



Empowering Young Women in Leadership and Politics



About Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative

Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) is a non-profit organization founded in 2014, committed to advancing principles of good governance, fostering youth civic participation, and cultivating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Operating as a youth-driven entity, our team leverages the potential of technology, conducting thorough research, and employing data-driven approaches to enrich the information environment in Nigeria. Among many other successful projects, we've delivered is the **SpaceForHer** project which engages the active participation of females in politics.

In recent times, BBYDI's initiatives have notably impacted communities in all 36 Nigerian states.

Over the years, our esteemed partners and sponsors include Box, Force of Nature, LEAP Africa, Nigeria Youth Futures Fund, Global Campaign for Education, International Fact-Checking Network, US Global Engagement Centre, and Becera. Their invaluable support has significantly amplified the effectiveness of our endeavours.

As we continue to expand and reach more communities, BBYDI remains steadfast in its commitment to empowering youth, promoting sustainable development, and contributing to a brighter future for all.

In Nigeria, the underrepresentation of women in politics is a pervasive issue that has persisted for decades. Despite women constituting approximately half of the population, their participation in political leadership positions remains significantly low. In the 2019 general elections, out of the 469 seats in the National Assembly, only 22 were occupied by women. This represented a mere 4.7% of the total seats, indicating a glaring gender disparity in political representation. Similarly, at the state level, women held only a fraction of the available positions in state assemblies, with the vast majority of seats occupied by men. This glaring gender disparity underscores the urgent need for initiatives like Space for Her to address the systemic barriers that hinder women's political participation.

Furthermore, a report published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reveals that in Nigeria's National Assembly, women occupy only 6.4% of seats, ranking the country 181st out of 193 countries in terms of women's representation in parliament. Additionally, at the state level, women hold only 40 out of the 990 lawmaker positions in state assemblies across the country. These statistics highlight the stark gender gap in Nigerian politics and the critical importance of interventions aimed at increasing women's participation.

Table Of Contents	
About Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI)	
Contextual Background	
Problem Statement	
Overview of intervention: About SpaceForHer	
Project Team (2 pages pictures)	
Scale Vision and Scope of Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative	
Outline of key activities	
Call For Applications	
Launch Press Conference	
Media Outreach - Diamond FM	
Space For Her Vote Now Campaign	
Research on Voter Apathy	
Space for Her MARKET SENSITIZATION	
Space For Her Plenary Session at Kwara State House of Assembly	
Lecture Classes	
COMMUNITY PROJECT FOR FELLOWS	
ON-AIR SESSION at Diamond FM with Balqees Hamzat	
Outline of Key activities in pictures	
Scope of Impact Evaluation	
Certificate for fellows	
Closing Picnic	
Post Fellowship Success Story	
Challenges Encountered	
Conclusion and Justification for Scale-up	
Appendix	
Picture Gallery	
Acknowledgements	
News and Publications	



Contextual Background

Space for Her emerged as a pioneering fellowship program designed to empower and inspire women to actively engage in Nigerian politics. In its inaugural cycle in April 2022, Space for Her received over 1,300 applications, demonstrating the strong demand and interest among women to participate in political leadership roles. From this pool of applicants, 20 exceptional women were selected to participate in the fellowship, indicating the rigorous selection process and the high calibre of participants.

Through its structured residency program, Space for Her provides intensive training in key areas such as storytelling, leadership development, political communication, and campaign strategy. These skills are essential for women to navigate the complex political landscape and overcome the barriers they face in pursuing political office. Moreover, the fellowship equips participants with the necessary networks and resources to amplify their voices and effect positive change in their communities.

By addressing the longstanding gender disparity in Nigerian politics and providing women with the tools and support they need to succeed, Space for Her is driving towards a future where women's voices are fully represented and valued in the decision-making processes that shape the nation's future.

5.2%

Problem

Statement

Despite comprising approximately half of the population, women in Nigeria continue to be significantly underrepresented in political leadership positions at the national and state levels. This gender disparity undermines the principles of equality and inclusivity in governance, limiting the diversity of perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes.

Since the reinstatement of democracy in 1999, men have overwhelmingly dominated the Senate. According to a fact sheet produced by the Centre for Development and Democracy (CDD), in the initial year, 1999, there were only

24 women among the 990 members, constituting merely 2.40% of the State House of Assembly. By 2003, this number increased to 40, representing 4.00% and in 2007, it also increased to 57 making it 5.80% of the House of Assembly. However, there was also an increase in female representation, going to 68 members in 2011, which accounted for 6.90% of the total. In 2015, the figure decreased to 51 members which constituted a percentage of 5.20%. See a visual representation of these trends below.

Women Representation in State Houses of Assembly (1999 - 2015)



■ Total ■ Women ■ Percentage



Overview of intervention

About Space for Her

Space for Her aims to address this imbalance by empowering women with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to overcome barriers and actively participate in Nigerian politics.

Space For Her emerged from the imperative need to address the longstanding gender disparity prevalent in Nigerian politics. Conceived by the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative in collaboration with GYMobilization, SpaceForHer is a pioneering fellowship program designed to empower and inspire women to actively engage in the political sphere. It is an 8-week project with 10 speakers from various walks of life about profitable and sustainable political participation and leadership for young women

The core mission of SpaceForHer is to challenge existing narratives surrounding women in politics and foster a more inclusive political landscape. The program aims to equip women with the necessary skills, knowledge, and networks to navigate and succeed in political leadership roles.

Space For Her prioritizes skill-building and confidence-building initiatives tailored to the unique challenges faced by aspiring female politicians. Participants received training in areas such as leadership development,

political communication, campaign strategy, stakeholder mapping, resource mobilization, and lobbying. These focus areas aim to equip fellows with the tools necessary to overcome barriers and thrive in the political arena.

Since its inception, SpaceForHer has made significant strides in empowering women to actively participate in politics. The fellowship has inspired a new generation of female leaders and catalyzed positive change within the political landscape. Moving forward, SpaceForHer remains committed to advancing the cause of gender equality in Nigerian politics, through sustained effort and collaboration for creating a lasting impact.

In essence, SpaceForHer represents a beacon of hope for women seeking to break barriers and make their mark in the political sphere, driving towards a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality. The project is solving the gap in the political participation of women that may have been caused due to the lack of knowledge, support and mentoring or systems on leadership and politics for women's growth. It also solves the grassroots view of female students taking leadership roles right from the start of their growth which is from their schools.

Scale Vision and Scope of Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative

Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) operates with a clear vision to empower young individuals and foster positive change within their communities. Through strategic projects and initiatives, BBYDI aims to create opportunities for growth, leadership development, and civic engagement.

The Scale Vision and Scope of BBYDI's impact are exemplified through its flagship project, Space for Her, which focuses on enhancing women's participation in Nigerian politics. Our long-term vision extends far beyond the boundaries of Kwara State, where we had the flagship edition of the project. We envision scaling up to all states in the country and catalysing change such that no political position is deemed too high or unattainable for women. The scope of our scale-up plan encompasses the following key components:

- 1. Impact on Participants:** The Space for Her flagship project directly impacted 20 young women between the ages of 25 and 40 years old. These individuals were provided with intensive training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the political landscape. In our scale-up, we hope to reach more women across several states and communities in the country.
- 2. Media Reach and Visibility:** The press conference held to unveil the fellows garnered significant media coverage, reaching over 1,000,000 Nigerians. Additionally, media features on Diamond FM and market sensitization activities in the Oba and Mandate markets further amplified the project's visibility and message. The scale-up project will look to garner more reach and visibility as a precursor to launching the fellow sustainably into their community political landscape.



