



PWAN'S POLITICAL MENTORSHIP AND BOOTCAMP PHOTOBOOK Vol. 2

 **NED** | NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR
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SUPPORTING FREEDOM AROUND THE WORLD



RULE OF LAW AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE
also known as **PARTNERS** WEST AFRICA NIGERIA

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POLITICAL MENTORSHIP AND BOOTCAMP

PHOTOBOOK



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 - 6

- Acknowledgment
- Foreword
- About the Project and boot camp

9 - 27

- Info-graphics of Women Representation in Politics
- Meet the mentors
- Meet the mentees

28 - 37

- Mentee's Perspective
- Way Forward
- Gallery



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The results and appointments following the 2019 general elections, led to a decline in the representation of women at the Federal, State and Local levels of government compared to the previous administration. 2,970 women were on the 2019 electoral ballot, representing only 11.36% of nominated candidates. Of this number, 60 women are currently in office representing about 4% of elected officials. This is a decline from the 2015-19 period, where women formed 5.65% of elected officials.

Since the re-emergence of democracy, Nigeria has struggled with attaining gender affirmative action in politics and governance. It is based on this that PWAN has worked over the years to understand the root causes of the exclusion of women in politics, and address them through awareness creation, capacity building for women, and mentorship.

PWAN appreciates the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) towards promoting the advancement of Nigeria's democracy particularly the political inclusion and representation of women in governance in Nigeria.

We appreciate Hon. Aishatu J. Dukku, member the Federal House of Representatives for her efforts in promoting inclusive governance and grooming young women for political representation. We acknowledge the valuable contributions of Hajiya Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Commissioners for Women Affairs of Gombe and Ogun states

towards PWAN's political awareness campaigns. We also appreciate the efforts and commitment of Dr Blessing Nwagba, Hon. Favour Tomomewo, Hon. Atinuke Bello, and Hon. Adaora Onyechere in mentoring young women for early political participation under our programme.

To our project partners YIAGA Africa and Women Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), and other partners in the civil society space, Crystal Justice Initiative for Legal Advancement (CJILA), Initiative for Research Innovation, Advocacy, and Development (IRIAD), National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), and a host of others. Thank you for your valuable partnership.

The efforts of the project team led Ms. Tolu Ojeshina - Program Manager, Citizen's Security are commended for her leadership and dedication towards actualization of the project. Members of the team- Kpeta Toyo, Ijeoma Igwe, Charity Onwubiko, Vivian Ojomu, Solape Nathaniel and Oge Mohanye, are also appreciated for their commitment and successful implementation of the intervention. The efforts of the Executive Director of PWAN- 'Kemi Okenyodo towards the successful completion of the project is also greatly appreciated.

The photobook is dedicated to all women who aspire to leadership positions and political office; PWAN will continue to work with other stakeholder to create an enabling environment for political inclusion in Nigeria.

FOREWORD



It was really a wonderful experience for me participating at Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) Leadership and Mentorship Program for Young Women in Politics. I have always believed in giving Younger Women an opportunity to participate in Politics through capacity building,

Networking and mentorship.

This Political and Mentorship program is a one stop program designed to give aspiring young women politicians the relevant knowledge and skills required to 'swim with the sharks'. There is a huge under representation of women at all levels of decision making in Nigeria, achieving gender parity in Political participation is a task that must be accomplished.

With my work over the years on increasing women's political participation, I most sincerely endorse the program as I find it a strong tool in navigating all the challenges hindering equal participation of women. As we move closer to the end of the sustainable development goals in 2030, women's equal participation and leadership in political life are essential to achieving the SDGs.

I thank the organizers for the opportunity to deliver the keynote address as I look forward to more collaboration with our Organization, Women in Politics Forum.

Ebere Ifendu Esq
President, Women in Politics Forum (WIPF)



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Beyond Voting: Increasing Women's Participation in the Political Process is a project that aims to strengthen women's capacity to participate in politics and shape government policies in Nigeria. From conception, the intervention has been supported by National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and three phases have been implemented successfully.

The project began in 2018 with an assessment of the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria to determine the push factors that affect the representation of women in politics and governance. The factors that came out strongly from all zones are patriarchy, cultural biases, party politics, high cost of elections, gaps in the electoral law and the Constitution, amongst others. Significantly, lack of mentorship by female politicians and capacity gaps affects the successive involvement of women in politics and this stalls the advancement of Nigeria's democracy.

Those findings were utilized to engage in the second phase of the project in 2019, where the factors were further reflected in the 2019 general elections. A post-mortem of the elections conducted by PWAN showed that out of 2,970 women who contested, only 62 got elected to offices across the Federal and State levels.

