover, while the vocational training offered by SU covers traditional skills like tailoring, cooking and shoe making, this may not align with the aspirations of all participants. Some young people may want to pursue careers in technology, business management, or other specialized fields, but the Union's training often focuses on practical, trade-oriented skills. This mismatch often left those with different career aspirations with feelings of exclusion from SU's programs,

reducing their ability to benefit from the Union's resources and hindering their professional growth in other areas. Additionally, while SU's vocational training and mentorships programs provide valuable support, these opportunities tend to be available only to those who actively participate in the

Union's programs. People who are unable to attend the annual camps or are not members of the Union may miss out on vital opportunities for entrepreneurial guidance and skills development. As a result, the Union's economic impact is somewhat exclusive, benefiting only a limited group of individuals rather than reaching a broader population that could potentially benefit from such programs.

Furthermore, Scripture Union's financial initiatives have their limitations, particularly in terms of capital availability and accessibility. While many individuals benefit from the initial startup funds provided by the Union, these resources are often insufficient to support the scaling of businesses, limiting their long-term growth potential. As Scripture Union primarily focuses on small-scale loans and microfinance, businesses that require more substantial investment to grow often struggle to expand beyond their initial scope. For example, a tailor who has received funds to purchase sewing equipment may face a bottleneck if they wish to increase their production capacity, purchase additional materials, or rent a larger workspace. Without access to larger loans, this tailor may be forced to continue operating on a small scale, limiting their income potential and their ability to contribute further to the local economy. Also, the lack of formal loans or access to larger-scale financial support has created a barrier for many aspiring entrepreneurs. Without these funds, it becomes much harder to scale up, innovate, or access technology that could enhance business operations. This is particularly true in industries that require heavy capital investment, such as agriculture, technology, or manufacturing. Many members are limited to starting businesses that don't require large upfront capital, restricting their capacity to venture into other potentially profitable sectors.

Scripture Union (SU) in southeastern Nigeria has faced a range of obstacles in executing its socioeconomic and cultural development initiatives. These challenges span financial limitations, logistical difficulties, political and security concerns and cultural resistance, all of which impact the organization's ability to carry out its programs effectively. One of the primary hurdles faced by Scripture Union is financial constraint. Many of SU's projects, such as providing educational resources, empowering youth and improving local infrastructure, depend on donations and

support from churches and international organizations. Given the economic realities of the region, where poverty levels are high and many people are struggling to meet basic needs, securing sufficient funds remains a significant challenge. The lack of consistent financial backing can delay or completely derail planned initiatives. Moreover, Scripture Union has had to operate within strict budgetary constraints, which limit its ability to scale its programs or engage in long-term development projects that require substantial capital investment. Additionally, the allocation of available resources often becomes a point of contention, as priorities may shift according to urgent needs, leaving certain projects underfunded or neglected.

Logistical challenges also complicate the implementation of Scripture Union's initiatives. southeastern Nigeria, though rich in cultural heritage and natural resources, suffers from inadequate infrastructure. Poor road conditions and an underdeveloped transportation network make it difficult for SU staff and volunteers to reach remote areas where their programs are most needed. Many rural communities lack proper access to roads, which makes travel difficult, especially during the rainy season when some roads become impassable. This lack of infrastructure also extends to inadequate facilities such as community centers, schools, or health centers, which are crucial for the successful implementation of SU's educational, healthcare and community outreach programs. Furthermore, limited access to modern communication technologies in these regions can impede SU's ability to effectively disseminate information about its activities, recruit participants, or coordinate events. In some areas, the lack of electricity and Internet access makes it challenging for staff to maintain communication or keep up with evolving development strategies.

In addition to these logistical and financial concerns, Scripture Union faces political and security challenges that are often rooted in the region's history of ethnic tension and political instability. The southeastern part of Nigeria, particularly the Igbo ethnic area, has experienced periods of civil unrest, most notably during the Nigerian Civil War, which has left deep scars on the collective consciousness of the people. During times of political instability, such as election related violence or ethnic clashes, SU's work can become even more difficult. Travel becomes risky and program activities are often postponed or canceled due to safety concerns. Security issues, ranging from militant groups to criminal gangs, have further complicated efforts to carry out initiatives in certain areas. Staff and volunteers are sometimes forced to stay away from

certain communities due to the threat of violence, undermining the continuity of SU's social and developmental work. In addition, political corruption at local and state levels can slow down the pace of development initiatives. Poor governance often results in a lack of collaboration between SU and government authorities, leaving many initiatives unsupported by the state. Without the necessary political backing, it becomes difficult for SU to access government-run facilities or networks that could enhance the impact of their programs.