- 3. Political Representation:** The Scale-up will look to inspire and produce more women who will vie for offices and leadership positions in the political space. Two of the Space for Her flagship fellows, Miss Shittu Raqayah and Mrs. Oluwatoni Adeleke, emerged as candidates in the House of Assembly and House of Representatives Elections. Their candidacy represents a tangible outcome of the project's efforts to promote female participation in politics.
- 4. Educational Impact:** The fellows engaged in change projects aimed at educating approximately 500 female students across 5 schools on various topics, including women's leadership, breaking societal stereotypes, personal development, responsible leadership, women in politics, and drug abuse.
- 5. Continued Scaling and Growth:** BBYDI is committed to scaling and growing the impact of its projects, including Space for Her. Future cohorts of the project will include an increased number of fellows, expanding the reach and scope of the initiative.

Additionally, BBYDI plans to implement step-down projects in various places across States in the country, further spreading the project's impact. The success of fellows like Miss Shittu Raqayah and Mrs Oluwatoni Adeleke serves as inspiration and motivation to continue promoting female participation in politics and empowering young women to take on leadership roles in Nigeria.

Outline of Key Activities

Call for Applications

The Space For Her program called for the first cohort of the fellowship. The female residents of Kwara State between ages 25-45 were required making it known that only 20 slots were available.

In April 2022, Space For Her launched its inaugural cycle, welcoming 20 selected participants from a pool of over 1300 applicants. The program spanned six weeks, during which fellows were trained on stakeholder mapping, engagement and management, resource mobilization, storytelling, leadership development, political communication, campaign strategy, lobbying and several political topics. The structured nature of the fellowship ensures comprehensive development and support for participants.

1300
applicants

20
fellows



CALL FOR APPLICATION

Are you an aspiring female based in Kwara, Nigeria?

Here is an opportunity for you to take the lead role.

Application to the first cohort of the Space For Her Fellowship is on.

Space For Her fellowship offers a 6-week structured residency fellowship where selected candidates will be trained on **stakeholders Mapping, engagement and Management, Resource Mobilisation, Storytelling, Leadership Development, Political Communication, Campaign Strategy, Lobbying and several political topics.**

Requirements:
Female residents of Kwara State between the ages of 25-45

Only 20 slots are available

Apply online via:
forms.gle/7caX73woQqtKQzer8

For more information, call
+234 706 877 5529

Supported by:



Are you an aspiring female based in Kwara, Nigeria?

CALL FOR APPLICATION

Application to the first cohort of the Space For Her Fellowship is on

Space For Her fellowship offers a 6-week structured residency fellowship where selected candidates will be trained on **stakeholders Mapping, engagement and Management, Resource Mobilisation, Storytelling, Leadership Development, Political Communication, Campaign Strategy, Lobbying and several political topics.**

Requirements:
Female residents of Kwara State between the ages of 25-45

Only 20 slots are available

Apply online via:
forms.gle/7caX73woQqtKQzer8

For more information, call
+234 706 877 5529

Outline of Key Activities

Space For Her Launch Press Conference

On April 30, 2022, everyone gathered for the launch of "Space for Her," a flagship endeavour of the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative. Dedicated to amplifying the involvement of Nigerian women in political leadership and governance.

Miss. Tolulope Gbenro, the Team Lead of the Space for Her Fellowship addressed everyone about Space For Her. During the press conference, Miss. Tolulope Gbenro stated that "the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in one of its reports declared that only 13 percent out of the 24,353 candidates that contested for various elective positions in the 2019 general election were women. Available data also reveals that women constitute less than five percent of the House of Representatives, which is made up of 109 legislators in the Senate and only eight of them are females while out of the 360 members of the House of Representatives,

only 11 of them are women. Across the country we have a total of 990 lawmakers in the state assemblies and only 40 of them are women out of the 43 ministers we have in the cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari, only 7 of them are females. Since Nigeria returned to the democratic crew over 20 years ago we are yet to produce a female governor through an election. The closest we had was that of late Aisha Al-Hassan popularly known as Mama Taraba who lost the Taraba governorship election to the president occupier of the post in the year 2015. The only female governor Nigeria ever had was Mrs. Virginia Etiaba who was sworn in on November 6th 2006. As the governor of Anambra states following the impeachment of the previous governor Peter Obi by the state legislature. At the moment only four of the 36 states have women as their deputy governors; they are Ogun, Kaduna, Enugu



Outline of Key

Activities

and River State respectively.”

A critical examination of women elected and appointed into political positions in the state between 1999 and 2019 revealed a significant lack of fair representation in leadership roles.

From 1999 to the present day, Kwara State has only produced 1 female senator and 4 members of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the situation appears to have worsened over time.

Under the current political dispensation, all 24 seats in the state assembly are occupied by men, with no female representation. This glaring disparity underscores the pressing need for increased gender inclusion in Nigerian politics.

While the current administration has appointed a higher percentage of women to positions compared to the previous administration, gender inclusion in Nigerian political space remains disproportionately low. Despite the significant voting power of women during elections, their representation in decision-making and leadership roles remains minimal.

It is disheartening to note that women in Nigeria continue to occupy a small percentage of political leadership positions. Despite the efforts of various local and international organizations to advocate for and support women’s participation in politics and governance, the targets of achieving 30% and 35% Affirmative Action for gender inclusion have yet to be met.

During the press conference, the following was proposed:

Political parties should actively encourage and facilitate the participation of women in politics, moving beyond mere campaign rhetoric to provide tangible support and

opportunities for women to engage in decision-making processes.

The government should prioritize gender inclusion and women’s participation in politics and governance, both nationally and at the state and local levels. This includes implementing policies and initiatives that promote women’s representation and leadership in political institutions.

The National Assembly was urged to reconsider the gender-related amendments rejected during the voting on March 1st, 2022. It’s ironic that the rejection occurred during Women’s Month, which celebrates women’s empowerment.

Women’s involvement in politics and governance is vital for building a robust democracy and fostering an all-inclusive society. It’s imperative to challenge and change the negative perceptions some hold about women in politics, such as viewing them as prostitutes, which is disrespectful and untrue. Women should support and uplift each other in their political endeavours.

In conclusion, Miss. Tolulope Gbenro extended her congratulations to all the fellows who were inaugurated. She thereby said a heartfelt thank you to all the resource persons, both those physically present and those contributing virtually from different locations.

Inclusion is a Special gratitude to the Global Youth Movement for their utmost support of the project.

Having addressed the factors contributing to low voter turnout in Nigeria. The ultimate goal is to see more women actively participating in politics.

Outline of Key Activities

Media Outreach - Diamond FM

On May 7th, 2022, the project was aired on Diamond FM 88.7 to address the topic; Female Participation in Kwara State Politics. It was hosted by Mr. Sanni Alausa Issa with Mr. Sikiru Issa Nuhu (Research Fellow, BBYDI) and Miss Tolulope Gbenro (Project Lead SpaceForHer Initiative) as appearing guests.

Space For Her Vote Now Campaign

A campaign was organised to sensitise the public on their right to vote and why it is important they exercise that right at the polls. An array of promotional materials was efficiently and adeptly crafted to increase awareness of the project. This encompassing endeavour involves the creation of captivating jingles, visually engaging infographics, and eye-catching flyers meticulously designed to resonate with the target audience. Additionally, the endeavour extends to the production of branded merchandise such as t-shirts, serving as wearable advertisements, roll-up banners for impactful display, jotters for practical utility fused with project messaging, as well as branded face masks and hand sanitizers for safety. This approach established a robust presence and fostered a deep-rooted connection with the intended demographic, thereby amplifying the impact and visibility of the project.