Post the election, new appointments were made across Federal and State cabinets and only 4 female Ministers out of 44 were appointed at the Federal level and 90 women while the men were 520 at the state level. PWAN began to monitor the performances of women elected and appointed to various positions in selected states in the country – Gombe,

Ogun, Taraba, Ebonyi and FCT were assessed. The assessment revealed the clampdown on women in governance, stalling their contributions to growth and development in the country. This informed the key messaging for PWAN's strategic engagements and campaigns at the grassroots (including engaging traditional leaders) to raise awareness on women's political inclusion in the four states. In this phase also, PWAN organized its maiden Political Leadership and Mentorship Program for young women across the country, in 2020. Fifteen young women across the geopolitical zones were trained and mentored towards shaping the political landscape soon.

While the year 2020 marked a new decade and turning point for women's involvement in decision-making and governance, PWAN went on to implement the third phase of the project which contributed towards building resiliency on gender equality and empowerment of women and emphasizing the urgent need for Affirmative Action on women's representation in the country, looking at the forthcoming general elections in 2023. PWAN sustained the grassroots political awareness campaigns, expanded the Political leadership and Mentorship Program where thirty young women were trained, mentored, and prepared to contest elections and engage in governance. To contribute to addressing capacity gaps of women in governance, PWAN trained and mentored thirteen female political appointees across Nigeria, equipping them to set the tone for more inclusive leadership. In the next phase of the project, PWAN will further expand its approach by engaging with political parties to create opportunities for men and women to participate equally.

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE STATE AND FEDERAL HOUSES OF ASSEMBLY



Only 7 women recently occupy Senatorial Seats out of 109 at the National Assembly



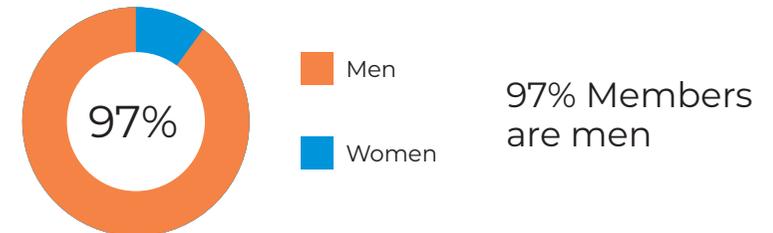
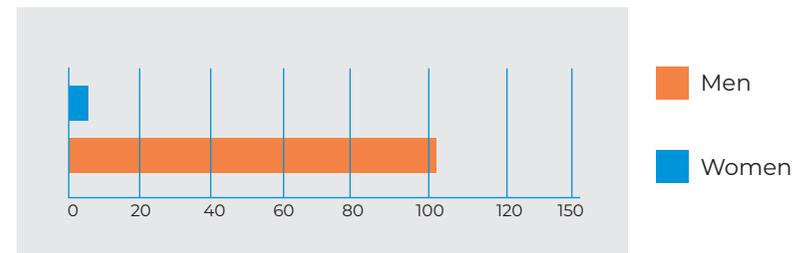
In the House of Representatives women occupy 11 seats out of 360 seats



Of the 29 Deputy Governor positions in the 2019 elections, women currently occupy only 4.



There are 944 seats in the State House of Assembly across Nigeria and Women occupy only 40 seats.



STATES WITH FEMALE DEPUTY GOVERNORS
Enugu, Kaduna, Ogun & Rivers

Out of 1920 women that contested for political positions across Nigeria, only 62 women won their respective positions, giving women 5.6% representation on all National and State levels.



ABOUT THE BOOT CAMP

A mapping conducted by the Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) to determine the reasons for the low representation of Nigerian women in governance showed a lack of mentorship and support for women. Other factors such as patriarchy, cultural bias, and high cost of running for elections in Nigeria also contribute to the exclusion of women in politics in the country

Between 2020 and 2021, PWAN commenced efforts to bridge the gap of lack of mentorship and support for women. In 2020, PWAN held its first Political and Mentorship boot camp for young women with political aspirations; the cohort consisted of 15 young women from different geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

In 2021, a second cohort of 30 mentees were enrolled into Political and Mentorship boot camp for young women. PWAN organized an intensive 3-days training session with support from project partners YIAGA Africa, and Women's Right

Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA). The young ladies were trained on the ethics of politics, fund raising, understanding the electoral system, legislative processes, media, and communication amongst others. After the training period, the young women were assigned to mentors, who have vast experience in politics and were able to provide support to the mentees on navigating the political terrain in Nigeria. The 6-month mentorship period involved online and physical meetings, seminars, and trainings.

PWAN will continue to develop creative solutions to the challenge of political exclusion of women in Nigeria and promote the involvement of young ladies in politics and governance.

