

9th Bi-annual Inter-House Sports of Yintab Private Academy

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Today, February 21, 2018, was the 9th bi-annual Inter-House Sports of Yintab Private Academy (YPA)- a school that started off from humble beginnings in a low-income part of Lagos in January 1990. My wife had been talking of wanting to stop teaching at the Federal College of Education (FCE) that produced teachers for the Primary School level. She wanted to be with kids.

As a University lecturer, we lived from hand to mouth. And there were needs to be met from children (3 at the time) parents, siblings, and the extended family. I had \$600 left in my savings account in the US at about October 1989. Convincing Tunde Odusanya, my late brother-in-law to rent a bungalow he owned in low-income Shogunle, for a school that his sister was pressuring about, I closed my account with Imperial Savings & Loans in Los Angeles, and repatriated the \$600 that was used to buy furniture and converted the bungalow into a school with my son and a cousin of his as the first students in January 1990.

YPA was one of the major beneficiaries of my 24 years stint with the UN. We bought the Shogunle property and built into a 2 story building and subsequently bought about 2 acres in Ikorodu and built it up from my salary and my wife taking no salary but plowing everything back into the compound that hosts the school. YPA was never meant to be money spinning and ran at material loss for over 20 years and appears to be trying to break even.

But today, I was happy to see the excitement of parents, old students and current children of both the Shogunle branch and Ikorodu at the Inter-House Sports event. Much has changed from when I was in Primary/Secondary School. The impact of the media on the organisers of the event was very clear. My parents were not involved during my time. But these parents were active participants who objected on occasions when officials appeared to have made a wrong decision. The officials had to respect the views of a participatory spectator group.

YPA had come first and second in football in Lagos in two recent years and was one of 45 schools that competed at a US Government and Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library jointly sponsored introduction of primary and secondary level introduction to artificial intelligence. YPA made it to the finals and came 5th in a competition with materially endowed elite schools. With this performance, one of the parents, Mr. Samuel Aliu, this month donated a robot to help prepare the children for the next competition. The Roborave club named the robot "Ara", a Yoruba word that means wonders.

With Prof. Funso Akere as chair of the event, accompanied by Prof. Ade Kukoyi and his wife Dr. Morenike Kukoyi, as well as my friend Bunmi Makinwa etc., the children had enough new role models outside of their teachers all of who represent integrity and service to mankind. It was pleasing to listen to a parent talk of many old students who are succeeding in the professions. In the end, what YPA has not contributed materially, it has in building young men and women who are holding their heads high and giving Nigeria a great name in professional undertakings.

