



EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE (EWEI) EDUCATIONAL SUBSIDY PROGRAMME (ESP)

Problem Statement

"Over the last decade, Nigeria's exponential growth in population has put immense pressure on the country's resources and on already overstretched public services and infrastructure. With children under 15 years of age accounting for about 45 per cent of the country's population, the burden on education and other

sectors has become overwhelming. Forty per cent of Nigerian children aged 6-11 do not attend any primary school with the Northern region recording the lowest school attendance rate in the country, particularly for girls. Despite a significant increase in net enrollment rates in recent years, it is estimated that about 4.7 million children of primary school age are still not in school.

Increased enrollment rates have also created challenges in ensuring quality education and satisfactory learning achievement as resources are spread more thinly across a growing number of students. It is not rare to see cases of 100 pupils per teacher or students sitting under trees outside the school building because of the lack of classrooms. Another challenge in Nigeria is the issue of girls' education. In the North particularly, the gender gap remains particularly wide and the proportion of girls to boys in school ranges from 1 girl to 2 boys to 1 to 3 in some States.

Many children do not attend school because their labour is needed to either help at home or to bring additional income into the family. Many families cannot afford the associated costs of sending their children to school such as uniforms and textbooks. For others, the distance to the nearest school is a major hindrance. Another cause of low enrolment, especially in the North, is cultural bias. According to current data, 30% of pupils drop out of primary school and only 54% transit to Junior Secondary Schools. Reasons for this low completion rate include child labour, economic hardship and early marriage for girls. For all these reasons, prospects of Nigeria achieving Education For All by 2015 remain frail."

Source : UNICEF- http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/children_1937.html

EWEI's Intervention:

After examining the current challenges facing girl child education in northern Nigeria, Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI) launched the Educational Subsidy Programme (ESP) in order to encourage girl child education at all levels. The ESP aims to subsidize the cost of books, uniforms and exam fees for girls. The ESP also provides opportunities for beneficiaries to receive additional skills like soft skills in leadership and social entrepreneurship and augment their education; providing capacity building in information technology, health, business and related fields. These seminars are called Empowerment Seminars and are held quarterly. The girls also receive mentoring from EWEI staff and Ambassadors.

Process:

Prospective beneficiaries are selected after a survey at selected public schools to ascertain girls who are excelling academically. Such girls are then interviewed and asked to write essays and tested. The potential beneficiaries' homes are also visited in the process to get a better sense of their backgrounds and their parent(s)/guardian(s) consent. The rigorous process is then finalized by the choosing of beneficiaries of the ESP by the Management of EWEI. Students must show consistent academic excellence over a period of 6 terms/semesters prior to their consideration for the ESP. Upon completion of their secondary schools while they await admission into tertiary institutions, ESP beneficiaries also get an opportunity to serve as volunteer interns with EWEI, providing further capacity building and experience in the non-profit development sector. In 2010, 7 students from 4 public schools were signed unto the ESP and as at 2013, 5 of those girls are still benefitting from the ESP.



BENEFICIARIES

JEMILAT ABDULKAREEM



Jemilat was born to the family of Mohammed Abdulkareem and was a student of Government Girls Secondary School, Doka Constitution Road, Kaduna. Jemilat's strong subjects are Intergrated Science, Business Studies, Mathematics and English Language. While in school she was a member of the HIV/AIDS club. In 2011, Jemilat's father passed away but that was an inspiration for her to work harder in school as she always remembers how much her father supported and encouraged her education. Her principal was very willing to recommend her for the ESP.

Jemilat's outstanding performance in school resulted in her selection as an ESP Beneficiary on 12th May 2010 at the age of 14 and since then had been an excellent student representing the school in various competitions, essay writing and debates. Jemilat is well known for her good attitude in school; shy, but dedicated to her studies. Jemilat currently volunteers with EWEI and her duties include monitoring ESP activities and giving feedback on its impact, participating in monthly staff meetings and assisting the staff in the office. She aspires to be a medical Doctor in future and be of help to the less privileged in the society. Jemilat's says of her time at EWEI Offices, " I am learning a lot and now know how to a lot of things I didn't know before."

