

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION AND PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVE

THE WOMAN

MAGAZINE



POLITICS
GENDER EQUALITY
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
PEACE AND SECURITY
LIFESTYLE

1ST EDITION



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ABOUT


WOMEN EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION AND PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVE (WEPBI)




WEPBI is a non-profit organization with a global focus, that has relentlessly championed the cause of women, especially those neglected within the rural communities improving on their political and economic relevance through inclusivity in decision making, Peace Building and conflict Resolution.

Over the years WEPBI has made a remarkable success in building the capacity of young girls and women in various communities on the inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making, economic and mental empowerment, and personal development skill. We are striving to expand our reach to other states for women voice to be heard.


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WEPBI

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The organization participate in politics, electioneering processes and governance. This article x-rays practical and wiewhtly issues affecting and preventing women from political or decision-making/leadership participation.



Editor's Notes

The issue of gender equality and women's participation in leadership/decision-making and politics has remained and will continue to occupy the front burner of the commission's engagement on inclusivity and equality. Although the endorsement of 35% affirmative action women's political advancement and representatives in a democratic government in Nigeria drew inspiration and motivation from the national gender policy which states that gender equality and women empowerment are basic human rights that lie at the foundation of equitable and integrated development. the involvement of women in political party management and election since the return of democracy in 1999 has no good statistical improvement, and the average political representation of women in Nigeria from 1999 to 2019 is 3% in 2002, in 2007 it was 8.3%, in 2011 made 10.2%, in 2015 it was 11.2% and finally in 2019 they move drastically down to 7.9%, with this data of women representation and the signs of the performance is worrisome and needs attention.

OGUADIMMA IJEOME JOY

Executive Director WEPBI

WOMEN PARTICIPATION HURDLES



CULTURE AND RELIGION

Religion is an accomplice in the stereotyping of women and reinforces the barriers that prevent them from participating politically, economically and socially. Culture in other words is intertwined with religion and they reinforce each other. Today, women play Major roles in religion because men play an active part in entrenching culture, particularly the advantageous ones. Unfortunately, little or no democracy is practised around culture and religion which is why the role of culture and religion remains an active and strong hurdle against women's political participation. Scanning through religion, most users of the pulpit are men that become popular, highly influential and more acceptable even when their leaders are no better than that of a woman. They indirectly present to society the popularity and leadership role as belonging to men and not to women. If this is juxtaposed with the poorly interpreted scriptural quotes of the man being the head and the woman the tail, then it is a game over for women.

Some cultural practice are more damaging, they may not directly speak against women in politics but indirectly eliminates women. In a political gathering of men and women especially in Igbo land when a kola nut is presented, women politicians are not expected to participate or dip their hand during the blessing and sharing of it which indirectly tells the whole story of her place in that political gathering. The fact that all the traditional rulers and town union president generals are men, these are not just a public position but they are the breeding ground for future leadership/decision-makers and political participation.

INEFFECTIVE SOCIETAL PROTECTION

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - (UNHCR) 1325 called for an increase in the role of women in decision-making as regards conflict prevention, management, and resolution. It was recorded that between 2003 to 2022 six female politicians lost their lives in political violence. In most cases, society turned to blame women when they fall victim to violence and blame them for trading where the lions traded.

The security architecture also does not have expanded training on the protection of women. However, the fact has been well established that women and girls suffer disproportionately from (SGBV in full first-time use) and its vice. SGBV is a violation of human rights including recognized fundamental rights and freedom under the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (CFRN) as amended, with zero tolerance on all forms of sexual harassment, abuse, exploitation, and safeguarding. According to the VAPP (in full too) act 2015, violence means any act or attempt which causes or may cause any person physical, sexual, psychological, verbal, emotional, or economic harm whether this occurs in private or public life in peacetime and conflict situations.

With all these policies, the cost of justice still makes it difficult for most women to seek legal redress and protection. In most cases, the hatchet is buried because pursuing the matter will be seen as bad publicity, which amounts to double jeopardy. One of the potential disincentives to participating in politics is the crudeness of Nigerian politics which brooks no opposition and revolves dissent by visiting the state-based/sponsored or non-state or one side/private violence on political opponents. The do-or-die nature of politics in Nigeria is barely veiled and most discouraging for women.



