



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

October 11, 2022

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Access2Success builds hope for kids in Nigeria

by **Kim McMillan**

Guest speaker Andrew Lovedale is the President and Founder of Access to Success (A2S), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to providing sustainable programs that generate positive change for Nigerian children and their communities. The organization is based in Benin City, Nigeria where Andrew grew up.

He shared his story about growing up in Nigeria and, after losing his father, he wasn't sure he would have the opportunity to go to school. He watched his mom sell everything down to the last contents of her jewelry box, but faith prevailed and he was able to get educated in England, then go on to gain a scholarship to play Division 1 basketball at Davidson College and major in Political Science. It was former head coach Robert "Bob" McKillop who offered him a spot on the team and where Andrew learned the value of community and began to take shoes back to Nigeria.

The cost of a pair of shoes was more than his mother made recalls Andrew. Back then he had only one pair of shoes that he played in, wore to parties and attended church that maybe lasted a maximum of three months wear. He said his greatest discovery was the equipment room where a pair of shoes awaited him and from that point on it was remembering his friends in Nigeria that the shoe collecting began. He would ask teammates for their shoes. In the first year, he took 20 pairs of shoes back home, in the second year, 40 pairs and eventually, with the support of the Davidson community, sent 10,000 pairs of shoes and raised \$15,000 to help start A2S. He thought he would never run a nonprofit, but because of how the Davidson community really "loved on me, I learned how you don't give them less than what you've been given."

Andrew's philosophy is the gifts of love and consistency and being there

until a child sees a light at the end of the tunnel that makes the difference. Nigeria has the most people out of school, not because there's a shortage of schools but a shortage of educators. Teachers only come to administer tests, so much of the ability to learn is left to the student.

Andrew's vision for A2S is that each individual in Nigeria finds a dignified path to a successful life and is empowered to live out God's plan for a future filled with hope. A2S provides a hot meal to students and gets them engaged in ways they never could without providing structure. Currently, there are 50 students with the goal of having 240 attend the After-School Academy. Twelve years later, A2S continues to invest in children and together the students have "built with their hands" a youth center to serve and create hope for future generations of students.

Today, there are 68 kids at universities across Nigeria because of the structure A2S provides. There are 250 entrepreneurs helping job seekers become job creators. "Children are able to think and create and now have mentors," says Andrew.

A testament to the success of A2S is the ability of students to think collaboratively as demonstrated in a recent Access to Pitch competition where a group of A2S scholars has designed a way to extend the shelf life of a commonly consumed Nigerian food called FooFoo. Now in the process of getting certifications, the students will receive a \$6,000 injection grant to fund the project.

Andrew tells Davidson grads how they sent him on a path that he never expected, but is truly grateful.

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/759928041>
The speaker's introduction begins at 25:35 minutes.