In 1995, Sister Oresoa Selo-Ojeme, PhD, left her comfortable life in Southern Nigeria to live on the streets of the capital city of Abuja, taking care of the poor and mentally ill. Through years of determination and hard work, Sr. Oresoa was able to move her ministry from under the city’s bridges to a permanent residence on the outskirts of Abuja. This ministry, named Anawim Home, offers shelter and opportunities for those most in need.

Now with residences and social programs in Nigeria and Ghana, Sister Oresoa and the order of nuns she founded, the Missionary Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor, have been known to care for up to 80 orphaned children, 30 mentally and physically disabled, and 10-15 pregnant young girls at any time.

In addition to their residence programs, Anawim Home provides education and youth programming to over 400 local children through the Anawim School and outreach programs in Nigeria. In Ghana, they provide care and resettlement services to ostracized elderly women and educational opportunities to girls who have lost their family support after refusing forced marriage. They also provide access to medical care, food, clothing, and adult skills education to hundreds of downtrodden, ill, and impoverished individuals both within and outside of their walls.

For more information, see: [www.hopeforwestafrica.org/anawim](http://www.hopeforwestafrica.org/anawim)

**Current Hope for West Africa Foundation and Anawim Projects**

**Anawim Administration Support**

Since 2015, the Hope for West Africa Foundation has worked with Anawim Home Sisters and staff to increase the capacity of the Anawim Home Administration Department. In building the administrative department, HFWA retained the services of an outside consultant, a highly competent staff member on loan from the Faith Alive Hospital (another HFWA partner), hired a Head of Administration, and supported the training of administrative staff and Sisters in finance and grant management skills. Solidification of this department has allowed the organization to take concrete steps towards sustainability and future growth of its social ministries through strengthened financial management, internal organizational coordination, and grants management.

With the administrative systems now in place, HFWA currently supports the salaries of seven full and part-time administration staff, including the new Head of Administration, a grants and project coordinator, an accountant and internal auditor. HFWA and Anawim home have agreed to the investment of $1,400 per month for a two-year period, near the end of which, metrics and progress will be assessed and the need for a further grant will be revisited. With staff dedicated to efficient organizational support, Sister Oresoa, her Sisters, and the project...
coordinator now have time to concentrate fully on their ministries to those most in need in Nigeria and Ghana.

**Anawim School and Scholarship Support**

Since the inception of her ministry, Sister Oresoa and the Sisters of Anawim Home have provided a home for orphaned children. Ten years ago, unhappy with the quality of the education the children were receiving at the local government schools, the Sisters formed a Nursery and Primary School, eventually growing to also include a Junior Secondary School (middle school). They recruited only qualified teachers and opened the doors to local neighborhood children whose small school fees have allowed the school to operate.

In 2015 and 2016, HFWA partnered with Nativity Church in Timonium, Maryland to build a new senior secondary school (high school) and boys’ dormitory. The Nativity School, now fully staffed with qualified teachers and government-certified physics, chemistry and biology labs opened its doors to underclassmen for the 2016/2017 school year. At the end of the year, 100% of the students passed all subjects in the national Junior School Certificate exams. Through the past year, the school has gone through a series of tests and requirements necessary to gain full accreditation by the Nigerian Ministry of Education. Having passed each requirement, the school will be fully accredited by December of 2017. This upcoming accreditation will ensure all students’ eligibility to take the National Senior School exams qualifying them for higher-level education.

Currently, there are 33 Anawim orphaned children attending the Anawim schools from Nursery through Senior Secondary. While school fees from the neighborhood children help to offset the costs of the Anawim children, the initial investments in the growing Senior Secondary School expectedly mean that the school will require extra support for the first few years. HFWA is working with Anawim Home to provide scholarship funds for the Anawim children, covering the costs of their school fees, books, supplies and uniforms. One year of school fees and all necessary supplies for one student ranges from $240 for a Nursery/Primary School student to $310 for a Junior Secondary School student to $405 for a Senior Secondary School student. **HFWA hopes to raise $10,200 to cover the cost of all Anawim students for one school year.**

