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1 THE ESSENCE

Long before such activities became popularly known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and long before it became essential for companies to engage in CSR as part of their brand building agenda, First Bank of Nigeria Plc had been making regular, substantial contributions to the wellbeing of grassroots communities and Nigerians.

FirstBank’s CSR strategy reflects our commitment to being socially, economically, and culturally responsible. With a resolve to provide sustainable solutions to the diverse developmental challenges that Nigerians encounter on various fronts, the Bank pursues constructive engagements and mutual partnerships with the recipient stakeholders, through a user-defined needs identification system.

FirstBank’s CSR is accentuated by our sustained aspiration to lead the industry by example not just in the provision of the best products, services and developmental assistance for promoting the individual and common good, but also in maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance, accountability and responsiveness to our internal and external stakeholders.

Through our CSR initiatives, we provide targeted support for education and youth development, grassroots sports development, healthcare, arts and culture, entrepreneurial and economic development, as well as sustainability of the environment.

2 EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The advancement of education and youth development has continued to receive ample attention in the Bank’s CSR initiatives. These include the FirstBank Annual Undergraduate Essay Competition for students in all universities and polytechnics in Nigeria and the Annual Secondary School Quiz Competition. In 2008, the Bank increased the prizes. Notably, the top three winners of the Essay Competition were offered automatic employment by the Bank upon graduation. Both competitions are long-lasting initiatives to promote intellectual development through healthy academic competition among secondary and tertiary school students nationwide.

Another key component of the Bank’s intervention in education is University Endowments. The total value of the FirstBank Universities Endowment in 15 federal universities now stands at over ₦350 million. These endowments were boosted with strategic projects which include:

- commitment of ₦50 million to the construction of the Faculty of Social Science Building, University of Port Harcourt;
- ₦28.7 million for the construction of a Lecture Hall at the Federal University of Technology, Minna;
- ₦38.4 million expended so far on the construction of a 500-seater Lecture Theatre at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; and
- another ₦3.4 million released as final payment for the construction of the School of Dentistry Building in the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, which cost a total of ₦55 million.

Our Brand Pillars

LEADERSHIP

Responsibly managed companies tend to be more sustainable over the long term. But sustainable growth is not simply a by-product of effective risk management – it also comes from being a good corporate citizen. At FirstBank we firmly believe in playing our part in society, especially by contributing to the development of Africa where we have our roots.



Faculty of Social Science Building, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

This new Faculty of Social Science Building, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, was constructed under the FirstBank Universities Endowment strategic projects initiative, to provide much needed infrastructure in Nigerian universities.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Targeted support

FirstBank's CSR initiatives focus on development in priority areas, including education, health and welfare.

The Bank provided ₦24.6 million for the construction of the administrative block of Loyola Jesuit Memorial College Port Harcourt and ₦10 million to support the construction of the Biomedical Research Centre of Babcock University, Ilesha Remo. In promoting intellectual discourse amongst the youth, the Nigeria Leadership Initiative received ₦23.8 million for its 2008 NLI Future Leaders Seminar & Award Dinner, ₦10 million for the Bank's partnership with Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE), ₦5 million for the SIFE Nigeria's delegation to the Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) World Cup 2008 in Singapore, and ₦6 million sponsorship of the Centenary Lecture of King's College Lagos.

Also, in the last financial year the Bank initiated the process for recruiting executive trainees, through which hundreds of fresh graduates are employed annually as part of its programme to promote youth development. In this vein, FirstBank stands out as probably the biggest employer of this genre of employees in the country.

3 HEALTH AND WELFARE DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, ₦50 million was donated to Lagos State Government towards building a medical centre for the people of Lagos, ₦14 million for the Free Eye Camp of the Zakkah and Husbi Commission, Kano State, ₦7.5 million for an ambulance bus donated to the University College Hospital, Ibadan, ₦1.4 million for the celebration of World Day for Safety & Health at Work 2008 organised by Federal Ministry of Labour & Productivity, ₦1.8 million contributed to the sponsorship of the 2009 Conference of the Paediatric Association of Nigeria, and ₦1 million towards the construction of the Officers Quarters and Clinic of the Mobile Police Force.