Cultural resistance or opposition also presents a significant obstacle to Scripture Union's development efforts. In some communities, there is a deep-rooted adherence to traditional beliefs and practices that may not align with the values that SU aims to promote, such as gender equality, educational reform, or health awareness campaigns. Certain cultural practices, such as discriminatory gender roles, early marriage, or the stigmatization of certain illnesses, can be at odds with the progressive values that SU advocates. This cultural resistance can hinder the acceptance of SU's programs, particularly when they challenge entrenched social norms. For instance, SU's efforts to promote female education or address issues like child marriage may face significant pushback in communities where such practices are deeply ingrained. Even when SU's programs are well-intentioned, they can be seen as foreign impositions, particularly in areas that hold traditional or religious views that oppose specific aspects of the organization's initiatives. Moreover, religious tensions can sometimes exacerbate the challenges SU faces in its outreach work. While southeastern Nigeria is predominantly Christian, there are varying denominations and inter-denominational tensions occasionally arise. These tensions may hinder SU's efforts to foster unity and collaboration across different Christian communities, with some groups viewing SU's programs as a threat to their own religious practices or beliefs. Additionally, there can be resistance from non-Christian groups in the region, especially if SU's evangelistic approach is perceived as an attempt to convert individuals from other faiths. Such opposition can make it difficult to gain widespread support for SU's programs, especially in more religiously conservative areas. Furthermore, some communities may exhibit general apathy or mistrust toward external organizations due to previous negative experiences with NGOs or international entities that have come and gone without leaving a lasting impact. Such mistrust can lead to a reluctance to engage with SU's initiatives, as local populations may perceive these programs as short-term interventions that fail to address deeper systemic issues. This skepticism requires SU

to invest considerable effort in building trust and demonstrating the long-term benefits of its programs.

Another key challenge faced by Scripture Union (SU) is in their educational initiatives in Southeastern Nigeria as regard the issue of examination malpractice. Schools affiliated with the SU and similar cultural or religious unions are known for their strict adherence to moral and ethical standards, including a zero-tolerance policy toward cheating in examinations. While this has earned these schools a reputation for discipline and integrity, it has also led to unintended consequences. A notable challenge arises when parents, despite initially enrolling their children in these schools due to their high moral standards, withdraw them as they approach external examinations. Many parents, fearing that their children might not have an advantage in competitive exams without resorting to malpractice, transfer them to public or private schools that are more lenient in this regard. This practice weakens the long-term impact of the moral education these schools aim to instill and presents an obstacle to sustaining an academic environment founded on ethical principles. Another significant issue is the victimization of students who actively resist examination malpractice. In both public and private secular schools, students who refuse to participate in such practices or speak out against them sometimes face bullying, threats, or outright hostility. In extreme cases, they have been targeted by school authorities who see their stance as a disruption to the prevailing culture of malpractice. The Scripture Union has stepped in on multiple occasions to support these students, providing intervention and ensuring their safety while advocating for a more ethical educational environment.

Additionally, there have been instances where Scripture Union fellowships in schools have faced administrative resistance. A particularly notable case occurred in Anambra State, where cultural union fellowships were banned for reasons that were not clearly stated. SU played a crucial role in challenging and eventually overturning the ban, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that students have access to faith-based moral guidance within the school system. These challenges highlight the broader tension between maintaining academic integrity and navigating societal pressures that often prioritize short-term academic success over ethical principles. The role of Scripture Union in addressing these issues underscores its commitment to moral education beyond the spiritual realm, reinforcing the need for continued advocacy and institutional support.