**Boreholes/Water Projects**

In 2015, HFWA provided the support for boreholes in two of the Anawim residences; one in Kaduna, Nigeria and one in Yendi, Ghana, as well as the support to upgrade old piping in the main compound outside of Abuja, Nigeria. Each of these projects was necessary to ensure the safe and sanitary conditions of all Anawim residents by providing flushing toilets and water for washing. To ensure sustainability and proper operation, HFWA requests and pays for **routine yearly maintenance checks of the boreholes and pipes at a price of less than $100 per year.**
Additional Current Anawim Home Activities

The Missionary Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor currently care for residents in 4 different locations in Nigeria and one in Ghana. While the numbers of residents change constantly as people in need are brought to them, or as former children and young mothers no longer need support, the current residents of the Anawim Home compounds include:

- Mentally Ill: 23
- Aged: 1
- Young Mothers: 4
- Children: 58

Nigeria

The Missionary Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor spend their days providing care and support to those most in need within and outside of their walls. From bringing food and clothes to local villages and leper colonies, to providing medical and psychological care to the mentally ill, to helping the children with their homework, their work is constant. Some of their additional activities in Nigeria are listed here.

Anawim Clinic

Anawim Home boasts a small clinic on their main compound in Gwagwalada, outside of Abuja. Three of the Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor are trained nurses who care for the regular ailments of the residents of Anawim Home and their charges. A part time doctor attends to patients at the clinic on a schedule and is on call as needed. In addition to supporting Anawim Home residents, every Wednesday the clinic opens to provide medical support for women living with HIV.

Skills Classes

With Support from the Nigerian Government’s National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA), Anawim Home has established skills building schools, teaching marketable skills to over 100 local women per year. Local women self select into the program and are able to decide between learning catering and cooking, sewing, knitting, hair braiding and bead making. Upon graduation, the women are given the supplies to start a small business or join others in their already existing operations.

Microcredit Activities with Local Women

In 2015, HFWA provided a grant of $8,530 and guided the staff tin establishing a 0% interest microcredit program in which 68 women received between $100 and $140 to establish or grow their businesses. These women had self-selected into 4 different “Trust Groups” in which each woman acts as each other’s collateral. Women have been able to purchase and sell more supplies, increasing their income, or branch into secondary businesses, increasing their market exposure as well as income.

With a positive response from the loan recipients and the community, and with higher than a 95% repayment rate, the Microloan project is now on its 3rd round of
loans with local women using the same funds that had been repaid by the previous groups of women.

**Brothel Fellowship**

Two mornings per week, dedicated sisters visit each of the brothels in town. They never bring judgment, but always arrive with smiles, songs, fellowship and compassionate conversation.

**Ghana**

In 2014, the Bishop of Yendi, in Northern Ghana, invited the Missionary Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor to expand into Northern Ghana so that they might assist local vulnerable women. In addition to becoming a religious order attached to the Church in Yendi, the Sisters have established themselves as a force for good in the community. While some of the sisters support the others by teaching the children in the local schools, the rest spend their days providing social and medical support to those in the surrounding communities most in need:

**“Witch Villages”**

Since arriving in Ghana, the Sisters have worked with 3 camps comprised completely of elderly women, some of whom are caring for their young relatives. These women have been ostracized from their own villages after being labeled “witches” for what others would consider medical or psychological reasons. Providing, as necessary, food, medical care and friendship to the women, the Sisters have been tirelessly working to reconnect and resettle them with their families. Starting with hundreds of older women in 2014, there are now only 54 women still in the camps yet to be resettled.

**Girls Refusing Forced Marriage**

In Northern Ghana, tradition dictates that young girls are often still expected to accept forced marriages. If they refuse, they often face being ostracized by their families. The Missionary Sisters of the Poorest of the Poor are working with the Bishop and local schools to provide these girls with a home and education. Thus far, they have helped to place 156 of these girls in homes or boarding schools. These numbers include 42 who have been placed in Primary School, 20 in Junior Secondary School, and 56 in Senior Secondary School.