POOR MENTORING AND CONSISTENCY

Politics is a career and the practical aspect of it is not studied within the four walls of any institution. It is learned while on the job and in most cases from the scratch. Learning of politics includes full participation in the entire electoral cycle, keeping an eye on the landmarks to the journey, and participation in political party activities, including the sponsorship and gradual elevation into political party leaders from the ward, L.G.A, State and National levels. Working as a political party official presents certain useful information that prepares a woman who has an eye for the future. Having a reliable experienced politician that one can serve to tap their wealth of knowledge is also very essential. For the sake of publicity, consistency of participation without being discouraged by pitfalls is useful, it helps to build experience, courage and conviction.

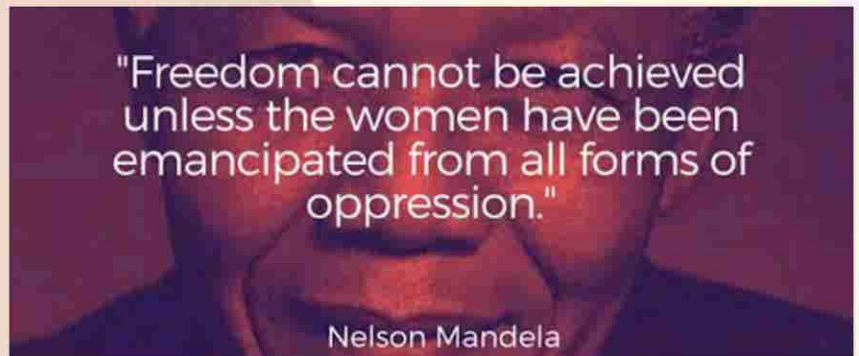
Other factors include but not limited to the following:

- Repressive nature of socialization and lack of self-esteem
- The lack of supporting framework
- Lack of finance and economic support
- Women's multiple roles such as reproductive, productive and community roles etc.



OVERCOMING THESE HURDLES

- System reform - starting with the electoral system by amending the law to comply with NGP, empowering INEC to reject non-gender-sensitive party lists, engendering internal party democracy and abolishing women's wing over time. Then enforcing the political party system to comply with the 35% NGP affirmative action.
- Sufficient knowledge of the INEC gender policy and understanding of the electoral laws/guidelines.
- Advocacy and partnership for internal party
- Addressing and reforming structures such as customs, religion, constitution/legal framework at states/corporate/organization policies and behaviors, activate ACJA and enforce existing laws/comprehensive security sector reforms.



WHAT WOMEN CAN AND MUST DO

- Develop self-esteem and respect for other women
- Build bridges across parties ethnic and religious lines to promote shared agenda
- Practice and promote gender solidarity- genuinely support and raise funds for female candidates

CONCLUSION

It is no doubt that investing in a girl child creates a ripple effect that yields multiple benefits, not only for individual women but also for families, communities and countries. studies show that increasing women's participation in politics leads to greater investment in all sectors of economic growth and livelihood. The exclusion of women from the economy and political arena is an affront to the spirit and values of democratic governance and a free-market economy. Therefore, the state parties shall take specific action according to article 9 of the protocol to the African charter on human and people's rights of women in Africa, to promote participative governance and equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that women participate without any discrimination in all election and are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessity for women's rights and interests to be taken into account. According to Beijing platform for action 1995: 181 - without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making the goal of equality, development and Peace cannot be achieved.

EXCLUSION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: THE NIGERIA DEVELOPMENT PRICE



By FELICIA ONIBON

INTRODUCTION

Evolving job needs are empowering women and leveling the playing field. The new service economy doesn't rely on physical strength but on skills that come easily to women, such as determination, attention to detail and measured thinking. The female brain is naturally wired for long-term strategic vision and community building. The emergence of female leaders can become a centrifugal force for good in the world. For the first time, we're seeing examples of female leaders emerging from across the generations to cross-weave their knowledge and drive for change. Importantly, there are now ambitious and capable women running influential organizations who can activate physical change through technology and policy.

Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres. Still, women continue to be vastly under-represented in decision-making in politics, businesses, and communities, especially in developing societies.

What happens when Women are not in leadership Positions ?

Women as leaders and decision-makers at all levels are critical in advancing gender justice and gender equality—and furthering economic, social, and political progress for all.

When women are meaningfully represented and engaged in leadership bodies—such as legislatures, courts, executive boards, and community councils—laws, rulings, and decisions are more likely to be inclusive, representative, and take diverse views into account.





WHAT IF WOMEN ARE BETTER LEADERS

By Felicia Onibon
National Coordinator
100 Women Lobby Group

October 2022

- Women's leadership within households, including decision-making over land and household income, improves access to education and healthcare for their families.
- Countries with a greater proportion of women as top decision-makers in legislatures have lower levels of income inequality.
- Peace agreements are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years if women leaders are engaged in their creation and execution.
- When women hold more executive leadership positions, their companies are more profitable: companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 21% more likely to outperform the national average.

If Women Are Better Leaders, Then Why Are They Not In Charge?

Over the past decades, scientific studies have consistently shown that on most of the key traits that make leaders more effective, women tend to outperform men.

For example, humility, self-awareness, self-control, moral sensitivity, social skills, emotional intelligence, kindness, and a prosocial and moral orientation, are all more likely to be found in women than men as well as in educational settings.



Women are more likely to lead democratically, show transformational leadership, be role models, listen to others and develop their subordinates' potential, and score higher on measures of leadership effectiveness than male leaders.



And if we did, then the average performance of leaders would not be as poor as it is today. The painful truth is that feminism is a data-driven bias. This is why, according to McKinsey, the world's GDP is \$12 trillion lower today than it would be if we advanced towards gender equality. According to the World Bank, gender inequality is costing us \$23,620 per person in lost earnings, and \$160 trillion in human capital loss (twice the global GDP). So, instead of optimizing our world for progress, wealth, and fairness, we choose to perpetuate a status quo that benefits those who are in charge. To the surplus of men who arrived at the top not because of merit, but because of privilege, deception, or greed, gender equality is like Turkey voting for Christmas.

According to Abosede Alimi (George-Ogan), 2021, women's low representation in decision-making roles has serious concerns for society, first and foremost because men and women do not share the same policy preferences.



Studies in India and civil society—to balance power in leadership and decision-making:

- Commit to gender parity in leadership.
- Implement laws and regulations that guarantee a safe and open environment for women's participation and leadership.
- Establish policies and practices that encourage women's leadership and promote gender parity.
- Invest in and develop public services and programs that enable women to succeed as leaders.

- Enable and support women's organizations and movements.
- Change the narrative on women in leadership, and confront sociocultural drivers of gender inequality.

In conclusion, Nigeria has a lot of lessons to learn from other notions. As a country, she cannot afford to discountenance the contributions of her women. Women have proven their worth in all spheres of life and need to be given a fair playing ground to thrive and effectively contribute to national development. Ensuring women's participation in politics and governance requires deliberate actions by the government and all critical stakeholders. The current trend of low representation cannot be allowed to continue if we want to achieve growth and development in Nigeria.

The Author



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Change Managers International Network





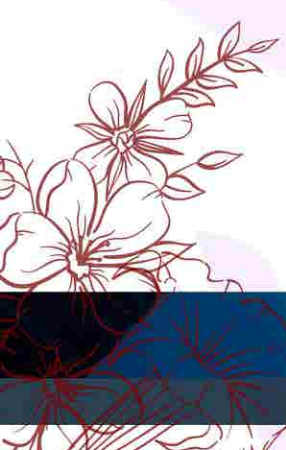
NIGERIA, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognizing how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn't weigh gender expectations." Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.



