



EDUCATION

For 25 Cents a Day, Poor Nigerians Get a STEM Education

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Nigerian students who want to escape poverty can learn science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, for the cost of 100 naira, or about 25 cents, a day.

Faridat Bakare is a 12-year-old student at Knosk Secondary School in Abuja. She started in the school in 2020, a year after it opened. She wants to be an engineer.

In a technical lab at the school, she shows a design for a **solar**-powered car made from **cardboard** for her class project.

"I want to become an electrical engineer who works with robots and solar panels and all the connections of all the **snap circuits** and ... things like that," said Bakare. She lives with her mother and four **siblings** in a poor neighborhood in Abuja.

Knosk School runs largely on donations. The school currently has 82 students, but is expanding each year. School officials visit each family to establish whether they can pay for the cost of education. The amount could be as high as \$159 for a term.

Irene Bangwell, the founder of Knosk, is a former teacher. She said the idea of a science high school for poor children came to her eight years ago. At the time, she took her child to a hospital and heard a cleaner there telling another patient that her young daughter was also a cleaner instead of being in school.

Bangwell added, "When we decided to run the Knosk School, we had to ask ourselves what kind of education does (a) poor man's child need to break out of poverty."

She says she plans to set up more such schools in Nigeria.

At least 10.5 million children in Nigeria do not attend school. The United Nations said in January that is the highest rate in the world. Most affected are girls, children with disabilities and those from poor families.

Students at Knosk spend 75 percent of their time studying STEM. When they finish their studies, each student has to develop a design of something they can use or continue to develop after school. For the cost of 25 cents a day, students are given clothes, books and food.

Fausat Bakare is Faridat's mother. She believes her daughter's education at Knosk will help the family.

"I believe that she will wipe away my tears, all my suffering will end through her," Bakare said from her home as she selected cassava, a local vegetable, to sell at a market.

I'm Susan Shand.

Abraham Achirga of Reuters reported this story. Hai Do adapted the story for Learning English.

Words in this Story

solar - adj. producing by using the sun's light or heat

cardboard - n. stiff and thick kind of paper used for making boxes

snap circuits - n. pieces or parts that easily fit together

sibling - n. a brother or sister