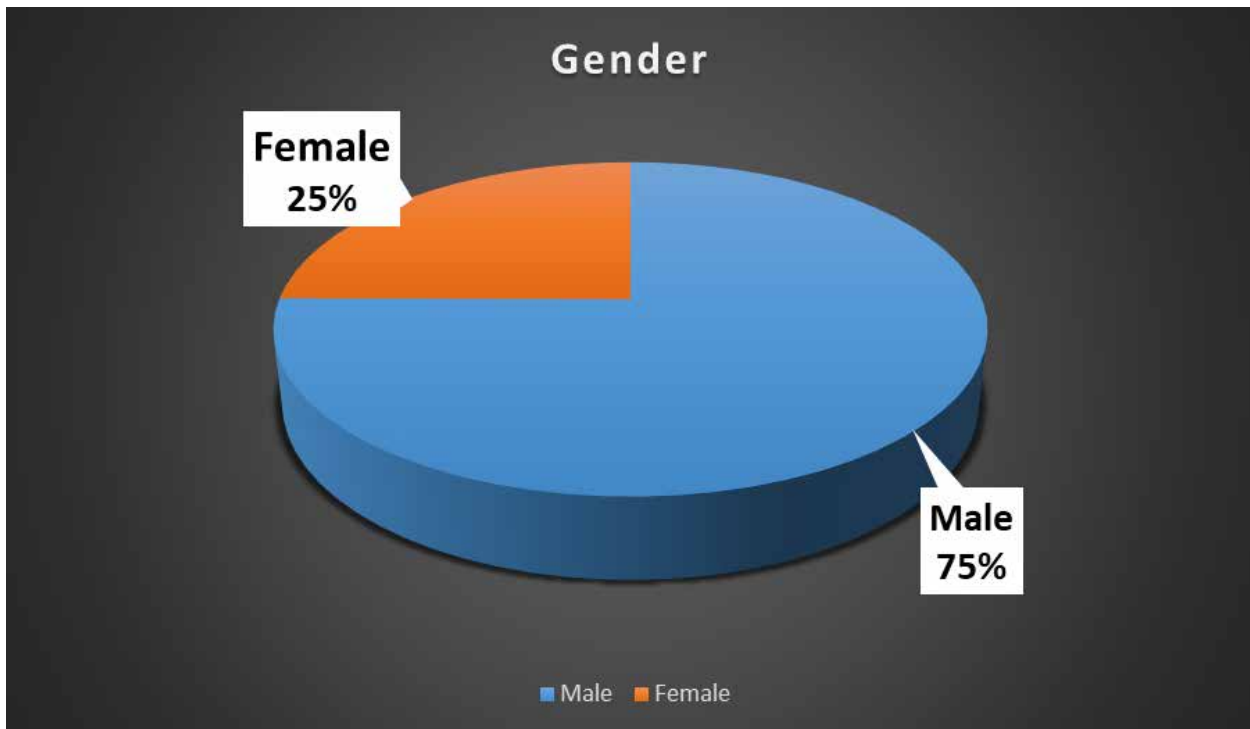
Outline of Key Activities

Research on Voter Apathy

Voter apathy, characterized by a lack of interest or low voter turnout has been observed in elections. It refers to the phenomenon where eligible voters abstain from voting. The Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) partnered with Yvote Naija to conduct a productive research endeavour.

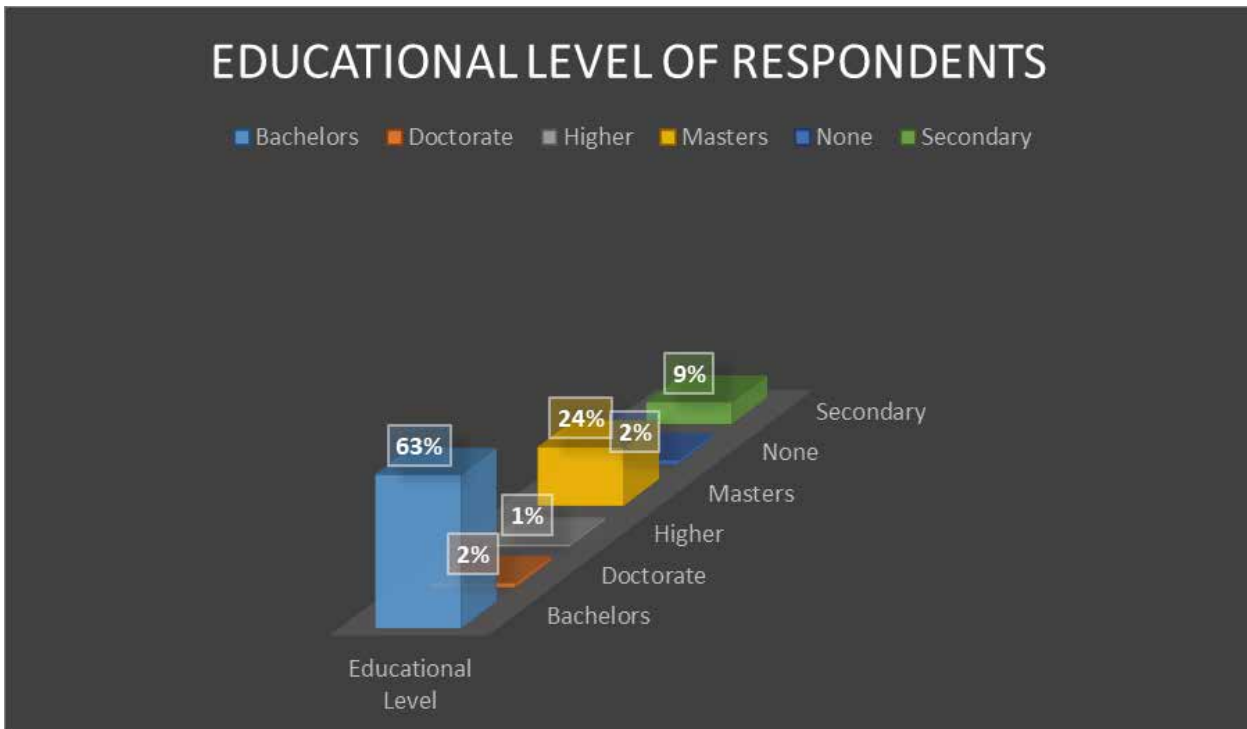
To address this ongoing issue, the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) conducted research through its Research Team to identify and mitigate the factors contributing to voter apathy in Nigeria, aiming to enhance voter participation. This survey is crucial for gauging citizen opinions on the reasons behind voter apathy and implementing their suggestions and recommendations.

It's noteworthy that 36,855 respondents took part in the survey, with data disaggregated by age, state, gender, and academic level. The respondents of the survey were disaggregated by age, state, gender and academic level.