In her well-known statement on gender, Chimamanda elaborates on the freedom that will be granted to women if cultural conventions and expectations are disregarded while ensuring gender equality. The majority of people in Nigeria are women, and they are well-known for being important community builders, managers, mothers, producers, and other responsibilities. Due to their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres, women contribute more than half as much to the social and economic development of civilizations as men do. However, their involvement in formal and informal organizations and processes that make decisions about the use of resources produced by both men and women in society is still minimal. A key characteristic of a traditional society is patriarchy, which has historically characterized Nigerian society. Men can rule over women because of a set of social interactions with a material foundation that fosters this process.

By allowing gender-differentiated terms in inheritance rights and legal adulthood, by tacitly condoning domestic and sexual violence, and by sanctioning differential pay for equal or comparable work, the patriarchal society sets the parameters for women's structurally unequal position in families and markets. Male dominance has been ingrained in the framework of social organization and institutions at all levels of leadership for generations as a result of tradition, culture, and religion dictating how men and women should interact. The exclusion of women from the workforce, the economy, politics, business, family, and inheritance are justified by patriarchy.



THE EXPERIENCE

Obialunamma E. Omekedo

I can still clearly recall a university-related incident. It contributed to my increasing utter disdain for the patriarchal society in Nigeria. During a presentation, a lecturer casually said that they thought it was crazy for girls to consistently outperform men in the field. I was perplexed by it and questioned why the lecturer did not simply encourage the male classmates to improve their academic performance instead of disparaging the effort and commitment made by the female students. I thought it was dishonourable and embarrassing. This supports the argument that gender equality must be attained because it affects all societal institutions and structures.

Scholars, activists, feminists, and development workers have been interested in this position of women in society concerning men as well as the subordination, oppression, and marginalization of women for a very long time. The concerns surrounding what is sometimes known as gender inequality have gained significant attention in recent decades. Research over the years has made it abundantly evident that there is a gender distribution imbalance in society and across all economic sectors. Gender disparity persists as a threat to society despite several initiatives implemented by the United Nations, governments, and other private organizations to decrease it to the barest minimum.

Data indicate that Nigeria still has to make significant progress toward gender parity, and the economy is suffering as a result. Another McKinsey analysis indicates that if women participated in the economy to the same degree as males, Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) might increase by 23 per cent, or \$229 billion, by 2025. Nigeria will need to address these figures to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 target of achieving gender equality for all by the year 2030.



GENDER
EQUALITY
IS A ~~HUMAN FIGHT,~~
NOT A Female Fight.



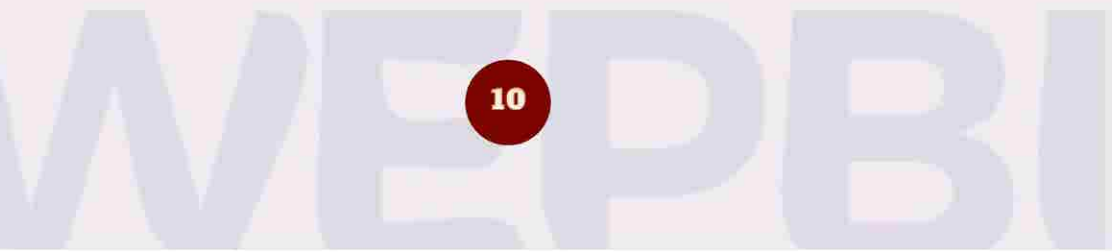


It is impossible to ignore the significance of the Sustainable Development Goals call for gender equality and the reduction of inequities when examining their 17 action points, which represent the most comprehensive global roadmap to shared human growth. It is unlikely that the world could achieve significant success in almost any of the SDGs' action areas - from ensuring universal access to high-quality healthcare, education, and sanitation to reducing poverty and hunger, creating productive jobs, and fostering strong institutions - without making significant progress toward gender equality and reducing inequalities. This is especially true for Nigeria, where gender bias not only keeps women in the backseat but also prevents the nation from reaching its enormous potential.

Nigerian women are severely denied their reproductive rights in the healthcare system, and they have one of the highest rates of maternal mortality worldwide.

**YOUR
POWER
IS YOUR
RADICAL
SELF.
FIND IT.**

Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone's responsibility.