Support was also provided for the annual celebrations of the Sickle Cell Club, Lagos Chapter, the Veterans Walk for Peace organised by Nigerian Legion, the Autism Awareness Day Celebration & Defeat Autism in Nigeria Project Launch organised by OLG Health Foundation & Autism Centre Port Harcourt, the Year 2008 Disability Week organised by National Handicap Carers Association of Nigeria, the NDLEA Officers Memorial Fund and Red Ribbon under the auspices of Partnership for a Drug Free Nigeria, the African Refugees Foundation and the Association of Resident Doctors 2008 Orthopaedic Week.



Support for Health and Welfare

Eileen Hopkins and Heidi Al-Askary, facilitators from the United Kingdom, at a training workshop on Understanding Children on the Autism Spectrum, sponsored in Abuja and Lagos by Zamarr Institute with sponsorship from FirstBank.

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4 SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Sports development continues to be a flagship focus area in the Bank's CSR strategy, with a reported commitment of ₦91.2 million for the construction of the NUGA VIP Centre, University of Nigeria Nsukka for the university's successful hosting of the Nigeria University Games (NUGA 2008) in December 2008, reputed to be the best NUGA Games so far, ₦20 million to Kaduna State Government in support of its hosting of the 2008 National Sports Festival, and ₦2 million to the Abia State contingent to the same Festival.

The Bank also kept up its traditional tournament sponsorships. The 47th Lagos Amateur Open Golf Championship organised by the Golf Section of Ikoyi Club 1938 was sponsored for ₦18.6 million, sponsorship and maintenance of Hole Nine at Ikoyi Club Golf Course for ₦1.2 million, the Georgian Cup of the Kaduna Polo Club for ₦6 million, and the Dala Hard Court Tennis Championship for ₦5.8 million. There was also support for the 1st U-16 Emeka Anyaoku Cup Final/Closing Ceremony and Fund Raising for Mini Stadium, the J. K. Randle Swimming Competition, and the Lagos Country Club's Kiddies/Children Sports Festival.

Under the auspices of the King's College Lagos Old Boys Association, there was support for the school's 88th Annual Interhouse Athletics Competition and the 16th Annual Interhouse Athletics Competition of St. Saviour's Schools Lagos. Folawiyo Jinadu Adisa, a physically challenged athlete, also received sponsorship to participate in the All England Open Badminton and German International Tournaments.

5 ARTS AND CULTURE

FirstBank provided support for the advancement of African cultural heritage through the provision of ₦150 million for the Cross River State Christmas Carnival, ₦15 million for the Royal Durbar Event of the Abuja Carnival, ₦8.6 million for the Maiden edition of Omen'Igbo, a Pan-Igbo Tourism and Cultural Fiesta, ₦5 million for the construction of the Owa-Obokun Palace, and ₦2.5 million for Iloko-Ijesha Town Hall Youth Development Centre. The Bank also provided support to the Zuma Film Festival, the Otuide Cultural/Musical Fiesta, the EEBI Epe Festival 2009, the University of Lagos Africaribbean Festival and the Cultural Week of St. Gregory's College, Ikoyi, all in the noble bid to promote our Nigerian and African-orientated cultural heritage.



Sports sponsorship

Among the many deserving cases supported this year is Folawiyo Jinadu Adisa, a physically challenged badminton player sponsored by FirstBank to compete abroad.



Support for Education and Youth Development

The top three winners in the 2008 FirstBank Annual Undergraduate Essay Competition with Mr. J. M. Ajekigbe, the Bank's former MD/CE (first right) and Lt.-Gen. Garba Duba (rtd.), a Director of the Bank.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Partnership

We work with a broad range of partners in order to direct our sponsorship funds towards those most in need.