MENTOR'S PROFILE



MEET THE MENTORS



HON. AISHA DUKKU



HON. ATINUKE BELLO



HON. ADAORA ONYECHERE



HON. BLESSING NWAGBA



HON. FAVOUR TOMOWEMO



AMB. KEMA CHIKWE

MENTORS' PROFILE



HON. AISHA DUKKU

An indigene of Dukku Local Government Area of Gombe State, AISHATU JIBRIL DUKKU was born on 18th December 1963 at Kaduna, northwestern Nigeria. She started formal education at Central Primary School, Gombe, from 1970 to 1976,

and then proceeded to Federal Government Girls College Bauchi where she obtained the General Certificate of Examination (GCE) in 1981.

Later in 1982, she obtained admission in Bayero University, Kano where she graduated in 1986 with a combined honour of Arts Degree in Education with specialization in English language.

Aishatu Dukku started her working career as a classroom teacher of English language at Government Secondary School, Gombe in 1987. In February 1988, she was appointed by the then Bauchi State Government as English Language teacher with Government Girls Science Secondary School, Doma, Gombe State.

She was Vice-Principal (Academics) of Pilot Junior Secondary School, Gombe in 1990. From 1990 to 1994, she was seconded to Women Commission as Women Development Officer, Gombe State. She was de-seconded to Ministry of Education, Bauchi as Vice-Principal (Academics) of Government Girls Science Secondary School, Doma, Gombe State from 1994 to 1996.

Aishatu Jibril Dukku was redeployed to Gombe State and appointed Principal, Gandu Junior Secondary School, Gombe in 1996. In 1997, the school was upgraded, and she was appointed pioneer Principal, Government Day Secondary School, Gandu.

She was appointed first and pioneer Principal, Federal Government Girls College, Bajoga, Gombe State from May 1999 to March 2006.

In March 2006, she became Federal Inspector of Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Inspectorate Service, Gombe, a position she held till May 2007.

MENTORS' PROFILE



HON. ATINUKE BELLO

Hon Atinuke Bello was born on 2nd December, 1985. She studied Computer Economics at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye. She had a brief spell at First Bank Plc before proceeding into private business.

She has continued to provide efficient representation, strong legislation, quality leadership, active participation at plenary, and continuous social and welfare programmes for the people with keen interest in the inclusion of women in government, youths and people with disabilities.

Not stopping at that, Hon. Atinuke Bello who is also the chief whip of the house has not for once stopped engaging youths across Odogbolu State constituency under the Youth Empowerment Scheme in addition to a strong interpersonal relationship with her constituents.

MENTORS' PROFILE



HON. ADAORA ONYECHERE

ADAORA ONYECHERE is a Nigerian Broadcast Journalist extraordinary' an Enigmatic, mind gripping On AIR Personality formerly with African Independent Television AIT. Her intellectual Foray

on Kaakaki The African Voice added that deep, intuitive edge that was not existent afore. She was also the Producer and Presenter of AIT's Gender Agenda Africa's Number 1 Premium program detailing the issues from across Africa on Gender on AIT.

She ran for Imo State House of Assembly in Nigeria in 2019, She lost yet further went on to serve in the capacity of senior special adviser on information and advocacy to the Former Governor of Imo state His Excellency Rt. Hon Emeka Ihedioha and the technical adviser to the deputy Chief whip Rt. Hon Nkeiruka Onyejeocha representing Umuneochi/Isukwato In Abia State.

With also a background in English and Broadcasting, Creative writing, and Project Management,

Adaora is the Cordinator of Deep Talk a Mentoring Group which reaches out to young women between the ages of 15-35. Adaora is the Initiator and Founder of Yellow Jerrycan Save a Child Foundation a platform advocating for the rights of IDPS, under this she initiated "For Love Sake teaching project at the IDP camp Durumi. Studies and Social Development.

She has won many awards both domestically and globally is currently the Female Role Model of The Year by The United Women Association for her numerous papers on policies and policy implementation strategy on Gender, IDPS and the physically challenged. She currently hosts her own show, Talk to Adaora commonly known as Talk2Adaora on Kiss 99.9 FM Abuja every Tuesdays at 4pm.

Her passion for supporting the women around her moved her into starting the WEWE Network Afrique, WEWE, an acronym for Women Enabling Women Everywhere, is a Pan-African Media, Branding and communications outfit which supports mainstreaming women in different sectors using mainstream media. She is also the CEO of Signature Heels Media and currently the Secretary to the Africa Young Female Advisers initiative.

MENTORS' PROFILE



HON. BLESSING NWAGBA

Hon. Dame Blessing O. Nwagba, Ph.D. was the first woman in the history of Abia State to be a major party front-runner for Governor in the 2018-2019 gubernatorial elections.