The Reality

In the financial industry, more than half of unbanked women are also financially excluded. Sociocultural factors continue to influence how women are treated as inferior to their male counterparts across legal institutions and familial relationships. The gender equality movement in Nigeria will benefit greatly from a focus on women's economic empowerment, poverty and financial inclusion, gender and social policy, gender and access to employment, workplace gender dynamics and policies, gender disability and inclusion, agriculture and food security, gender and health, access to reproductive rights, access to education, closing the gender gap in STEM, and gender and digital inclusion.

The ENDSARS demonstration in 2020 has significantly advanced the argument that promoting and upholding gender equality would only benefit society. A collection of feminists, including BBC Sex for Grades Kiki Mordi, Ozzy Etomi, and many others, created the Feminist Coalition in 2020. During the ENDSARS movement, they actively participated in supplying the facilities that the protesters required. Additionally, they assisted with legal matters, rescued hurt people, and generally disseminated knowledge about the cause. Currently, they raise their voices in support of women's and girls' rights, this further goes to strengthen the narrative that young Nigerian women and girls are already dominating in all of these fields, proving that they can give the country the socioeconomic boost it needs.

A greater emphasis on addressing the intersectional gender imbalances that are a key component of these issues for Nigeria, which is struggling with slow development, falling standards of living, weak institutions, and stagnant economic growth, could be the key to unlocking the wealth of opportunities the nation has to offer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi, my name is Oby. I am a young feminist creative who enjoys freelancing projects.

Some of my works are published on www.feministhub.org, www.globalplatforms.org, ispeak.africa, voicebox.site and <https://www.theayanfe.com/2022/09/23/foreign/>.

In Ngozi Okonjo-Iwela's words; ***"Get anyone you know talking about gender stereotypes. These false assumptions cannot survive being held up to the light of day."***





By Ugochukwu Loveth
(Biochemist)

WHAT'S MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, that enables people to cope with the stresses of life and realize their abilities to learn well, work adequately, and contribute/determine how they relate to others in their environment. It influences how we think, feels, act, and make healthy choices.

Mental well-being can be characterized as a combination of how we feel (our emotions and life satisfaction) and how we function (relationships with others, personal control, purpose in life, and independence).

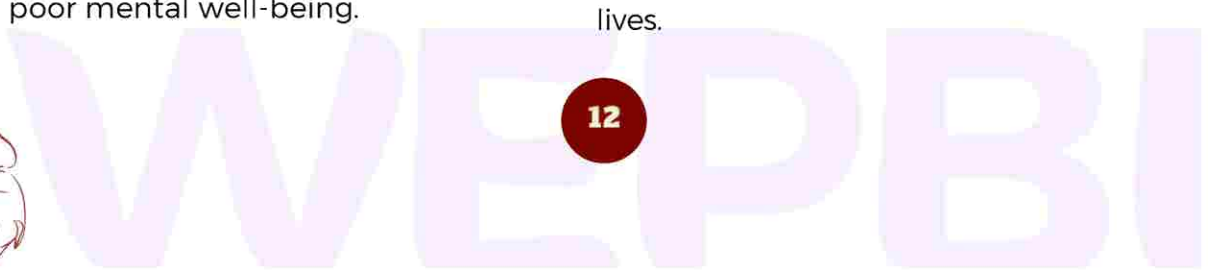
It is something that can affect anyone, both old and young, and anyone can experience good or poor mental well-being.

It is something that can affect anyone, both old and young, and anyone can experience good or poor mental well-being.

WHY IS WELL-BEING USEFUL FOR HEALTH?

Well-being is a valid population outcome measure beyond morbidity, mortality, and economic status that tells us how people perceive their life is going. Results from cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental studies find that well-being is associated with:

- Self-perceived health.
- Longevity.
- Healthy behaviours.
- Mental and physical illness.
- Social connectedness.
- Productivity.
- Factors in the physical and social environment.
- Poor mental health makes us more vulnerable to certain physical health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes
- When our mental health is good, we are better able to cope with the difficult times in our lives.
- Good mental health enables us to work more productively and reach our full potential.
- it enhances our mood, and self-esteem and promotes a better relationship with people in our lives.