Outline of Key Activities

- Educational Level of Respondents**



Bachelor's Degree 63%

82.2% Registered Voters

87.2% Voted because they believe and want to uphold the sanctity of the electoral process

3.5% were induced with money to cast their vote

87.2% voters because they believed it is their civil right

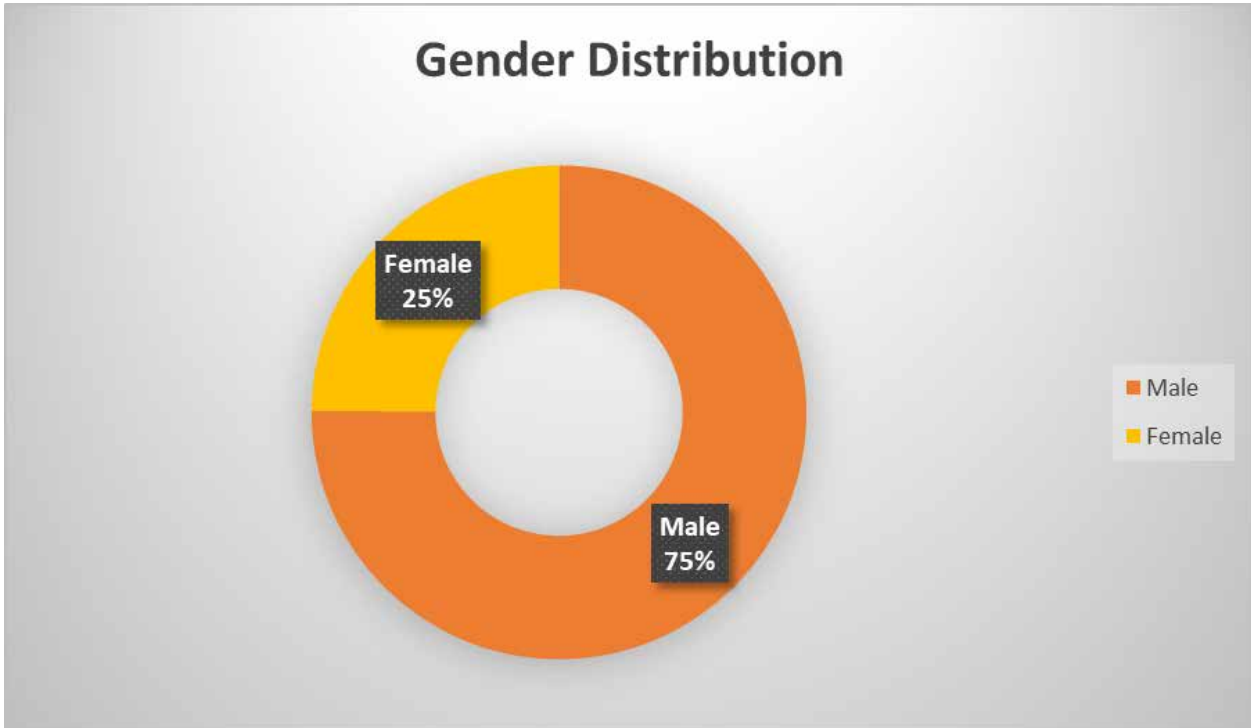
65.2% have the belief that younger generations (less than 35 years) are interested in voting in Nigeria

80.3% of respondents hold the opinion that elections have never been transparent.

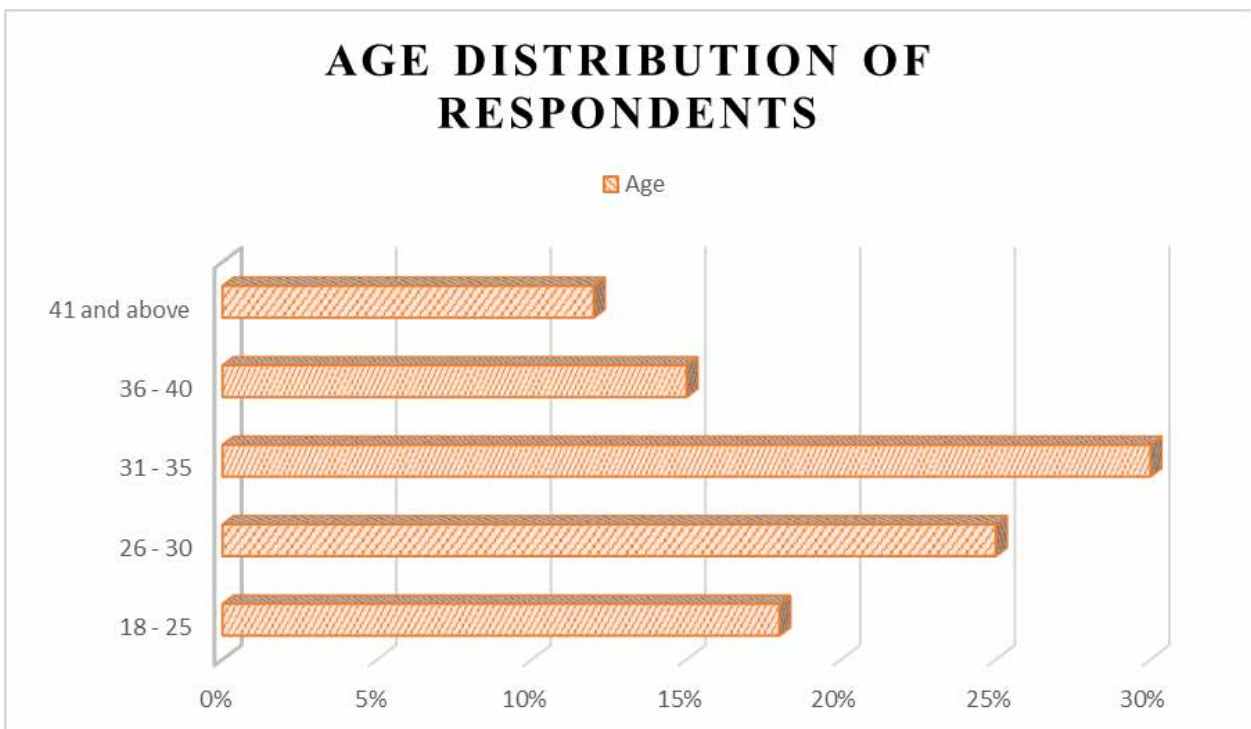
11.1% believe that it has been transparent and 8.8% are not sure if it has been transparent or not.

Outline of Key Activities

- Gender Distribution



- Age Distribution of Respondents



Outline of Key Activities

Market Sensitization

To make sure everyone knew how important it is to vote, a sensitization was conducted in the markets of Oja Oba and Mandate. The people of the market were encouraged to get their Permanent Voters Cards.

This way, more people can have a say in how things are run in their communities. These efforts showed that when people come together, they can make a big difference in shaping their future.



Outline of Key Activities

Space For Her Plenary Session at Kwara State House of Assembly

The fellows had a unique opportunity to observe a plenary session at the Kwara State House of Representatives, where they witnessed firsthand how laws are made and debated. Additionally, they had the privilege of connecting with Honourable Representatives, allowing them to gain valuable insights and build networks within the political sphere.

Furthermore, they were organized into four teams, each tasked with spearheading change projects aimed at addressing various societal issues. One of their impactful initiatives focused on education, where they reached out to approximately 500 female students across five schools. Through interactive sessions, these young women were enlightened on topics such as women's leadership, breaking societal stereotypes, personal development, responsible leadership, women in politics, and the dangers of drug abuse.

By empowering these students with knowledge and skills, the fellows aimed to inspire a new generation of leaders who are equipped to challenge norms, advocate for change, and contribute positively to their communities.



Outline of Key

Activities

Space For Her Lecture Series

The inaugural session of the Space For Her fellowship took place at the **dHub Innovation Center** at Tanke, Ilorin on May 7th, 2022. Space For Her was a 6-week mentorship program designed to empower women with the skills and qualities necessary to contribute to nation-building. The focus of this session was on campaign planning and management, spearheaded by Mrs. Folashade Aransiola, the Kwara State Chairman for the League of Women Voters in Nigeria.