She ran a radical, grassroots driven, and state wide campaign under the platform of the Social Democratic Party.

She was an Honourable member representing Aba North Constituency in Abia State House of Assembly from 2011-2019, during her time in the State House of Assembly, she was the Chairperson, House Committee on Commerce and Industry, Chairperson, House Committee on Health, and Chairperson, House Committee on Women Affairs, respectively.

Hon. Nwagba also occupied various leadership positions in the public and private sectors, such as, Member, Board of Management at University College Hospital, Ibadan, Director, Belzy Nigeria Limited, Director, Fulfilment International Academy and College, Chief Youth Development Officer at the Ministry of Education and Youth Development, Umuahia, Member and Policy Director at Aba North Local Government Education Authority, amongst others.

MENTORS' PROFILE



HON. FAVOUR TOMOWEMO

Hon. Favour Semilore Tomomewo hails from Mahintedo town in Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State. Upon inauguration as a lawmaker representing Ilaje

Constituency II, she became the

Chairperson House Committee on Women Affairs, Chairperson House Committee on Diaspora and as well she is a member of some other Committees in the Ondo State House of Assembly.

In her innate desire to serve humanity vis-a-vis her career path, she established T. Favour Health Care Service where she cater for the indigent members of her immediate community. In the course of the discharge of Tomomewo's health benefits to her people in their different communities,

she was exposed to the poverty of her people, a situation which goes beyond their health need.

She thereafter made consultation with her people and decided to foray into politics where she would be able to bring them out of poverty using political means. She was immediately saddled with the responsibility of flying the flag of her party, the All Progressive Congress as a Member, Ondo State House of Assembly. She enjoyed the maximum support of her people and won with a wide margin thereby becoming the only female lawmaker of Ondo State 9th Assembly. As a political trailblazer, she was also honored of recent with the Ambassador for West Africa Emerging Political leader as she is also an associate TCG of the Royal Society Academy (RSA).

Favour Tomomewo is not just a wife and a mother but also an advocate for women, children and gender equality.

MENTORS' PROFILE



AMB. KEMA CHIKWE

Chief Kemafo Nonyerem “Kema” Chikwe, Ph.D. is a former Nigerian Federal Minister of Aviation. She currently holds the position of National Women Leader of the People Democratic Party (PDP).

Chikwe became a radio journalist, editor and a publisher. She was chief executive and publisher, Prime Time Limited, publisher of Ash magazine. She has published three books, edited a number of publications and contributed to several books.

She was appointed Minister of Transport, and then of Aviation by President Olusegun Obasanjo, holding office until May 2003. She later went on to run for the Governor of Imo state.

In 2009 she became the Nigerian Ambassador to Ireland.

MENTEES' PROFILE



MEET THE MENTEES



AISHA ABUBAKAR



NERAT YAKUBU



DEBORAH DAUDA



HAUWA SANI MAGAJI



REJOICE ISHAKU



KOREDE BLESSING



FAITH OMOREGBE



RAFIAT ATANDA



CYNTHIA UNAMKA



KEHINDE KAYODE



BUSHRAH BALOGUN



RAHILA DAUDA



JATTA AWETU



SAADATU YANUSA



FATIMA ABUBAKAR

MEET THE MENTEES



RACHAEL EDEH



DORIS OZIOMA



OGECHUKWU EUNICE



SUSAN OKOLIE



QUEEN CHIKWENDU



DELA FAVOUR OWAN



MFREKE ASIGBE



KANENG PRECIOUS



IDONGESIT MICAH

AISHA ABUBAKAR



AISHA ABUBAKAR is from Bauchi state, she is 27 years of age. A graduate of law from Bayero University, Kano, and was certified with a B.L in the year 2015 after undergoing one year rigorous training and undertaking the Bar Exams in the Nigerian Law School, Bwari Campus, Abuja. She served in the year 2016 with a Former President, Nigerian Bar Association., and is currently running a masters programme in law (LL.M).

Being a lawyer, she has worked with law firms and of recent, set up a law firm in partnership with other colleagues (Spear-Edged Law & Associates). She has an interest in international relations, good governance and Economic law (both local and international).

NERAT YAKUBU GYANG



NERAT YAKUBU GYANG, is an indigene of Plateau state, she is a graduate of Sociology, from the University of Jos Nigeria. She earned a professional course in Project Management from the British School of Project Management. In 2014, and a Diploma certificate In Computer Applications from ECWA Information Institute, Jos. She attained her Primary education from Educare Private School Jos, there after, her Secondary School Education.

She is a development interested in justice with peace, inclusion of girls, women and people with special needs.