ELEMENTS OF MENTAL WELLBEING

For overall health and well-being, we must look at the four key elements that play a role in our well-being, they include our mind, body, spirit, and environment (including our relationships). They don't only play a key role, they are interconnected which is why when one is out of whack, the others are affected.

It is important that when we're not actively performing, take a step back and assess our mind (our thoughts and feelings), our body, our spirit, and our environment to see what we can do to improve our well-being.



FOR A HEALTHY MIND

We all know the feeling of shaky hands and sweaty palms when we're feeling nervous, this is just how our thoughts and feelings have an impact on our bodies.

On a larger scale, heightened stress or anxiety can lead to a panic attack, and to get in tune with your mental health, ask yourself:

- How often have I felt stressed, anxious or on edge?
- How often have I not been able to stop worrying, or being hopeless?
- Have I found pleasure in doing things I enjoy, such as hobbies or have little interest in doing things that usually make me happy?

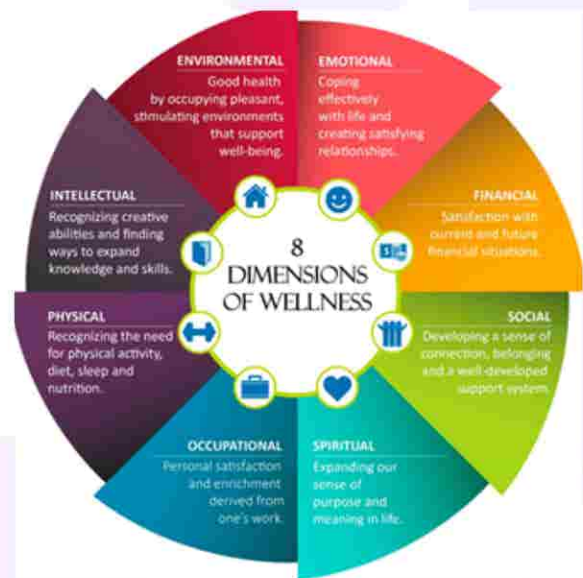
It's true that most times when we're feeling stressed or down, it can be difficult to open up

to someone or ask for help, but no one should have to carry their burdens alone. Talking to someone about your worries weighs the lifted off your shoulders, so it's important to consider talking to a trusted friend or family member or a mental health professional.

FOR A HEALTHY BODY

Research tells us that adequate sleep, activity, and a balanced diet can improve mental well-being, and can also help us manage mental health problems. When we're busy or stressed, or when we're feeling down, it's impossible to look after our physical health very well.

For some people struggling with acute anxiety or depression, even getting out of bed, eating and showering can be difficult or impossible. But every small thing we can do counts.



To check in with your physical well-being, ask yourself:

- How often do I have adequate sleep, enough not to feel tired when I woke up?
- How often have I done some form of exercise or physical activity?
- And how often have I missed meals?

If you can do little things to improve your sleep, to get active, or to make sure you don't skip meals, it can make a big difference to your well-being.



FOR A HEALTHY SPIRIT

Spirituality is often associated with religion and faith, but spirituality has a much broader meaning which can apply to people of all religions/faith and people of no faith.

We can look at spirituality as having a life with meaning or purpose. What gets you up in the morning? What makes you feel whole? What are your beliefs and values?

When we're feeling down or stressed, or struggling with illness, we are neither connected strongly nor disconnected from it.

To connect and check in with your spirit, we can use the Japanese concept of Ikigai to ask ourselves:

- What am I good at?
- Who do I love?
- What does the world need?
- What contribution can I make to the community, based on my answers above?

Finding meaning in our lives contributes to feelings of happiness and fulfilment, which in turn influences our well-being.



FOR A HEALTHY SPIRIT

There are so many elements of our environment which can have an impact on our well-being; the house we live in; our relationships; our work or school environment; and even the weather!

