

HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA

ONILEMO COMMUNITY

NIGERIA | IBADAN REGION

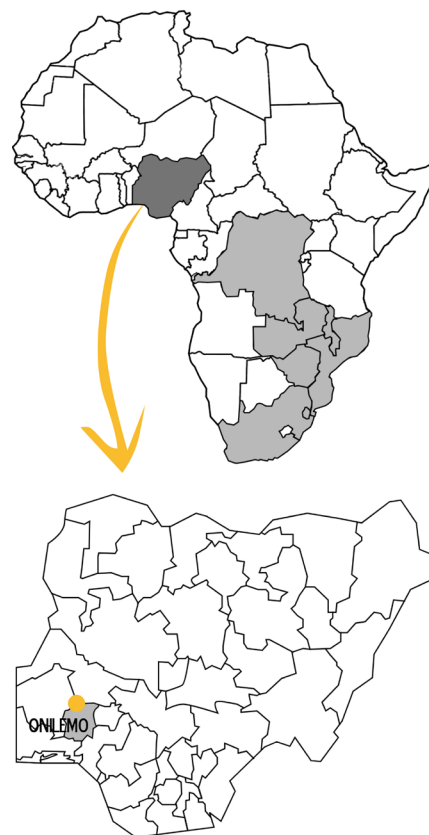
Far into the bush in Nigeria is a rural community called Onilemo, where there is a lack of access to basic government services such as health-care facilities and schools. There is a clinic in a neighbouring community but it is a long walk. In the rainy season the river floods, making it dangerous and near impossible to cross. Many people find work growing and harvesting the natural resources in their community like oil from palm trees, cassava and pepper. While people try to sell their goods in the local market, this rarely provides enough for their families.

Within Onilemo idol worship runs deep and many people participate in the practice of witchcraft and ancestral worship. Additionally, there are many Muslim families living there and the good news of Jesus is not commonly heard.

In 2022, the local Hands at Work team in Lagos was looking to expand their work in Nigeria, committed to their care of the most vulnerable children. When Toyin, a member of the Lagos team, shared this dream with her mother, she mentioned other places around the Ibadan area that were incredibly vulnerable. As they walked, they went through a series of communities, but none of them felt like the place where God was leading, but upon entering Onilemo the vulnerability was obvious. This was where God was calling them to start caring for children.

In Onilemo they connected with Mama Bole, who was already active in her community, visiting people in their homes, praying over them and starting a community school. It was clear that she had a heart to serve. As Toyin shared the vision of Hands at Work, she was eager to be involved and introduced Toyin and the team to the local chief and a number of key people in Onilemo. From there, they began mobilising other ladies within the community who, although vulnerable themselves, expressed a desire to do something to help the children in the community. As they visited their homes and shared about Jesus in this predominantly Muslim community, the team of Care Workers began to grow. It so happens that many of the Care Workers are also the Primary Caregivers of the children being cared for.

Once a team of Care Workers was mobilised, the Onilemo Community Based Organisation began officially serving 50 of the most vulnerable children in April 2023.



Children Currently Supported **50**
 Number of Care Workers **5**
 Coordinator Name **Mama Bola**
 Basic Services Started In **2023**