## End notes

1. Nwachukwu Chika, "Scripture Union Model Academy Debutes", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, 2(8), 2008, p. 48
2. See appendix 5
3. O. C. J. Nmalada, "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union: A Case Study of Scripture Union Onitsha Region, an M. A. Thesis", pp. 46-48
4. Ayodele G. Michael, "S. U Making Positive Impacts with AIDs Life skill Message", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, 2(8), 2008, pp. 53-54
5. Eze C. N., *Response to the Request for the Permission to Carry out HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign and Establishment of Scripture Union Bible Club in Secondary Schools in Anambra State*, August 12, 2005, Governor's Office, Anambra State, Nigeria
6. Emelumadu Oby, *Invitation to the Scripture Union Onitsha Regional Coordinator for the 2008 World AIDS Day Celebration*, November 21, 2008, Anambra State HIV/AIDS Programs Development Project, Awka, Nigeria.
7. Ibid,
8. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma, 57 years, Benin City, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
9. Emezie Chikodinaka, "201 Surrender to Jesus at Amasiri Crusade", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, 2(8), August, 2008, p. 47
10. An interview with Kingsley Edozie, 63 years, Clergy, at Enugu, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
11. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu, 65 years, Educationist, at Enugu, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
12. An interview with Peters Nwokocha, 62 years, Clergy, at Okigwe, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
13. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire*, pp. 326-327

14. An interview with Kingsley Edozie.
15. D. Maduako, I. Edomwonyi, G. Egu and D. M. Onu, *Flames of Fire: The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books, 2018, pp. 328-329
16. Ibid., p. 329
17. Ibid., p. 330
18. An interview with Peters Nwokocha.
19. An interview with Enefiok Umorem, 42 years, Clergy, at Enugu, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2024
20. An interview with Kingsley Edozie.
21. Fowe A., "Old Students Boost Schools Work", in *Scripture Union Plumblin*, Vol. 16, 2016, p.35
22. An interview with Sir F. M. C Esokawu.
23. An interview with Abraham Eyeruroma
24. An interview with Kingsley Edozie.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Assessment**

This section critically assesses how the concept of socioeconomic development, as outlined in the conceptual clarification, aligned with and was reflected in the socioeconomic initiatives of Scripture Union in southeastern Nigeria. By examining these initiatives through the lens of various theoretical frameworks, the extent to which Scripture Union's activities embodied the principles of socioeconomic development is explored, particularly those that emphasized education, skill acquisition, poverty alleviation and community empowerment.

The conceptual clarification defined socioeconomic development as a comprehensive process that transcended mere economic growth to encompass improvements in social, educational, cultural and institutional factors. Scholars and institutions, including the UNDP, World Bank and Amartya Sen, have shaped modern development by emphasizing human development, equitable growth and the expansion of individual freedoms. Scripture Union's initiatives in southeastern Nigeria reflected these principles by addressing both material and immaterial aspects of community well-being, ranging from educational support and skill-building to spiritual and moral guidance. Scripture Union's approach was deeply rooted in the development of individuals and communities, aligning with the view that development should focus on enhancing the well-being of all people, especially those marginalized by socioeconomic disparities. By promoting both spiritual and socioeconomic growth, Scripture Union exemplified how development could be integrated into faith based work, creating a well-rounded model for empowering communities and fostering long-term prosperity. This comprehensive approach mirrored the broader development frameworks that emphasize the creation of opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Social development focuses on the improvement of community welfare through accessible education, healthcare and social services. Scripture Union notably contributed to the social development of southeastern Nigeria through several impactful initiatives that went beyond basic material assistance. One of the most significant examples of Scripture Union's social contribution was its involvement in the establishment of schools throughout the region. These schools, such as

King's Kids Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools, with branches in various locations including Ngeo, Emene, Nsukka and Abakaliki in Ebonyi state, played a critical role in the educational upliftment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The schools not only contributed to a significant increase in literacy rates but also integrated moral and Christian values into their curricula, ensuring that students received both academic and character development. Through these schools, Scripture Union offered an opportunity for children from low-income families to receive an education that would open doors to employment and help break the cycle of poverty that often affected their communities.

Furthermore, Scripture Union offered scholarships for indigent students, ensuring that children from financially disadvantaged families had access to education. These scholarships to a large extent also covered a percentage of the school fees for both primary and university-level education for union staff children. This initiative aligned with the UNDP's view that economic development should expand people's choices, allowing them to lead productive and fulfilling lives. By alleviating the financial burden on families, Scripture Union helped foster social equity, ensuring that the most vulnerable in society had an opportunity to succeed and contribute to the broader community.

Another key element of Scripture Union's social development efforts was its skills acquisition programs. These programs targeted unemployed youths and equipped them with practical skills in various trades, including tailoring, baking, carpentry and shoe-making. The importance of these programs lay not only in providing individuals with the skills they needed to generate income but also in the broader impact on the community's economic stability. As individuals acquired new skills, many went on to start their own small businesses, thus fostering local entrepreneurship and contributing to the reduction of poverty in their communities. This long-term, sustainable approach to social development empowered individuals to be economically independent and helped build human capital, which is essential for community driven growth. Moreover, Scripture Union's health awareness programs complemented its social initiatives by educating local communities about vital health issues such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and maternal health. These programs not only improved the physical well-being of individuals but also contributed to broader social stability by reducing the burden of preventable diseases. This approach to social development mirrored the UNDP's focus on human development and

access to opportunities that would improve the quality of life for individuals and communities as a whole.