Mrs Folashade emphasized that contemporary politics demands inclusivity rather than mere equality. She urged attendees to prioritize conveying messages of inclusiveness effectively and cautioned against appearing exploitative in grassroots engagement. She advised women to assert themselves without resorting to aggression, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a collaborative and respectful approach. Mrs

Folashade outlined the five pillars of a successful campaign:

- Having a strong why.
- Identifying who knows what.
- Building an effective and efficient campaign strategy,
- Owning and communicating your campaign message with clarity, and
- When handling campaign finance, every kobo counts..

Participants actively contributed ideas, including strategies to engage youth perspectives in the lead-up to 2027. The session, spanning two hours, was enriching and engaging, leaving attendees with valuable insights and strategies for effective campaigning.



#SpaceForHer Speakers' Series



Mrs Folashade Aransiola

TOPIC

Campaign Planning
and Management



Outline of Key Activities

Another lecture series of the SpaceForHer fellowship held on May 14th, 2022. This session, titled “Strategic Communications,” was expertly facilitated by Professor Saudat Salah Abdul Baqi, a distinguished professor of Mass Communication at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Professor Abdul Baqi urged participants to transition from passive engagement to active participation in various spheres. She eloquently elucidated the concept of strategic communications. Engaging the audience, Professor Abdul Baqi posed a pivotal question: “How do we lead effectively?” She underscored the importance of meritocracy over sentimentality in attaining leadership roles, encouraging women to compete on equal footing with their male counterparts. Emphasizing the significance of

homegrown capacity building, she urged attendees to strive for excellence, self-organization, and impactful leadership.

Central to Professor Abdul Baqi’s discourse was the notion of empowerment as the cornerstone of effective communication. She delineated the characteristics of a trainable individual:

- Tolerance, emotional balance, and perseverance.
- Eagerness to acquire and apply new skills.
- Flexibility, open-mindedness, and a rejection of self-limiting beliefs.
- Self-awareness, continuous self-improvement, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Clear articulation of personal values and a willingness to engage in meaningful exchanges.

Professor Abdul Baqi stressed the importance of active listening and receptivity to feedback in fostering effective communication. She highlighted the indispensable role of encouragement, energy, and enthusiasm in exemplary leadership.

In conclusion, the session underscored the imperative of strategic communications as a catalyst for women’s empowerment and effective leadership. Attendees departed with a renewed sense of purpose and a wealth of actionable insights to apply in their personal and professional endeavours.



#SpaceForHer

Speakers' Series



Dr. (Mrs) Saudat Salah Abdul Baqi

TOPIC

Strategic Communication
using 4 E's



Outline of Key Activities

Space For Her Fellows' Community Project

The fellows engaged in community projects as a means of sharing the knowledge gained with other and multiplying the scale of the impact and reach of the program. The community project was carried out in groups at schools in local rural communities in Kwara. This gave the fellows a hands-on experience in mobilizing and addressing an audience as a leader, while also giving the audience the experience and avenue to inspire to take action as leaders in their respective environments. The details of each group's project are provided below:



Outline of Key Activities

Group 1 Project

The community project at Kwara State School for Special Needs, Apata Yakuba in Ilorin East Local Government Area of the state on Sunday, 12th of June, 2022. The deaf students from JSS 3, SSS 1, 2, and 3 classes totalling 149 students for the session were in attendance.

The Team lead, Alabi Tawakalitu Omolara was the moderator for the session. She introduced her team members, the SpaceforHer fellowship, and the reason for the community project after which Haleemah Gegele engaged the students in Personal Development in Leadership.

She encouraged the students to be more proactive than ever before for them to achieve their dreams. The discussion was

around taking up Leadership roles, knowing exactly what they would like to achieve in life, irrespective of their disability, and how to effectively work towards achieving their goals. The students were also encouraged to learn vocational skills as a means of boosting their productivity.

Another fellow, Alli-Oluwafuyi Lateefat Ayeni engaged the students on Overcoming Barriers in Leadership. She encouraged them to see all barriers as opportunities and utilize them positively to grow. While Agboola Fatimah Kehinde worked alongside the official interpreter to convey our messages to the students through sign language skills, Oluwatobi stood in as the official photographer.



Outline of Key Activities

Group 2 Project - Inspire to Lead.

The group organized an event on June 20, 2022, at Community Secondary School, Ogele, Kwara State to inspire secondary school girls to cultivate their ambition and develop leadership skills.

The theme; Inspire to Lead sprouted from much research and vision through the lens of problem-solving surveys conducted by the team members. Amongst others, the team focused on gender socialization and its vices (gender discrimination, and gender inequality).

Therefore, the team took its outreach to the adolescent girls at Ogele who are potential brides and ambassadors someday and encouraged them to develop a positive mindset towards taking leadership roles that can help them fight inequalities and violation of human rights that exist within their community and country at large. It was an interactive session that allowed the students to narrate some of their experiences at home, school, and in their community. They were introduced to the concept of leadership, skills possessed by a leader, examples of leaders, and choosing a role model.



Outline of Key Activities

Group 3 Project

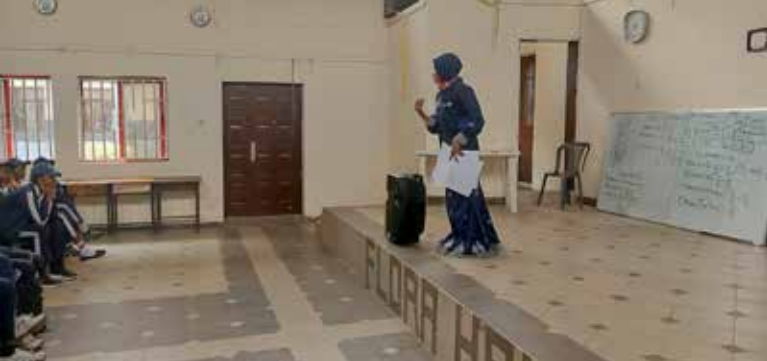
Queen Elizabeth School was visited on the 17th of June, 2022 to discuss the topic of Women's participation in Leadership and Good Governance. Different topics relating to the theme were discussed.

Engr. Joke took the introductory aspect and Mrs. Tolulope took drug abuse emphasizing on

Oseni Islamiat Arinola took women in leadership in all sectors and governance using transitioning from secondary school to university and attesting to her career. Shittu Rukayat took women in politics using herself as a case study while Rukayat Omonike took another aspect of leadership. Souvenirs for their SS3 students to encourage them and remind them constantly of reasons why they need to dream beyond the four walls of their school were discussed.



Outline of Key Activities



Group 4 Project

There was a community project at the Pakata Girls' Day secondary school, Pakata, Ilorin and Flora Schools, Tanke, Ilorin, Kwara State on Wednesday 6, July 2022. There were 56 girls from SS 1 & 2 students from Pakata and 68 female students from Flora Schools for the session. Balqees T. Hamzat, the team lead moderated both sessions starting with an introduction and giving a background of the program. Using the designed and printed placards as teaching aids, Bamidele Damilola engaged the students of Pakata with 4 topics on the Placards and Balqees completed the session using the other four. The roundup speech was taken by one of the teachers Mr Nasir and he shed more light on the topic discussed.

Exploring a similar method at Flora School, Balqees Hamzat used placards to explain influence as a person in any sphere of life, how to be a leader and understand humour. She encouraged the students to learn soft skills that build and boost their productivity and profitability according to the vision they have for their lives.

Damilola Bamidele also engaged the students on what it takes to be a leader. She encouraged them to see leadership as a thing of the moment that will last a lifetime depending on what you do with your authority. Dr. Busola Ogunmodede took time to explain the concept of leading with courage in their self and various positions. She also discussed what a leader should be and how to manage leadership amongst peers. Barakat Jimoh explained the qualities of a leader while sharing that a leader must build herself with knowledge and character. She ended with the quote "For every leader, there exist many peers; that is why a leader must have a positive attitude."