HAUWA SANI MAGAJI



HAUWA SANI MAGAJI, is from Borno state, a graduate of University of Maiduguri with BA Languages and Linguistics, a PGD English Medium at Mohammed Goni College of Legal and Islamic studies and Msc Peace and Conflict Studies(in-view).

She is presently working with USAID/UNIMAD Post Conflict Activities to Counter Violence Extremism as Early Grade Reading Professional. She is also the Executive Director of Initiative For Community Health and Crisis Response, a community-based organization.

DEBORAH DAUDA



DEBORAH DAUDA is from Adamawa State, she is a graduate of Adamawa State University (ADSU) with a B.Sc in Chemistry. She is into fashion designing and interior decoration. She is liberal minded and always has the best. interest of the less privileged in her community at heart.

REJOICE ISHAKU



REJOICE ISHAKU, has a major in Public Administration from Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic where she acquired her National Diploma and is currently undergoing her Higher National Diploma. She is currently a volunteer working with Awalah Women Multipurpose Cooperative Society a community-based organization in Bauchi State.

Her key interests include Feminism, Community Development and Women Economic Empowerment.

OMOREGBE FAITH



UZAMERE FAITH OMOREGBE had her primary Education at Ayobahan Primary School, Ugonoba in 2003 and thereafter proceeded to Chris Idia Educational Centre where she obtained her West African Senior School Certificate in 2013. She had her higher education at the University of Benin where she obtained her Bachelor of Agriculture

(Forestry & Wildlife) Degree with Second Class Honors in 2018. She's a poultry farmer and an entrepreneur. She takes interest in volunteering, community service and participating in campaigns.

KOREDE SOTUBO



KOREDE SOTUBO is from Ogun State, she is a Legal Practitioner with vast experience in Corporate and Commercial law practice, providing legal services to both indigenous and international clients.

She graduated from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where she obtained her LL.B and proceeded to the Nigerian Law School, Yenegoa Campus, Bayelsa, Nigeria, where she obtain her B.L. She has interest in Blockchain Technology and FinTech Regulations, and she has worked with several multi-national companies and commercial Banks in Nigeria. In addition, Korede is one of the very few Certified Blockchain Legal Professionals in Nigeria, certified by the African Blockchain Institute. Furthermore, she is passionate about public policy developments particularly policies involving the education and financial section in Nigeria.

RAFIAT ATANDA



RAFIAT ATANDA from Oyo state, is a graduate of English Language from the Lagos State University, who currently works as a Communications Officer in a leading financial institution. Her interests lie in four major areas: media, communication, politics and policy. She is an empathetic and natural leader, who wants a Nigeria that works for all. Currently, she is a ONE Champion, and member to many youth-led NGOs.

BUSHRAH BALOGUN



BUSHRAH BALOGUN is from Lagos State, a development practitioner, Gender & Social Justice Activist, Mental Health Counselor and Program Manager.

She's a graduate of Microbiology from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi state, Nigeria. Ms. Balogun is a thoroughbred Student Union Activist and Serial volunteer with 5 years of experience in advancing of Women & Girls' rights and Youth development in Nigeria and beyond through Peer interaction, Organizing, Grassroot Engagements, Policy, Research and Advocacy.

In her years of vigorous social advocacy, Ms. Balogun is keen and proactive about promoting Gender Equality, Social justice, Mental Health, Inclusiveness, Democracy and Good governance. She seeks to upscale and upgrade Africa development frameworks by increasing the effects, implementation and sustainability of social impact projects focused on Women, Girls and Youth development as well as maximize profitable ventures in Project management.

Ms. Balogun is however, committed to advancing the sustainable development goals 1, 3, 4, 5 and 16, for a progressive, equitable and just society for all.

RAHILA DAUDA



RAHILA DAUDA hails from Bauchi State, she had her primary school education in Bauchi State and also finished from Federal Government Girls' College Bauchi.

She later proceeded to the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University for an undergraduate degree in law and graduated in 2016. She also got admission to the Nigerian Law School, Abuja Campus and was called to the bar in 2017. From 2018 to present she has been involved in law practice and living out her passion which is an advocate for Rule of Law, Human Rights and Social Justice.

Rahila's interests are advocating for the downtrodden especially women and children. She is an active member of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) whose motto is promoting the rule of law, currently she is the Vice-chair of the Young Lawyers Forum of NBA Abuja Branch. She is also a member of the International Federation of Women Lawyers, an international NGO that preserves, promotes and protects the rights of women and children.

Rahila is currently the pioneer chairperson for Young Women in Politics Forum, FCT chapter.