Economic development, as defined by scholars like Todaro and Smith, emphasized poverty reduction, the creation of employment opportunities and the fostering of economic stability. Scripture Union's work closely aligned with these objectives, particularly through its vocational training initiatives, which aimed to equip individuals with the skills necessary to achieve financial independence. One of the most notable examples of Scripture Union's contribution to economic development was its investment in skill acquisition programs which got conducted during camp programmes and in fellowship groups. These programs, offered to young people in southeastern Nigeria, provided vocational training in practical fields such as tailoring, baking, carpentry and shoe-making. These skills not only addressed immediate employment needs but also provided a foundation for long-term economic self-reliance. Many individuals who completed these programs went on to establish their own businesses, creating economic opportunities for themselves and contributing to the local economy by offering products and services that met community needs.

In addition to vocational training, Scripture Union created opportunities for local economic growth through its investment in local infrastructure. The establishment of camps, such as the Camp of Hope in Okigwe (Imo state) and the Camp of Faith in Nteje (Anambra State) to mention a few, served as both spiritual and economic hubs for surrounding communities. These camps provided venues for spiritual gatherings, conferences and retreats, but they also created jobs in construction, catering, event management and hospitality. The economic impact of these camps extended beyond direct employment, as they also generated income for local businesses that supported their operations. Through these camps, Scripture Union promoted community based economic development while simultaneously contributing to the spiritual well-being of the people.

Furthermore, Scripture Union's funding for skills acquisition programs demonstrated its commitment to economic development. The organization, through its network of wealthy members, provided financial support for individuals showing promise in their vocational training. This financial support, often in the form of micro-grants or scholarships, helped recipients establish their own businesses or pursue further education. By doing so, Scripture Union created a cycle of empowerment that benefitted not only the individual but also the wider community,

promoting economic self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on external aid. Scripture Union's commitment to human capital development and local job creation reflected the World Bank's emphasis on long-term investments in economic stability. By focusing on both immediate economic opportunities and long-term self-sufficiency, Scripture Union's initiatives supported sustainable economic development in southeastern Nigeria.

Institutional and cultural factors played a crucial role in ensuring the relevance and sustainability of socioeconomic development initiatives. Scripture Union's work in southeastern Nigeria demonstrated a deep understanding of the importance of engaging with local cultural values and institutions. Scripture Union successfully integrated local cultural values into its initiatives, fostering trust and cooperation with community leaders, local churches and other stakeholders. This cultural sensitivity ensured the success of many of the organization's programs, as local communities were more likely to embrace initiatives that respected their traditions and priorities. By working in partnership with community leaders, Scripture Union ensured that its programs were contextually appropriate and had a lasting impact on the region. Institutional collaboration was another key element of Scripture Union's success. The organization worked closely with local governments, churches and other NGOs to amplify the reach and impact of its programs. These partnerships enabled Scripture Union to scale its initiatives, ensuring that they aligned with broader development goals in southeastern Nigeria. This collaborative approach enhanced the sustainability of the organization's efforts, ensuring that its programs continued to benefit the community long after the initial intervention.

Scripture Union's socioeconomic initiatives in southeastern Nigeria aligned closely with the broader concept of socioeconomic development, which emphasized the integration of social, economic, cultural and institutional factors. The organization's approach reflected the UNDP's human development framework, which focused on expanding the choices available to individuals and enabling them to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Scripture Union's efforts in education, skill acquisition and health awareness directly contributed to human development by providing individuals with the tools they needed to improve their lives.

Furthermore, Scripture Union's work embodied the World Bank's emphasis on long-term, sustainable economic growth. Through its vocational training programs, the construction of schools and camps and its investment in local infrastructure, the organization fostered local economic development while simultaneously promoting social and cultural well-being. Scripture

Union's comprehensive approach integrated spiritual guidance with practical support, ensuring that its initiatives were not only materially beneficial but also spiritually enriching. By addressing the interconnected needs of communities, Scripture Union exemplified the potential of faith-based organizations to contribute meaningfully to socioeconomic development. Its initiatives helped to reduce poverty, empower individuals and promote community cohesion, creating a foundation for long-term social and economic resilience.

