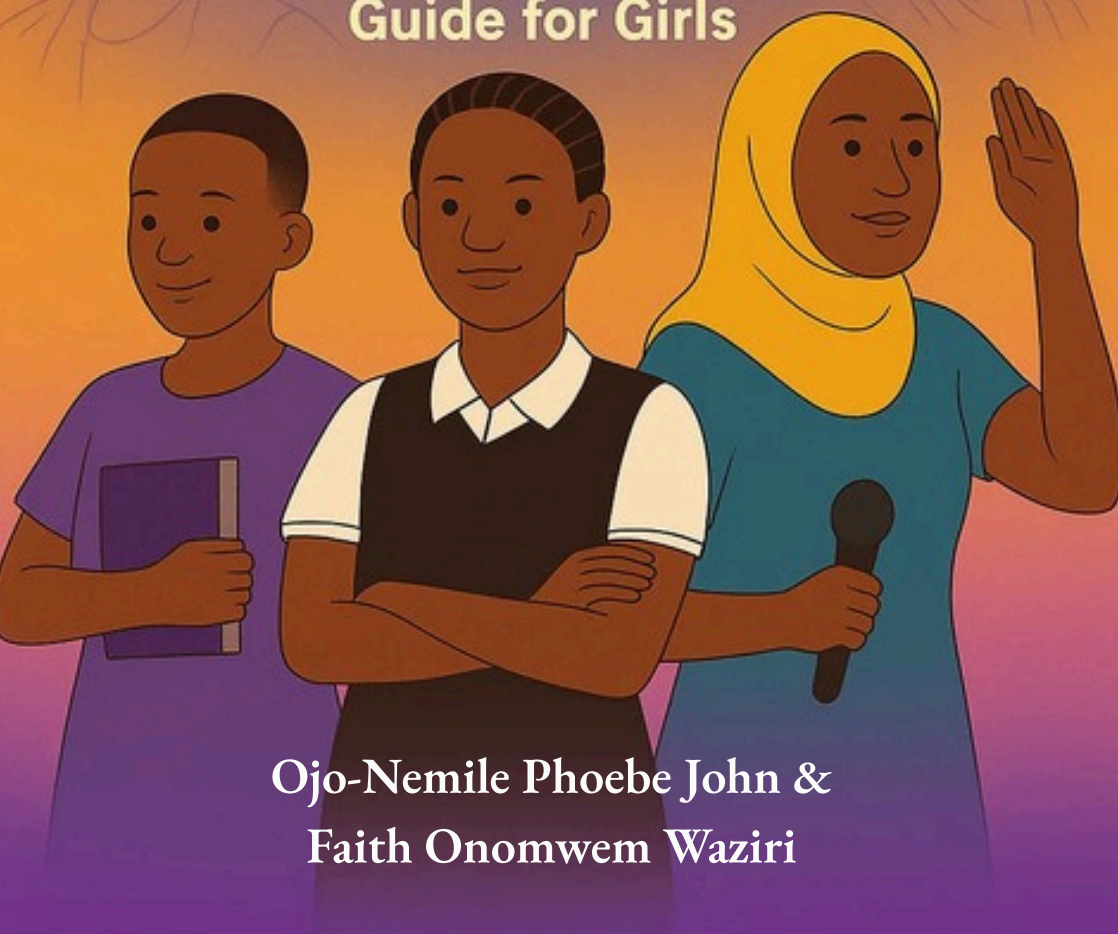


READY TO LEAD

A Civic and Leadership
Guide for Girls



Ojo-Nemile Phoebe John &
Faith Onomwem Waziri

Ready to Lead

A Civic and Leadership Guide for Girls

FOREWORD

By Dr Azeezat Yishawu

“when girls have the right tools, knowledge, and confidence, they become unstoppable. They unleash their potential, turning ideas into action and challenges into change.”



Dr. Azeezat Yishawu

Senior Special Assistant on Policy Development & Analysis to the Honourable Minister for Youth Development, and First Female Speaker of the Nigerian Youth Parliament

Leadership isn't something we are born knowing, it's something we grow into when we're seen, heard, and supported. But for too long, many girls have been made to feel like leadership is a space reserved for others.