SA'ADAT YUNUSA



SA'ADAT YUNUSA MOHAMMED, is an indigene of Sokoto state, from Dange Shuni local government. Born August 1982 and a graduate of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

She is a lawyer and currently works as a Principal Legal Officer with National Human Rights Commission, Abuja. She is also a member of the Nigerian Bar Association and has gotten numerous awards and recognition over the years, she also holds various political positions. She contested in the 2019 General Election, Member, Federal House of Representative, Dange – Shuni, Bodinga, Tureta Federal Constituency. The only and first female to have contested that position in Sokoto State.

FATIMA ABUBAKAR



FATIMA ABUBAKAR, is an indigene of Niger state, she is a graduate of Federal University of Technology, Minna where she bagged a Bachelor of Technology in Library and information Technology. She is a professional Librarian at Federal Medical Center, Jabi - Abuja.

Her interests are trying new ideas, networking, making positive impacts, entrepreneurship, right of the girl child and children.

KEHINDE KAYODE



KEHINDE HANNAH KAYODE is from Lagos State, is a Political Scientist and a Gender Studies Specialist. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Lagos State University in 2017 and graduated as the best student. She got a Post Graduate Diploma

in International Gender Studies (a First-class grade point) from the University of Iceland, Reykjavik in 2020. She was a fellow of the Gender Equality and Training Programme (GEST), Iceland under the auspices of UNESCO in 2020. She has a Master's Degree in Political Science from Lagos State University in-view.

She is currently working as an Executive Assistant in Techpoint Africa and TalentQI. She is the project manager of GirlUp Nigeria and also multi-task as the executive coordinator of the Girls 4 Leadership Initiative. She has a keen interest in gender issues and governance, particularly as it relates to girls and young women, and she is enthusiastic about women and leadership opportunities.

RACHEAL EDEH



EDEH RACHEAL, is an HND holder in Public Administration, currently working as an admin Support in a hospital. Her interests are politics and human resource.

JATTA AWETU



JATTA AWETU HOPE is from FCT, Abuja. A graduate of IBB University Lapai, where she studied Political science. She is currently running her MSc At NOUN Abuja Model Center studying Peace and Conflict Studies. She also works with a psychotherapy center as a personal assistant to the CEO while also running Ladi Kwali Young Women Leaders hub as the founder.

Her hobbies includes participating in anything that impacts the lives of people especially young women at the grassroots level. She is interested in self growth, development, and Volunteering.

DORIS OZIOMA



DORIS OZIOMA OSUIWU hails from Umuduruaku Amaju Amaigbo in Nwangele LGA in Imo State. She graduated in the year 2015 from Akani Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Uwana Afikpo Ebonyi State. With HND in Marketing Department.

She Currently works with an NGO organization under the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin known as Justice Development and peace commission (JDPC), And her hobbies are Travelling and Reading.

MFREKE ASIGBE



MFREKE ASIGBE is a native of Akwa Ibom State. She is a graduate of Microbiology with a Master's degree in Public Health. She is the founder and CEO of Cypress Global Health, a health and wellness organization that is focused on training and coaching women, children, couples and families on Stress management, non-violent communication, abuse and domestic violence recovery, emotional intelligence, healthy dating and marriage relationship, healthy parent-child relationship and healthy work-place relationship.

Mfreke's passion to see women, children, couples and families thrive beyond trauma and stress led her to publish a book titled; Managing Stress: The Pathway to Building a Healthy Relationship and Family. After her mentorship program with Nigerian Women Trust Fund on ending gender-based violence, she developed further interest in women empowerment, politics and other issues that affects women. In addition to this, she has worked with several International and local NGOs to improve the quality of lives of people living with HIV/AIDS in her community.

Mfreke is currently working to amplify the voices of women and ensure their full participation in politics, advocacy, policy influencing and implementation.



DELA-FAVOUR OWAN

DELA-FAVOUR OWAN is from Cross River State, she is a Political and lifestyle blogger and an IELTS facilitator @Mindprime. She holds a B.A in English and literary Studies from the University of Calabar, Calabar. She has an interest in Politics, Journalism, Political Blogging and Teaching.



OGECHUKWU EUNICE

OGECHUKWU EUNICE ONWUMA, is an indigene of Delta state, she is a research assistant with a B.Sc in Economics, M.Sc in Health Economics and MBA Microfinance and Management (in view) . She is interested in Politics and Research



SUSAN OKOLIE

SUSAN OKOLIE, is an indigene of Delta state, she is a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree holder in Mass Communications from Imo State University, Owerri.

She serves as a Program Coordinator with Young Leaders Right and Patriotic Initiative of Nigeria (YOLPIN), a Civil Society Organization, which focuses among others on youth empowerment, youth participation in democracy and democratic governance, etc.