So one can deduce that Scripture Union's socioeconomic development initiatives in southeastern Nigeria aligned seamlessly with the broader concepts of socioeconomic development, as outlined in the conceptual clarification. The organization's work in education, skill-building, health awareness and community empowerment reflected a comprehensive approach to development that addressed both material and spiritual needs. By fostering economic independence, creating employment opportunities and promoting social equity, Scripture Union played a pivotal role in the sustainable development of southeastern Nigeria. Through its faith-based approach, Scripture Union exemplified how religious organizations could contribute to the broader development agenda by providing comprehensive support that uplifted communities and fostered long-term prosperity. This alignment underscored the importance of integrated development strategies that addressed the complex needs of communities, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and resilient society.

## **Conclusion**

This study has offered a comprehensive exploration of Scripture Union's (SU) multifaceted impact in southeastern Nigeria, revealing how the organization has far exceeded its traditional role in spiritual guidance to become a significant force in socioeconomic development. Through a detailed examination of SU's history and evolving initiatives, particularly in the context of post-civil war recovery and societal rebuilding, this study highlights the critical contributions the organization has made in education, economic empowerment and community welfare. While many previous studies have primarily addressed SU's religious impact, this research successfully illuminates how the organization has shaped southeastern Nigeria through its diverse sociocultural and economic initiatives. By prioritizing education, vocational training and skills acquisition, SU has empowered individuals, facilitated self-reliance and helped to build stronger, more cohesive communities. The scholarship offered to students, the creation of local schools like King's Kids College and the vocational programs that helped individuals develop marketable

skills exemplify how SU has strategically aligned itself with the region's developmental needs. The organization's efforts in promoting social justice, equity and healthcare underscore its commitment to fostering not only spiritual growth but also practical, long-lasting social transformation. By addressing systemic challenges such as poverty, gender inequality and unemployment, SU has contributed to building a more equitable society. Its focus on marginalized groups, including women and youth, has helped ensure that all members of the community are empowered to participate fully in social and economic life.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources *Oral Interviews*

Name	Age	Occupation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Edozie Kingsley	63	Clergy	Enugu	5/10/2024
Enefiok Umorem	42	Clergy	Enugu	5/10/2024
Esokawu F. M. C.	65	Educationist	Enugu	16/10/2024
Eyeruroma Abraham	57	Clergy	Benin	7/10/2024
Nmalada O. C. J	66	Educationist	Benin	6/10/2024
Nwokocha Peters	62	Clergy	Okigwe	5/10/2024
Ogbonna Sunday	66	Clergy	Enugu	17/02/2025

### Official Publication/Letters/Reports

A Documentary for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of King's Kids Comprehensive Secondary School

Anyalechi, O., "Bravo, Our Scripture Union", in *Scripture Union Plumblin*, Vol. 1, No. 7, August 2007

Ayodele, G. Michael, "S.U Making Positive Impacts with AIDs Life skill Message", in *Scripture Union Plumblin*, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2008.

Chikodinaka, Emezie, "201 Surrender to Jesus at Amasiri Crusade", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2008.

Chikodinaka, Emezie, "2000 Sisters Attend Enugu Sisters Conference", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2008

Dean, John, "Celebrating the Scripture Union Council at 50" in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblines* Vol. 1, No. 7, August 2007

Edomwonyi, Irowa, "Funding the Gospel Work", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, Vol. 2, No. 8, 2008.

Emelumadu, Oby, *Approval of Application for the Extension of the HIV/AIDS Awareness Project in Schools*, June 1, 2006, Anambra State HIV/AIDS Programmes Development Project, Awka, Nigeria.

Emelumadu, Oby, *Invitation to the Scripture Union Onitsha Regional Coordinator for the 2008 World AIDS Day Celebration*, November 21, 2008, Anambra State HIV/AIDS Programmes Development Project, Awka, Nigeria.

Emmanuel, Alechenu, "SU Making Impact with AIDS: Life skill Message", in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblines*, Vol. 2, No. 8, 2008

Eze, C. N., *Response to the Request for the Permission to Carry out HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign and Establishment of Scripture Union Bible Club in Secondary Schools in Anambra State*, August 12, 2005, Governor's Office, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Fowe, Tunde., "Old Students Boost Schools Work", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, Vol. 16, 2016.