6 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The promotion of entrepreneurship, professional, corporate and national economic development featured significantly in our CSR scheme, with ₦34.2 million to the Nigerian Economic Summit Group for the Nigerian Economic Summit, ₦25 million for the Investors Road Show of Nigerian Gas Masterplan Infrastructure Blueprint in London and Singapore organised by Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, ₦25 million for the South-South Economic Summit, ₦20 million for the maiden edition of Nigeria CEO Forum organised by BusinessDay Newspapers with Global Management Consultants and McKinsey & Co, ₦11.8 million to the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission for the sponsorship of a Business Investment Forum in Brazil, and ₦11.6 million to the World Economic Forum for sponsorship of the World Economic Forum Summit.

The Seminar on Trade Capacity Building Programme on Exporting to the United States: AGOA and Beyond was sponsored with ₦11.1 million, the 14th Lagos Economic Summit ₦5 million, the International Business Conference of Foreign Investment Network ₦10.5 million, the International Conference on Food Security ₦10 million, the Nigerian Infrastructure Summit ₦10 million, the 2008 Gateway Trade Fair, Abeokuta ₦3 million, the 4th Economist Conference by the Economist Magazine ₦4.6 million, and the Third Annual Opportunity Nigeria Investment Conference organised by Nigerian British Chamber of Commerce ₦2.5 million.

The development of professional bodies also benefited from this field of sponsorships, with ₦7.5 million for the 38th Annual Accountants Conference organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, ₦6.5 million for the ELAN 6th National Leasing Conference organised by the Equipment Leasing Association of Nigeria, ₦5.6 million for the Institute of Directors Nigeria 2008 Annual Fellows Evening, ₦5.3 million for the Corporate Nigeria 2009 organised by Corporate Guides, ₦3 million for the 40th Annual Conference of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management, and ₦1 million for the 2nd National Forum of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria.

Ample support was also extended to the 2nd Leg Women Bankers Forum organised by Association of Women Bankers of Nigeria, the Honorary International Investors Council Meeting by Nigerian Investment Promotion Council, the Annual General Scientific Meeting organised by Medical Women Association of Nigeria, the Annual Public Lecture of NIPR 19th AGM/PR Week 2008, the International Conference of Independent Shareholders Association, the African Energy Forum 2008 by Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the annual entrepreneurial award of Fate Foundation, the Renewal of Partnership for Business Leadership Programme organised by Leap Africa, and the International Conference on Good Governance and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria.



Support for Sports Development

Ultramodern VIP/Senior Staff Club Centre at The University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), donated by FirstBank for the hosting of the Nigeria University Games by UNN in December 2008.

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7 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Bank provided in recognition of the need for adequate security and an enabling environment for economic progress, ₦20 million for the People Police Marathon – Race Against Crime, ₦5.9 million for five officers of the Nigeria Police to attend the 115th Conference of Police Chiefs, and ₦1.3 million for sponsorship of the First National Conference on Cybercrime. Also, the Bank provided five patrol vans worth ₦16.8 million to the Anambra State Government, three patrol vans valued at ₦12.8 million to the Enugu State Government and five patrol vans worth ₦17.5 million for the Imo State Government security initiative.

The cause of environment sustainability also continued to receive the Bank’s attention, with the donation of ₦9 million to the Lagos Millennium Group on the Environment (LIMGE) in support of the Lagos Central Business District Rebirth Agenda programme, additional ₦4.1 million to sustaining the beautification and landscaping project of the Costain Roundabout in Lagos to which the Bank has been committed for a while, ₦1million for the Physical Planning & Urban Development of Lagos State, as well support for the 2008 World Habitat Day celebrations.

The additional sponsorships and donations made during the period under review are contained in the table within the Report of the Directors on page 77.



Grassroots

With a presence in many locations in the country, FirstBank combines grassroots understanding and a global perspective. Both are vital in contributing to the nation’s development.



Support for Beautification of the Environment

The Costain Roundabout Beautification initiative, an environmental sustainability project of FirstBank.