Outline of Key Activities

ON-AIR SESSION at Diamond FM with Balqees Hamzat (Space For Her Fellow)

Photos - [SPACE FOR HER DIAMOND FM - Google Drive](#)

Twenty young women aged between 25 and 45 played a big role in changing things in their communities. They got a lot of attention from the public, with over 1,000,000 people hearing about them through a press conference. This made them symbols of hope and progress for many.

Two of these women were representatives in the government. Miss Shittu Rukayat, for Owode/Oniru Local Government Area, and Mrs. Oluwatoni Adeleke for Irepodun Local Government Area.

Their jobs are to listen to the concerns of the people and make sure they're heard in government.

Their stories were shared on Diamond FM, a radio station that many people in Kwara



State listen to and this has helped spread the message of change to around 5,000 people living in Kwara.

During the on-air session, matters arose leading to the discussion of the topic "In a nation striving for inclusive governance, will women living with disabilities ever fully participate in Nigeria's political landscape?" This was the topic placed on the table during the air session by Miss. Balqees alongside Mr Abdulkareem Abdullateef of @sadyinitiative with Mr Alausa Issa Sanni on Diamond FM radio.

The Key Points for Inclusion for the topic of concern were the need for quality Education, Freedom of Expression, Supportive Organizations whereby Groups and organizations advocating for their rights are crucial for amplifying their voices, and Quotas for Inclusion. Initiatives such as INEC Nigeria's quotas can ensure their representation in political spaces.

To successfully implement these the government must establish clear communication channels for advocacy efforts, Implement robust monitoring/evaluation mechanisms and Ensure grassroots access to support systems.

"Perfection may be elusive, but progress lies in action. Let us embark on this journey, for "done" is the pathway to learning and true empowerment. Together, let's pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future in Nigerian politics."

Diamond fm LIVE 88.7

TOPIC: Female Participation in Kwara State Politics

NATIONAL AFFAIRS
People * Issues * Government

Sat., 07th May Host: Sanni Alausa-Issa
1000 - 1100am

Guests:

Sikiru Issa Nuhu
Research Fellow, BRIC

Tolulope Oibenro
Project Lead, Space for Her Initiative

Download our app

diamond887fm www.diamondfm.net

Scope of Impact

Evaluation

The “Space for Her” fellowship program aimed to empower, educate, and encourage young women to participate in leadership and political offices. The impact of this initiative was significant and multifaceted, as detailed below:



Direct Impact on Fellows

The program directly impacted 20 young women between the ages of 25 and 40. These fellows received intensive training and mentorship from 10 speakers from various backgrounds, equipping them with the necessary skills for profitable and sustainable political participation and leadership.

20
Fellows

10
Speakers

25-40
age bracket



Media and Public Engagement

The press conference held to unveil the fellows garnered extensive media coverage, reaching over 1,000,000 people across Nigeria. This broad reach amplified the visibility of the fellowship and highlighted the importance of women’s participation in politics. A media feature on Diamond FM, which has a listenership of over 50,000 people in Kwara State, further extended the program’s influence. This platform was used to discuss the fellowship and its objectives, thereby raising awareness among the local population.

1,00,000
people reached



Scope of Impact

Evaluation



Political Representation

Two of the fellows have made significant strides by running for political office. Miss Shittu Raqayah, representing the APC party, is contesting for a seat in the House of Assembly for Owode/Oniru Local Government Area. Mrs Oluwatoni Adeleke, under the Labour Party, is running for the House of Representatives to represent the Irepodun Local Government Area. Their candidacies demonstrate the practical impact of the fellowship in fostering political ambitions and actions.



Community Engagement and Voter Education

The fellows conducted market sensitization campaigns in the Oba and Mandate markets. These campaigns encouraged locals to obtain their Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) and participate in the electoral process, thus promoting civic engagement and political participation at the grassroots level.

500+

market people reached



Scope of Impact

Evaluation



Plenary Session Attendance

The fellows attended a plenary session at the Kwara State House of Representatives. This experience allowed them to observe legislative processes firsthand and network with Honourable Representatives, providing valuable insights and connections that could support their future political careers.



Change Projects

Divided into four teams, the fellows executed various change projects. One notable project involved educating about 500 female students across five schools on topics such as women's leadership, breaking societal stereotypes, personal development, responsible leadership, women in politics, and drug abuse. This outreach not only broadened the impact of the fellowship but also inspired the next generation of female leaders.

500+
female students
educated

5
schools visited



The "Space for Her" fellowship has made substantial strides in empowering women, fostering political participation, and promoting leadership among young women. Through direct training, extensive media engagement, community sensitization, and educational outreach, the fellowship has created a ripple effect, influencing not only the immediate participants but also the wider community.

Certificates for Fellows

CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Mahmud Rubayat Omonike

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Oluwatoni Modupe Adeleke

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Dagbo Fatimah Kehinde

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Ahmed Mulikat Temitope

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Ogunmodede Adebunola

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



CERTIFICATE ID: BBYD00455FH



This is to certify that

Alabi T. Omolara Olutayo

Has successfully completed a 6-week
**Fellowship and Community
Development Service Project**

Talolope Gbenra
Project Lead

Abideen Olojuwa
Executive Director



Post Fellowship

Success Story

TOLULOPE JIM-ADETOYE



The SpaceforHer fellowship program put together by the Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative was a great platform to train and empower women in society to be bold, brave and heard. It was a good experience for me, I had teachings and training from super people in the state and outside the country.

The best part of all was the community service session. As a microbiologist and a student of Public Health, I gained more knowledge of what awaits me in the community and ways to get through it. I have had quite several experiences in community development service but #The space for her fellowship gave me a better platform to be bolder, more outspoken, more zeal to impact other women to rise to challenges in society.

So far, I have had sessions in my church community, together with a group of other women to speak and train others on the need to be involved and take up leadership roles starting from the smallest unit in the community which is the family, and to the society at large. I have had opportunities to lead and coordinate several projects since after the training. They've been successful so far and thanks to #spaceforher for more courage and push.

God made the woman to be a helpmate to the man and not a servant, so as women, we need to rise to that duty now. Be helpmates, take up roles, join in the decision-making, join in the forces, and let our voices be heard. Helpmates have equal roles to play and #spaceforher has enlightened me and given me a platform to follow.

Thank you Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative for the opportunity, it was worth it and it is still pushing me to go far and be a better leader.

Post Fellowship

Success Story



DR. MRS. ADEBUSOLA OGUNMODEDE



I work as a Psychiatrist and mental health advocate with over 10 years of experience working in the mental health space in Nigeria. The Space for Her fellowship opened my eyes to the benefits of quality leadership and taught me valuable skill sets to lead in my chosen field.

The 2022 cohort of the Space for Her fellowship finished already, but I have since gained the boldness to upgrade my leadership skills and my public advocacy programs for mental health. In July, in the Mind-Reader's Academy, we had the first-ever mental health literacy virtual boot camp with over 220 participants and I have been interfacing with faith-based and social impact organizations and media outfits to increase the reach of mental health advocacy in Kwara and beyond.

We are in the last planning stages of the Mental Health Advocacy program for secondary Schools which will start on the 16th of Nov 2022, where I and my team of volunteers in the Mind-Reader's Academy will be visiting selected secondary Schools in Ilorin on a consolidated drug abuse prevention campaign. I have indeed been galvanized by my exposure to the Space for Her Fellowship and look forward to a future of solid and far-reaching leadership and impact in the mental health space in Nigeria and beyond.

