



## FoCus On: Fit To Achieve Sickle Cell Foundation, Nigeria

### Quick Facts About FTA Foundation

**Founder:** Sickle Cell Warrior June Okochi (*left*)

**Location:** Nigeria

**Focus:** Rural SCD Support/Awareness

**Instagram:** [https://instagram.com/fittoachieve?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link](https://instagram.com/fittoachieve?utm_medium=copy_link)

**Website:** <https://www.fittoachieve.org>

**Email:** [fittoachieveuk@gmail.com](mailto:fittoachieveuk@gmail.com)

**I**s one thing to be born with a lifelong debilitating condition such as sickle cell and have the right support, whether it's free specialist care, a decent home, support in employment and education – which can improve one's health outcomes, prevent early mortality and provide a near-to-decent quality of life.

It is another kettle of fish entirely, to be born with sickle cell into poverty with no access to basic needs as listed above.

Nigeria, a country with the highest prevalence of sickle cell in the world, where 17 babies are born per hour with sickle cell, is also listed as one of the poorest countries in the world with 86.9 million people living

realities – where children die prematurely as a result of sickle cell complications and a lack of access to healthcare.

This is why the *Fit to Achieve Sickle Cell Foundation* was established, with our vision around supporting children and families living with sickle cell from severely deprived rural areas in Nigeria.



Jephthah Jerry

in extreme poverty (2018), it can be excruciatingly tough to survive daily if you live with sickle cell disorder.

These are the realities of many families

Sickle cell disease doesn't just impact the affected individual, it can wreak havoc on the lives of those around them also. Children up to a certain age rely on their care givers to support, assist and help them manage their condition. This can be especially difficult in rural and under-served communities with



**Jephthah had dropped out of school because of the stigma of a chronic leg ulcer, which had deteriorated into an open wound**



with many economic challenges.

By providing education and awareness, health programs and aid to those impacted by sickle cell, the *Fit to Achieve Foundation* encourages warriors to lead a healthy life despite their condition.

FTA or F2A as it is often called, was founded in 2015, by June Okochi, who herself suffers from sickle cell and who wanted to use her own experience to help, support and educate others.

Providing much needed supplies in malaria prevention

kits, wellness packs, home packs for the management of sickle cell, folic acid and pain relief medication, including on-the-ground work by the team, F2A has helped change the lives of those within these communities through targeted and proactive outreach.

Jephthah Jerry is a 17-year-old suffering with sickle cell disease. She had dropped out of school because of the stigma of a chronic leg ulcer, which had deteriorated into an open wound. Mentally and emotionally, she had struggled all her life, with her family unable to afford the medicine and care she needed or the

support that was required when she would go into crisis.

F2A was able to identify Jephthah through the sickle cell screening program offered and through donations, the Foundation was able to pay for Jephthah's treatment and also support her ongoing health care, giving her a chance at returning to school to continue with her education.

F2A is keenly aware of the added demands of offering support to those younger warriors who are still struggling to understand what their condition is and how they can overcome it.