Onwukwe, D., "Scripture Union Nigeria: Past, Present and Future", in *Scripture Union Nigeria Plumblines*, Vol. 1, No. 7, August 2007

Nwachukwu, Chika, "Scripture Union Model Academy Débuts", in *Scripture Union Plumblines*, Vol. 2, No. 8, August 2008

Nzurumike, Sylvia, *Approval for the Production of Follow-up IEC Material*, June 1, 2006, Anambra State HIV/AIDS Programmes Development Project, Awka, Nigeria.

Scripture Union, *Reports on the Scripture Union Enlarged International Council Meeting 1979*, London: Ark Publishers, 1979.

Scripture Union, *The Constitution*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press, 2008

## **Secondary Sources**

### **Published Books**

Adebayo, A. Olufunke, *Social Protection in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects*, Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, 2018.

Adekuruoye, P., *Scripture Union Nigeria: Pilgrims Development Program*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2009.

Amotsuka, E., Akande W. and Adeyemo T., *The Word Legacy: Best of Mike Oye's Message in Print* Ibadan: Niv Nation Publishers, 2009

Briggs, K. S., *Raising a Godly Generation, Compendium Seminar Papers*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press, 2005.

Ekechi, F. K., *Missionary Enterprise and Revival in Igboland 1857-1914*, London: Frank Cass, 1971.

Ekpo, Etim Ekpo, *Unprofitable Servant*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2017  
Fowe,

Tunde, *Scripture Union (Nigeria) Aid for AIDs and Design for the Family*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press, 2005

Fox, Jonathan, *Social Protection in Africa: A Regional Review*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Giddens, A., Duneier M., Appelbaum R. P. and Carr D., *Introduction to Sociology*, Seagull 10th edition: Pearson, 2017

Hanks, Geoffrey, *60 Great Founders*, Kaduna: Evangel Publication, 2001

Hews, Michael, *A Tale of Two Visions*, Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2015

Iwe, Maduebibisi O, *Truth, Holiness and Tradition*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press, 2023

Maduako, D., Edomwonyi I., Egu G. and Onu D. M., *Flame of Fire, The Story of Scripture Union (Nigeria)*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2018

Mbanaso, A. U., *My Stewardship*, Owerri : Ark Publishers, 2005

Midgley, James, *Social Development: Theory and Practice*, California: Sage Publications, 2014

Nigel, Sylvester, *God's Word in a Young World: The Story of Scripture Union*, London: Scripture Union, 1984, pp 1-12.

Nnamani, N., *Acts of the Pilgrims: The History of Scripture Union Ministry in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Press, 2015.

Nwobia, U. H., *Entrepreneurship: The Wise choice*, Enugu: San Press, 2014.

Nwobia, U. H., *Wealth Creation*, Enugu: San Press, 2011.

Oha, E., *The Catalyst of the Gospel-Reflection on Revival and Reawakening, East of the Niger, 1970-2014, Scripture Union Nigeria Enugu Area Perspective*, Enugu: SAN Press, 2017.

Okafor, C. Raph, *Like a Mustard Seed*, Ibadan: Kola Johnson Publishers, 1985.

Oladeji, A. Oriyomi, *The Role of Scripture Union (Nigeria) in Equipping Churches for Missions* Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books.

Oladeji, A. Oriyomi, *Introducing Scripture Union Nigeria: A Nation Building Ministry*, Ibadan: Scripture Union Nigeria Press and Books, 2002.

Olupona, K. Jacob, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Paul, Y. Cho, *More than Numbers*, Lagos: Maranatha Foundation Books, 1984

Sanneh, Lamin, *West African Christianity, The Religious Impact*, New York: Mary Knoll, 1983.

Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom*, England: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Todaro, P. Michael and Smith C. Stephen, *Economic Development*, London: Pearson, 2015

United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020: The next frontier—Human development and the Anthropocene*, UNDP, 2020.

Willmer, W. K., *Money for Ministries*, USA: Scripture Union Publications Inc., 1989.

World Bank, *World Development Report 2022: Financing for an equitable recovery*, World Bank Publications, 2022

### **Journal Articles**

Adebayo, A. Olufunke, "Social Enterprises and Impact Investors in Nigeria." In *Social Enterprises and Impact Investing in Emerging Economies*, G. M. Smith and M. D. McManus, 45-67. New York: Springer, 2021

Ashafa, M. Abdullah, "Literature Review in History Research", in Aghalino O. Samuel, Okpeh O. Okpeh, Imbua L. David (eds.), *Historical Research*, Abuja: Herodotus Publishers, 2023.