BILKISU GWABIN

18 year old Bilkisu was adopted by the family of Missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Ali Gwabin during their visit to her village. She attended Government Girls Secondary School Ungwar Rimi Kaduna before she joined Government Girls Secondary School Independence Way Kaduna where she underwent her Senior Secondary Class and wrote her SSCE. Bilkisu was a member of the Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) and Economic and Financial Crimes (EFCC) Clubs.

Her strong subjects include Integrated Science, English Language, Mathematics, Physical Education and Christian Religious Studies. Bilkisu was selected as the Head Girl of her school was known as an excellent student by all her teachers and students in addition to her dedication and respect for others. Both of her foster parents are also deceased but her Aunty, Tina Gwabin; has been a dedicated guardian.

In her words:" I am a good girl who is hardworking in school, honest and gentle. I am a respectful student who has the determination to become somebody in future. I am a person who works hard and who always uses opportunity when it comes my way."



Her good reputation and perfect results in her academics made her a beneficiary of the ESP on 26th April 2010. Bilkisu is also known for her care for other students and aspires to be a Pharmacist in the future. Bilkisu will start her internship at EWEI in August 2013.



ZUBAIDA JA'AFAR

Zubaida is 17 years old and was born to the family of Alhaji and Hajia Bawale Ja'afar and attended Government Girls Secondary School Ungwar Rimi Kaduna before she gained admission into Kaduna Capital School. She is a hardworking student and always dedicated to her studies. She is known as one of the best students in her class. Zubaida has been a member of the Muslim Students Society (MSS) and Economic and Financial Crimes (EFCC) Clubs.



Her strong subjects include English Language, Mathematics and Science. She enjoys playing handball.

In 2010 she performed excellently in the ESP consideration Test where she made an outstanding result and led to her selection as an ESP beneficiary. Zubaida is a quiet, cheerful student and always inquisitive. She wants to be a medical Doctor in the future as part of her contribution to the society.

A recommendation from an official of the Ministry of Education in Kaduna states that : " She is capable of studies, hardworking, respectful and obedient student. You will not regret giving her this award."

BILIKISU SULEIMAN:

Bilkisu was born to the family of Alhaji Suleiman Abubakar from and is 16 years old. She attended Government Girls Secondary School Doka Kaduna. She is currently a student of GGSS Doka and in SS2. Bilkisu is a member of the Muslim Students Society and Debating society. She has maintained consistent academic record and her principal was very willing to recommend her for the ESP.

Bilkisu is of a good character and a happy girl actively participating in various EWEI projects in her school. She was selected as an ESP Beneficiary on 15th May, 2010.

**KHADIJAT ADO**

Khadijat is 16 years old and was born to the family of Ado Garba Muhammad. She attended Government Girls Secondary School Doka Kaduna and was in JSS2 when the programme began.

She is currently a student of Federal Government College Kaduna and in SS2. Khadijat is of good character and hardworking in school, always give most of her time studying her books. Khadijat has been a member of the Press and Drama Clubs and has maintained a consistent record of academic excellence.



A recommendation from her principal states that : " She is a brilliant student, therefore she is recommended to you for consideration for any assistance as may be required."

Due to her excellent result in the ESP consideration Test she was selected as a beneficiary of the ESP on 17th April, 2010.

Thank you! For your mentoring and support for the ESP

ABANTU For Development, Mavis Orjime, Christiana Arams, Joy Anthony and Judy Kent



EWEI ESP Beneficiaries leading in the World Environment Day marked on 5 June 2012



EWEI Empowerment Seminar September 2012



EWEI Empowerment Seminar January 2012



EWEI Empowerment Seminar November 2010



Presentation of materials donated by Ms Judy Kent at EWEI Empowerment Seminar January 2012



Goal Setting Exercise at EWEI Empowerment Seminar



EWEI Empowerment Seminar January 2013