Post Fellowship

Success Story



SHITTU RUKAYAT MOTUNRAYO



Having been part of the first phase of the #SpaceForHer workshop, the experience during the training was meant to motivate women folks in society towards leadership positions. More importantly, being a candidate of my party (APC), I have been able to implement the lessons I got from the training.

I have been able to further my activities by reaching out to people on the issue-based campaigns, the need to join politics, and the need to allow and support women's candidature.

Also as an aspiring lawmaker, my activities are on quality representation, legislative advancement, executive oversight and constituency.

My priority areas include the strengthening of public institutions, accountability, enforcement of the Child's Rights Act, and empowering people with information locally and globally.

Space For Her activities have been a plus to me. Thank you, Space For Her

Shittu Rukayat Motunrayo - Now a party candidate, Owode Onire Constituency.

Post Fellowship

Success Story



OLUWATONI ADELEKE



I'm happy I attended the space for her fellowship because I got motivated to do more. I got elected as the Vice president for the Africa Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) during the fellowship and when I saw the readiness of women to support each other and the need for more female participation in politics most especially in Kwara state, I decided to seek for nomination to contest in Labour party in Kwara state. I have always been interested in politics and I joined the Labor Party sometime in 2009 but I have been on and off and have not participated much since then.

Now, I got my party's ticket to contest as a member of the Federal House of Representatives in Irepodun/Isin/Oke Ero/Ekiti in Kwara South senatorial district. I am happy I took the bold step as many people tell me that I am the only female candidate contesting for that position in Kwara state across all political parties.



BALQEES HAMZAT



Leadership is a path that everyone must follow. Space For Her taught me a lot about personal and people leadership. Outside the class and Zoom rooms was the need to be looked for by my fellows. The mantle of leadership was beyond being called the class representative but the 20 human representatives over 2 months. The classroom knowledge and personal interactive lessons stretched my horizon of being a leader.

Creatively, a lady is a leader. It was tough yet enlightening and inspiring.

Learning at the feet of key players in community development, and political and personal leadership was a win for me. If I won't count so many blessings in 2022, Space For Her shouldn't be left out.

Post Fellowship

Success Story



BAMIDELE RACHAEL



It's an understatement to say Space4her did a great job on me. Should I start with lectures from excellent men and women of top calibres, to market drives, KWHA sitting visits and many more exciting moments during the fellowship? This is an experience that none of the fellows will be able to forget, as the training built not just future leaders but also good humans who will be worthy of emulation in character and learning.

On a final note, I shouldn't forget to mention that the post-training routine checks and invitations for many opportunities and events by the Executive Director of BBYDI himself. Our fellows are doing wonderfully well in political affairs and other leadership roles.

Yes, we'll keep breaking the bias and limits. Women are strong and capable people. Thank you BBYDI, Space For Her always.



OSENI ISLAMIAT



During the Space For Her fellowship, I learned a lot about women's participation in politics and good governance. Every facilitator did justice to the topics. They made sure we were impacted.

After the fellowship, I became their world ambassador and also OMLA. Space For Her fellowship was the push I needed to keep me going. Thanks to the team behind Space For Her.

Post Fellowship

Success Story



ALLI-OLUWAFUYI LATEEFAT



Since the end of the scholarship, I have assumed more leadership roles in my community and professional association.

I was involved in a community outreach where I spoke to young adults, mainly adolescent girls, on the need to resist harassment of any kind.



SALMAN RABIAT



I have taken a step further in pursuing one of my greatest dreams of going into Tech and I have been doing very well. I am happy SPACE for HER gave me more reasons to believe more in myself.

Challenges

Encountered

Throughout the project, Space For Her encountered several challenges that required careful navigation and proactive solutions. One significant challenge was ensuring consistent engagement and participation from all participants. Given the diverse schedules, commitments, and priorities of the women involved, maintaining their active involvement in the program proved to be a continual effort. Strategies such as personalized communication, flexible scheduling, and interactive sessions were employed to address this challenge and keep participants engaged.

Resource constraints also presented a notable challenge for the project. Limited access to funding and resources impacted the scope and scale of activities that could be offered to participants. This necessitated careful prioritization of initiatives and creative solutions to maximize the impact of available resources. Despite these constraints, efforts were made to provide valuable programming and support to participants within the project's means.

Technical difficulties arose, particularly when incorporating virtual elements into the project. Challenges such as internet connectivity issues, platform compatibility, and software glitches occasionally disrupted the delivery of content and engagement with participants. Quick troubleshooting and alternative communication methods were employed to overcome these obstacles and ensure the smooth operation of the project.

Additionally, navigating cultural sensitivities and nuances in discussions surrounding gender equality, leadership, and politics required careful consideration and cultural competence. Recognizing and respecting diverse perspectives while promoting inclusivity and empowerment was crucial in fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all participants.

Despite these challenges, Space For Her remained committed to its mission of empowering and enabling women to participate in leadership and politics. Through resilience, adaptability, and collaborative efforts, the project successfully navigated these obstacles and continued to drive positive change for women across communities.

Conclusion and

Justification for Scale-up

Space For Her has demonstrated its effectiveness in empowering young women to actively participate in leadership and politics, addressing the systemic barriers that have historically hindered their engagement. Through mentorship, education, and advocacy, we have witnessed tangible outcomes, including increased political representation and civic engagement among our fellows.

The success and impact of Space For Her underscore the urgent need to scale up and expand our efforts to reach more young women across Nigeria. By scaling up the project, we can amplify our impact, reach underserved communities, and empower a new generation of female leaders to drive positive change in their communities and beyond. Moreover, the emergence of two fellows as candidates in the House of Assembly and House of Representatives elections highlights the transformative potential of our program. By continuing to promote female participation in politics and leadership roles, we can contribute to building a more inclusive and representative democracy in Nigeria.

As we look to the future, scaling up Space For Her will enable us to build on our successes, address systemic barriers, and create lasting change for women and girls across the country. Together, we can continue to break barriers, challenge stereotypes, and create a more equitable and inclusive society for all.

Photo Gallery

#SpaceForHer

Speakers' Series



**MR HAMZAT
LAWAL**

CEO,
Connected Development,
Abuja.

Hamzat Lawal is an activist who has successfully led grassroots campaigns in over 40 African countries with over 15 years experience in the non-profit sector and specializes in practical issues associated with Climate Change, Open Data, advocacy campaigns and development policies as it affects rural and deprived grassroots communities.

He is also the Founder of Follow The Money, the largest Pan-African grassroots data-driven movement and leads a team of technology and innovation-driven campaigners to amplify the voices of marginalized grassroots communities in promoting accountability as a catalyst for utilization of public funds focusing on specific communities across Africa. His Follow The Money initiative emerged winner of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Mobilizer 2019 Award, of the Bonn SDG Global Festival of Action, Germany.

He is currently the Chief Executive of Connected Development (CODE), under his leadership in 2017, CODE won the ONE Africa Award which recognizes, rewards, and advances the exceptional work of Africa based organizations dedicated to helping the continent achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, CODE won The Council of Europe Democracy Innovation Award which recognizes Follow The Money as one of the leading ground-breaking initiatives in the world that are promoting democratic principles.

Hamzat was recently appointed as Beyoncé's BeyGood Global Citizen Fellowship as an Advisory Board Member. He was also recognized amongst the 300 most influential Africans in 2019, joining the ranks of Akinola J. Mohammed, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Aliko Dangote. In 2018 & 2019 he was listed as one of the world's 100 most influential people in digital government by Auphilink.