Ibor, Manyo Erim Simon, Akpama Love Joseph and Asor Joseph, "Activities of Faith-Based Christian Organizations and the Economic Empowerment of Women in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria", *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*, 16(1), 2013

Nwaka, J. C., "Referencing Guide in Historical Research, in Aghalino O. Samuel, Okpeh O. Okpeh, Imbua L. David (eds.), *Historical Research*, Abuja: Herodotus Publishers, 2023.

Ogbogbo, R. N. Chris, "Use of Primary and Secondary Sources in Historical Writing", in Aghalino O. Samuel, Okpeh O. Okpeh, Imbua L. David (eds.), *Historical Research*, Abuja: Herodotus Publishers, 2023.

Inglehart, R. and Baker W. E, Modernization, cultural change and the persistence of traditional values, *American Sociological Review*, 65(1), 2000

### **Unpublished Work**

Nmalada O. C. J., "The Origin and Growth of Scripture Union Nigeria: A Case Study of Onitsha Region", an M. A. Thesis

### **Tertiary Sources**

World Wide Web

Adebayo, A. Olufunke, "Social Enterprises and Impact Investors in Nigeria." In *Social Enterprises and Impact Investing in Emerging Economies*, edited by G. M. Smith and M. D. McManus, 45-67. New York: Springer, 2021, accessed January 2025, [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-59454-0\\_3](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-59454-0_3).

Adedeji, Adebayo and Olufemi, A. Babarinde (eds.), "Perspectives on Nigeria's Economic Development", Volume II. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 2012, accessed January 2025, <https://www.africanbookscollective.com/books/perspectives-onnigeriaeconomicdevelopment-volume-ii>.

Akinwale, O. O. *The Church and Development: A Study of Social Transformation Activities of the Chapel of the Resurrection, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*. Ibadan: Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, 2017, Accessed January 2025, [https://www.academia.edu/43088015/THE\\_CHURCH\\_AND\\_DEVELOPMENT\\_A\\_STUDY\\_OF\\_SOCIAL\\_TRANSFORMATION\\_ACTIVITIES\\_OF\\_THE\\_CHAPEL\\_OF\\_THE\\_RESURRECTION\\_UNIVERSITY\\_OF\\_IBADAN\\_IBADAN\\_NIGERIA](https://www.academia.edu/43088015/THE_CHURCH_AND_DEVELOPMENT_A_STUDY_OF_SOCIAL_TRANSFORMATION_ACTIVITIES_OF_THE_CHAPEL_OF_THE_RESURRECTION_UNIVERSITY_OF_IBADAN_IBADAN_NIGERIA)

Kopp, M. Carol, " Development Economics: Definition and Types", Investopedia, Assessed December 28, 2024, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/development-economics.asp>.

Lamidi, Kazeem Oyedele and Philomena Ify Igbokwe, "Social Investment Programs in Nigeria: Impact and Challenges", *African Journal of Social Work*, 9(1), 2019, Accessed January 2025, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajsw/article/download/206270/194498>.


Olayiwola, A. A. "The Role of Christian Religious Organizations in Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria", *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 6(9), 2015, Accessed January 2025, <https://keffi.nsuk.edu.ng/bitstreams/97d255844c844be591af-f5a755905ce1/download>.

United Nations, "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", United Nations, Retrieved November 17, 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

WPHF/SUWA TRAINS WOMEN IN OGOJA ON SKILLS ACQUISITION, <https://www.suwa.org.ng/wphf-suwa-trains-women-in-ogoja-on-skills-acquisition/> 2025




APPENDIX 2



**ANAMBRA STATE ACTION COMMITTEE ON AIDS**  
(OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR)  
**WORLD BANK ASSISTED**

*State Secretariat Road Awka.*

**Team Project Team** 

048-551088      08037080814  
048-550513      08033237774  
048-550733

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2006

---

Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

The Project Manager,  
Scripture Union Nigeria,  
Onitsha

Sir,

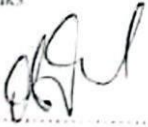
**RE: APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF THE PERIOD OF OUR PROJECT  
HIV/AIDS AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS**

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> May on the above subject matter.