She is a passionate advocate of women and youth empowerment, democracy and good governance, with huge interest in research for development , writing and traveling. Currently, she is a Post Graduate Diploma Student in the Department of Criminology and Security Studies, National Open University of Nigeria (Noun), Abuja.



KANENG YOHANNA

KANENG YOHANNA JATAU is from Plateau State, she is currently studying Mass Communication at Plateau State Polytechnic, Barkin Ladi.

She works as an aide to the House of Representatives Member representing Jos South/Jos East Federal Constituency. She is also a consultant on media to the Senator representing Plateau North.

QUEEN CHIKWENDU



QUEEN CHIKWENDU is a 26-year-old enterprising young woman from Anambra state with an insatiable passion to impact and influence the 21st century youths through proactive teaching, mentoring and exemplary leadership.

She holds a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature from Nnamdi Azikiwe University among other myriads of leadership certifications. She is a community development worker and have been fully engaged in it for the past three years working with non-profit organizations in different capacities.

She possesses keen interest in mobilizing young women in leadership, she has organized various capacity building programmes for the young female students of Nigeria which geared towards stimulating their interests in the political and civic processes of their communities. As a skilled and passionate advocate for human development, gender equality, girl-child education and youth development, she engages in series of mentoring.

She believes that closing the huge gap in women representation in leadership and governance in Nigeria is the foundation for achieving the Agenda 2030; thus, there is a dire need for the young women participation in political parties, advocacy campaigns and coalition-building.

IDONGESIT MICAH



IDONGESIT MICAH is from Akwa Ibom state, she holds a National Diploma in International History and Diplomacy and a B.A in History and International Studies from the University of Uyo.

She is a public servant with an interest in Politics, Women Emancipation/Grassroot Mobilization and Capacity Building.

CYNTHIA UNAMKA



CYNTHIA UNAMKA is from Imo State, eastern Nigeria. She is a graduate of Government and Public Administration from Imo State University, Owerri. She works as an Advocacy officer in an NGO based in Lagos.

Her hobbies include reading, meeting people and cooking. She has an avid interest in researching current affairs and also in the inclusion of women in peace and security issues in Nigeria.

MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE



MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE



My interest in politics began at a very young age at a time where my dad made us read newspapers and

watch political discussions on CNN and NTA rather than MTV and Sony. So, I grew up loving politics.

When I started my career in broadcast journalism in 2016, my interest in politics (local & international) was at a high. As a corps member, I reported stories from the executive chambers of the Governor of Oyo state, and later worked as a presenter on TV and radio analyzing news stories and interviewing political office holders. All these times, I was a spectator. In fact, I believed that politics was a DIRTY GAME, and that the Nigeria political structure was faulty and rotten (I still believe the latter).

In 2021, I got selected as a cohort of the Partners West Africa Nigeria, PWAN's leadership and mentoring programme for young women. We had this leadership boot camp that gave me a paradigm shift. At that retreat, a quote came alive in my spirit; the quote says, "THE ONLY

THING NECESSARY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IS FOR GOOD MEN TO DO NOTHING". It was a quote by Edmund Burke.

Since then, I have become more intentional about building capacity, acquiring leadership skills, and lending my voice for a GOOD change to the polity in the Nigerian political space. Thankfully, I have gotten opportunities both locally and internationally, (thanks to the capacity built at PWAN mentoring) as a Margaret Ekpo Youth Fellowship (MEYF) fellow and at the Radio Netherlands Training Centre (RNTC).

I aspire, in the not-too-distant for a legislative position in the upper chambers of the Nigeria senate because I quite believe that the constitution at present represents a big part of our problem. I want to make laws to better lives. However, the bigger picture is to pull a "Hillary Clinton" on the entire country. Because, why not?

I appreciate PWAN a lot. They have offered me great opportunities for self-development, mentorship and I have been able to forge great relationships with other young women who are/want to be part of the positive change in the political sphere. I'm also looking forward to more support from PWAN on my political journey.

Adesewa Olofinko
PWAN 2021 Mentee

MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE



The state of gender inequality and equal access to socio-economic and

political opportunities between both genders has remained a key issue in Nigeria. It depicts an apparent gap in female leadership and unequal representation, thereby making political atmosphere discriminatory and extreme for women to thrive and contribute to nation building.

Hence, my political ambition to become a leader with competence, character, empathy, vision and value, one that sets out to co-create a Nigeria guided by the core principle of democracy; fairness, justice and equity and ensures every citizen is protected, represented and thrive irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender. Also, push for gender-interest

interventions to get more women in governance and politics.