He is currently leading a global education campaign to accelerate girls' education and ending girl-child marriages starting with the Northeast in Nigeria as a Malala Fund Education Champion.

TOPIC Stakeholder Mapping for Increased Women Participation in Politics

Wednesday
8th June
2022 **2:00PM**

@brainbuildersint @brainbuildersinternational @brainbuilders01 www.thebrainbuilders.org

#SpaceForHer

Speakers' Series



**MALLAM LAWAL
OLOHUNGBEBE**

Director,
Centre for Community
Development

Lawal Olohungebebe is a community development practitioner. He did a diploma programme in Sharia and Common Law at the College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies (CAISL), Born. He holds a BSc. in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Maiduguri, Shariah and Common Law (LLB) from University of Born, MSc. Social Work and Community Development from Ladole Akintola University of Technology, Ojo/Ososo.

Lawal is a product of St. Francis Xavier University, Canada where he obtained a Certificate in Facilitation and Training Approaches to Community Change. He attended the Knowledge Train Institute, Barbican in London where he underwent project management training. He also did short courses in Adult Education and Community Engagement of University of Wurzburg, Germany.

Lawal has served as a community development facilitator with some NGOs in Nigeria including the Initiative for Peoples' Good Health (IPGH) Uges, Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria (GHAN) Calabar and Enhancing Nigerians Response to HIV/AIDS (ENR) all in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Olohungebebe Lawal Oloshun is currently the Coordinator of the Kwara State University's Centre for Community Development. He is the Chief Volunteer of the Volunteers of Born Community and the Enrolite (VOICE) and the Volunteer Coordinator of Havnas Institute for Development Studies (HIDS) and Havnas Initiative for Community Advancement (HICA). Lawal is the convener of the popular Kwara Candidates' Forum and the Centrewide Emerging Leaders Fellowship (CELFF).

Lawal speaks Yoruba, English, Arabic fluently and basic Hausa and German. He is happily married with children.

TOPIC How can Community Development enhance Women Political Participation

Saturday
21st May
2022 **10:30AM**

@brainbuildersint @brainbuildersinternational @brainbuilders01 www.thebrainbuilders.org



#SpaceForHer

Speakers' Series



BUKOLA IDOWU

Founding Director,
Kimpac Development
Initiative (KDI).

TOPIC Mapping the Political Terrain

Bukola Idowu ACC, AMPSM, AFD is a public policy oriented socio-development expert with extensive experience in democratic development, policy analysis, community organizing and youth development. Bukola is the Founding Director of Kimpac Development Initiative (KDI). Currently, he is responsible for analysing and enhancing the activities and strategic plan of KDI. A bold visionary, Bukola, with his leadership and management skills, repositioned KDI in less than a decade as one of the fastest non-profits in Nigeria, pioneering democracy courses and leading democracy work in Nigeria. Bukola has also led strategic initiatives in Nigeria that have significant youth development and electoral reforms, one of which is the industry first ever a Youth Development Bill been passed in law in Ogun State. Prior to his current role, Bukola created over seven (7) years of his life to foster Capital and business development in Nigeria with two leading Nigerian banks repositioned for excellence & customer-oriented banking. He is a Trainer as well as a Human Resource Professional. Bukola is an alumnus of the Resurrection Strategy Network of the International Republic Institute (IRI). Through IRI, he has conducted media strategy in 33 African Countries on the value of Corruption Free Youth for entrepreneurs and global organizations. Bukola is a senior member of the Institute of State, Strategy and Management (ISSM), a Member of the Institute of Training and Development (INTD), and an Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ACA).





Photo Gallery



News and Publications

- [Intercontinental News](#)
- [Nigeria Tribune](#)
- [Just Event Online Publication](#)
- [Premium Times](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [The Satcom Media](#)
- [The Trailblazer News](#)
- [This Day](#)
- [Punch](#)
- [Vanguard](#)
- [Medium-The Baseline Blog](#)
- [Medium-The Baseline Blog](#)
- [Medium – BBYDI](#)

Other Publication

- [Arise TV](#)
- <https://afrikaeyes.com/spaceforher-group-calls-for-women-inclusion-in-politics-says-they-national-builders/>
- [FactualTimesNG](#)
- <https://incnews247.com/bbydi-launches-spaceforher-fellowship/>
- <https://choicereporters.com/2022/04/30/reserve-deputy-governor-position-for-women-csos-tell-fg/>
- <https://thenigerianpost.com.ng/2022/04/30/reserve-deputy-governor-position-for-women-automatically-csos-to-fg/>
- <https://presidentialprecinct.org/bukky-shonibare/>
- <https://fij.ng/article/invictus-africa-founder-bukky-shonibare-selected-2021-ford-global-fellow/>
- <https://twitter.com/Rukayatshittu06?s=20>



Acknowledgement

In reflecting upon the journey of Space For Her, we are deeply humbled and profoundly grateful for the myriad individuals and organizations whose collective efforts have illuminated the path to empowerment and equality for women. With heartfelt appreciation, we extend our gratitude to each and every contributor who has played a role, large or small, in making Space For Her a beacon of hope and opportunity.

To our esteemed mentors, whose wisdom, guidance, and unwavering support have ignited sparks of inspiration in the hearts and minds of countless women, we express our sincerest gratitude. Your selflessness in sharing your expertise and experiences has empowered women to dream big, reach for the stars, and shatter barriers with unwavering determination.

To our dedicated facilitators and speakers, whose passion, eloquence, and expertise have enriched our program with invaluable insights and perspectives, we offer our deepest appreciation. Your willingness to lend your voice to the cause of women's empowerment has elevated the discourse and sparked a meaningful dialogue that transcends boundaries and fosters understanding.

To our generous sponsor, GYMobilization, whose steadfast commitment to gender equality and social justice has fueled our mission and propelled us toward our shared vision of a more inclusive and equitable world, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Your financial support, resources, and networks have enabled us to expand our reach, amplify our impact, and provide essential opportunities to women from all walks of life.

To the participants of Space For Her, whose courage, resilience, and thirst for knowledge have breathed life into our program and infused it with purpose and passion, we offer our deepest appreciation. Your willingness to engage, learn, and grow has inspired us all and reaffirmed our belief in the transformative power of education, mentorship, and community.

To our dedicated organizing team and volunteers, whose tireless efforts, creativity, and dedication have fueled the engine of Space For Her and kept the flame of hope burning bright, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Your selflessness, hard work, and commitment to excellence have been the driving force behind our success, and we are endlessly grateful for your unwavering dedication and passion.

Together, we stand on the shoulders of giants, united in our shared commitment to building a future where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive, succeed, and reach her full potential. As we look to the horizon with hope and optimism, we carry with us the lessons, memories, and friendships forged through Space For Her, knowing that together, we can create a world where gender equality is not just a dream, but a reality for all.

With boundless gratitude and admiration,

Abideen Olasupo,
Executive Director,
BBYDI

Appendix

Google Drive Link with publication link that shows the activities to date.

- [Google drive: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AmXSunU0vAb0HY_6Lt9i4yRbO1IX27BZ?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AmXSunU0vAb0HY_6Lt9i4yRbO1IX27BZ?usp=sharing)

Notice

This document was designed and produced by Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative as an output material under the Specef for Her Project

Initiative funded by the Global Mobilization.

©Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative

(BBYDI) 2022. All rights reserved.

Contact Us

Phone: (+234) 706 877 5529

Mail: brainbuilderedu@gmail.com

Web: www.thebrainbuilders.org

Address: 12 City of Refuge, GRA, Ilorin,
Kwara State, Nigeria