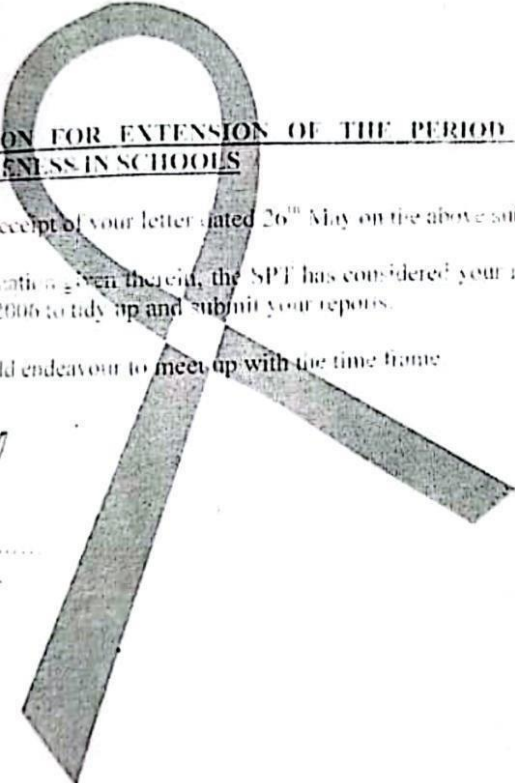
Based on the explanation given therein, the SPT has considered your request and have given you till the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 2006 to tidy up and submit your reports.

However, you should endeavour to meet up with the time frame.

Thanks



Dr Oby Emelumadu,  
Project Manager



APPENDIX 3

**GOVERNMENT OF ANAMBRA STATE OF NIGERIA**  
**STATE EDUCATION COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS**

AWKA

ANAMBRA STATE POST PRIMARY SCHOOL SERVICES COMMISSION



Educational Services Dept.,  
P.M.B. 5035  
AWKA

Your Ref \_\_\_\_\_

Our Ref ANSPPSSC/ESD/NIS/Vol. II/142

Date 12th August, 2005

The Regional Co-ordinator,  
Scripture Union Nigeria,  
114C Awka Road,  
P.O.Box 995,  
Onitsha.

Re: Permission to Carry out HIV/AIDS Awareness  
Campaign and Establishment of Scripture Union Bible CLUB  
in Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

C

I am directed to refer to the above subject matter and to request you to ensure that you do not denigrate other denominations in discharging this apostolate.

You are also requested to liaise with the **Officers** in charge of HIV/AIDS in the Ministry of Education in the persons of Mr. H.N. Umeh and Mrs. B.N. Ojoko to find out which areas they are covering so that you can reach those not already reached.

Eze, C.N.  
Director Ed.Serv.Dept.,  
For: Officer - in - Charge,  
PPSSC, Awka.

**Date:** Monday December 1, 2008  
**Venue:** Government House, Awka  
**Time:** 10.00 am

for   
Dr Oby Eneke Umadu,  
Executive Director,  
ANSACA

*Handwritten notes:*  
one - ...  
two weeks  
three  
CD  
with

APPENDIX 4



**ANAMBRA STATE HIV/AIDS PROGRAMME DEV. PROJECT.**

**(WORLD BANK ASSISTED)**

*State Secretariat Road Awka.*

eam  
Project Team

☎: 080 33743105  
080 45256606  
080 36676345.

12/05/06

*Date*.....

AN/SPT/COMM./VOL.2/052

The Project Manager,  
Scripture Union [Nigeria],  
Onitsha Region.

Sir,  
**APPROVAL FOR PRODUCTION OF FOLLOW-UP IEC MATERIAL**


Your letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 refers. Approval has been granted for the production of the follow-up material for students for HIV/AIDS awareness Programme in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Go through the write-up. rephrase areas pointed out and affect all the corrections. Include the three recommended logos: **World Bank**, **ANSACA** and **SU** logos and at the end of production before **distribution**:

- > Samples of the produced materials must be sent to the office for final vetting by the Communications Unit.
- > The whole work must be verified and certified by the Procurement Unit, State HIV/AIDS Programme Dev. Project (World Bank Assisted) before the approval to distribute is granted.

Items needed for the verification by the Procurement Unit are **Invoice** and **Delivery note**.

Thanks.

  
Sylvia Nzurunike,  
Communications Officer.

CC: Project Manager,  
State HIV/AIDS Programme Dev. Project,  
(World Bank Assisted).

APPENDIX 5



SHOT ON A3S  
UMIDIGI DUAL CAMERA