So check in with yourself and ask:

- Do I feel safe and happy in my home?
- Do I feel valued at work, and do I work in an environment which encourages me to work well and reach my potential?
- Are my friends and family supportive of me, and can I turn to any of them when I need support?

MOSTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What causes mental health problems?

Mental health problems can have a wide range of causes. It's likely that for many people there is a complicated combination of factors - although different people may be more deeply affected by certain things than others.



For example, the following factors could potentially result in a period of poor mental health:

- Childhood abuse, trauma, or neglect
- social isolation or loneliness
- experiencing discrimination and stigma, including racism
- bereavement (losing someone close to you)
- severe or long-term stress
- drug and alcohol misuse
- domestic violence, bullying or other abuse.
- significant trauma as an adult, such as military combat, being involved in a serious incident in which you feared for your life, or being the victim of a violent crime
- physical causes -like, a head injury or a neurological condition such as epilepsy can have an impact on your behavior and mood.

Although lifestyle factors including work, diet, drugs and lack of sleep can all affect your mental health

If you're unable to cook a meal, it's better to eat something rather than eating nothing at all. If you're unable to sleep, laying down and letting your body rest is better than no rest. And if you're unable to exercise, just walking around, or dancing in your room, can make a significant difference to how you're feeling both mentally and physically.



ICT - A TOOL FOR WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

By EVELYN OTI

The world is going Global as the clock ticks every second. This has influenced development ranging from Digital infrastructures to Digital Economy.

It is on this note that CCAPI is encouraging more women and Girls to engage in Information Communication Technology (ICT) such as digital marketing, graphic design, virtual arts etc. This would enhance more engagement of women and Girls in the digital world which would contribute to the reduction of unemployment and improve the livelihood of Women and Girls.

2022 Multi-dimensional Poverty Index reveals that 63% of people living in Nigeria are poor. 80% of married girls between the ages of 12-17 among this in Child Marriage and 60% of unmarried girls are poor.

Gender disparity continues to affect the overall population with 1 in 7 poor people (19.1 million) living in a household in which a man has completed primary school, but no woman has done so. Therefore, CCAPI believes in expanding its reach on women's economic empowerment to equip the female Gender with various skills such as ICT and other vocational training.

On the WWL project, over 700 women have been empowered through vocational training from 2019 to 2022. Our special appreciation goes to Actionaid Nigeria and Global Affairs Canada on the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Nigeria Project.

Based on collaborative efforts from governmental and non-governmental organizations, CCAPI intends to promote women and girls' inclusion in ICT to boost economic empowerment for Women and Girls.

We believe Every Girl should take a step into the digital Space.



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Evelyn Oti obtained her first and second degree in Computer Systems and Software Engineering from the universities of Greenwich and Glasgow, UK. Her vision is driven by her passion to advocate for the rights of vulnerable women and children in the society. In Child Care and Adult Protection Initiative (CCAPI) she applies innovation to enhance interventions on women and children related projects. She has also contributed to the enhancement of health related project for women and children through software deployment and her experiences in social and health care. Through her supervision and guidance, CCAPI has implemented several projects ranging from Healthcare to Social support services as well as Legal aid. This is inclusive of Gender Based Violence and Women Empowerment, where she (Evelyn) speaks as a voice for the Women. Evelyn provides counselling and advocates for justice on culprits of Gender Based Violence. Through CCAPI Evelyn Oti has also provided a Skilled Empowerment Centre for Women at the Women Development Centre Calabar, where she availed women and girls the opportunity to be empowered with various skills. The centre also makes provision for women to share and support themselves on issues related to Gender Based Violence. In CCAPI Evelyn works in collaboration with FIDA, Women for Women and other partners to resolve Gender Based Violence issues. Evelyn is an author to various articles on Women and Children such as ; A study on Help for Teenage Mothers, Children at Risk of Substance Abuse. She has also written some collection of poems titled; The Cold Claws of the Unkind and other poems.

Based on the rape pandemic in March 2020, Evelyn Oti wrote a poem titled 'We Cry Out', where she made outstanding contributions against the injustice perpetrated on the female Gender.



WEPBI





THE

Life is a Journey

JOURNEY

2023

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