Grateful for the impact of the PWAN Young Women Political Mentorship Programme in my quest to build a political career. It has helped nudged my dream of becoming an outstanding public leader and reaffirmed my commitment in realizing this goal, with the exposure to first-hand experience of the life, challenges and successes of a female politician/leader through intergenerational mentorship and the trainings which provided me the platform to learn, expand my network and imbibe the core values and ethics of leadership and public service.

Bushrah Balogun
PWAN 2021 Mentee

MENTEES' PERSPECTIVE



Each time I see it's dawn again in

Nigeria, I am filled with lots of cloudy

emotions. I think about news on insecurity, deaths, poverty and my friend Shade, a promising lady and others who have left Nigeria for greener pastures. Things are falling apart, and our leaders seem to be drifting apart.

The political climate of Nigeria is worrisome. It stifles the creativity of youth; encroaches on human rights; lacks flexibility and adaptability; and questions our collective humanity. Our leaders speak rhetoric and push propaganda, but in reality, lots of people are not enjoying the dividend of democracy.

I want a democracy that works for everyone. No true democracy

can be achieved without strategic, people-centered and empathetic leadership. Nigerians need to tell a story of abundance sprinkled with hope and possibilities.

Someday, I will run for a political office; preferably as a parliamentarian. On this journey, I see the Partner West Africa Nigeria's (PWAN's) mentorship program being instrumental to my success. This is because I have built a resilient sisterhood with vibrant female changemakers across the country. Plus, I have access to intergenerational leaders and conversations that will enrich my candidacy.

Rafiat Atanda
PWAN 2021 Mentee

THE WAY FORWARD



PATHWAY TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Over time, the advocacy for gender equality and sustainable development in Nigeria has been centred on the need to formulate laws and policies that will guarantee equal representation of men and women in all tiers of government. Considerably, those efforts have brought about accomplishments in the system, particularly with the development of the National Gender Policy (2006) and National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, several Federal Government parastatals such as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have followed suit to develop their institutional gender policies based on the existing national policy.

Patriarchy is proven to be one of the dominant factors that hinder progressive moves towards gender equality in Nigeria. Hence, this has placed women in a defensive position towards making their voices heard in contributing to a sustainable democracy and nation-building. Over the years, Civil Society Organizations have organized programmes to amplify and support young women

across the country to vie for elective and appointive positions in government. For instance, PWAN's Political Leadership and Mentorship Programme for young women, and ElectHer which has created opportunities to increase access for female aspirants/candidates in elections through the ElectHer academy as well as the Agender35 campaign/program that seeks to provide financial support for 35 young women across Nigeria to contest in the 2023 elections. These organizations among others, seek to equip the younger generation of women for early political participation.

Despite the accomplishments of other African countries like Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, etc on gender equality through Temporary Specific Measures and Quota systems, Nigeria was yet to follow suit in legislating an affirmative action for women's involvement in governance. However, in recent times, a laudable move has been made in this direction. Nigeria has commenced a process of review of the 1999 constitution as amended. The process which commenced in April 2020 seeks to address various constitutional issues including political exclusion of women.

As part of the constitutional review process, a bill to create special seats for Nigerian women in the two chambers of the National Assembly was presented to the House of Representatives and scaled through Second Reading in April 2021. The Bill, titled “A Bill for an Act to Alter the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to create additional special seats for women in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly” which seeks to create additional 111 seats for women out of a total of 544 seats in the National Assembly is sponsored by the deputy Chief Whip of the House, Hon. Nkiruka Onyejiocha and co-sponsored by the Speaker House, Hon. Femi Gbajabamila. Passage of this bill will bring about a significant increase women's representation in the parliament.

To support the process of the passage of this bill, CSOs have participated in public hearings on the constitutional review. The Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) conducted a study and prepared a Memorandum in support of the special seats for women bill. The memorandum sought to highlight public opinions on women's inclusion in politics to support the objectives of the bill. Key findings from the research showed that majority of people believe that there should be more women in governance because they are thoughtful,

industrious, and diligent and can cause changes in the country. Some people agreed that there should be a quota system in place to guarantee equal representation, while others opined that indigeneity should be cancelled from the electoral laws as it promotes discrimination and nepotism in the system.

The following recommendations were also made to the National Assembly Committee in support of the bill:

- a) Support for the creation of additional special seats for women in parliament;
- b) Adoption of online voting in Nigeria to reduce electoral offences, and
- c) Review of the criterion for contesting elections to residency rather than indigeneity.

The draft amendment is presently on the floor of the Senate, and the report of the Senate Committee on Review of the 1999 Constitution will be presented to the Senate in July 2021. Assent to the Constitutional Amendment will be a steppingstone towards gender equality and sustainable development for equal benefit of nearly half of the population in Nigeria.

<https://iriad.org/iriad-memo-on-constitutional-review-2021/>

GALLERY









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