That's why I love this toolkit, Ready to Lead. It challenges that mindset completely. It's a powerful, practical guide that helps girls discover their voices, build confidence, and take their place as leaders and active citizens shaping Nigeria's future.

My own leadership journey started gradually, from serving as Head Girl to leading student associations and youth groups. Growing up in Lagos, I dreamed of becoming a doctor.

Studying medicine at Lagos State University taught me discipline and compassion, but it also opened my eyes. I began to see that our society needed healing too from injustice, exclusion, and silence.

That desire to serve led me into student leadership, and I later became the first female Speaker of both the Lagos State University Medical Students Association Senate and the Nigerian Youth Parliament. Standing there, holding the gavel as the first woman in the youth Parliament's history, I realized it wasn't just my victory, it was proof that girls belong in leadership spaces too.

This toolkit speaks directly to what I believe: when girls have the right tools, knowledge, and confidence, they become unstoppable. They unleash their potential, turning ideas into action and challenges into change.

To every girl reading this: you already have what it takes to lead. Your voice matters. Your story matters. Don't wait for permission, show up with courage, and purpose.

I commend the lead author, Phoebe, and her partner, Faith, for this brilliant work, and encourage schools, youth groups, and development partners to use this resource widely and intentionally.

May this toolkit be more than just pages, may it spark a movement of girls who not only dream of a better Nigeria, but lead the way to achieving it.

Dr. Azeezat Yishawu

FOREWORD

By Juliet Isi Ikayere-Asekomeh Esq.



Juliet Isi Ikayere-Asekomeh Esq.
Two-time Political Candidate in
Nigeria (under 30)

The first time I contested for political office in Nigeria, I was still in my twenties. Many asked why I would step into a system resistant to change, and why I wouldn't wait my turn. My answer was simple: our generation cannot wait.

Twice before turning thirty, I offered myself to serve, not because it was easy, but because it was necessary.

The journey was eye-opening. I was told I was too young, that politics was not for women, that my dreams were unrealistic.

I faced financial hurdles and cultural barriers that seemed designed to keep people like me out. Yet in the midst of resistance, I discovered something more powerful: the hope of those who believed in me.

I will never forget the young women who whispered, “Because of you, I now believe I can lead.” In those moments, I realized that leadership is not only about winning elections; it is about shifting mindsets and opening doors for others.

That is why this book, *Ready to Lead*, is so important. It affirms that leadership is not the privilege of age, gender, or wealth, but the responsibility of anyone with vision and courage. It reminds us that every attempt to lead, whether or not it ends in electoral victory, is a seed planted for the future.

To every young leader reading these words: your struggles are valid, your dreams are legitimate, and your time is now. Every step you take clears the way for others. The courage to step forward is itself a form of victory.

I honor the authors of this book for showing us what we often know in our hearts, that young people are not just leaders of tomorrow; we are leaders of today. Their work is a testament to resilience, visibility, and the urgency of passing the baton to a generation ready to redefine what leadership looks like.

Ready to Lead is more than a title, it is a call. May it inspire you, as it has inspired me, to rise, to persist, and to never doubt that you, too, are ready to lead.

PREFACE

As a Little girl, I was told “girls don’t make strong leaders because they are too emotional.”

Over time, I realized I wasn’t the only one hearing this. Many girls were told the same thing. What this does to us is, it makes us want to shrink ourselves and believe that we are not worth the trouble. It makes us doubt our worth, hesitate to aim for big goals, and feel like we don’t belong in positions where big decisions are made.

But that’s not true. I’ve seen it for myself, so when the idea for this book first came to me, I wanted it to be a gentle reminder to every girl that her voice matters, her dreams are valid, and her leadership can create real change. Along the way, Faith joined me and shared her thoughts and experiences, and I’m thankful for her contribution to bringing this vision to life.

As you read, I hope you see that there is no limit to what you can do and who you can become. Nigeria and the world needs your kind of leadership.

With all my love and belief in you,
Phoebe

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INTRODUCTION

“Investing in women is smart economics, and investing in girls, catching them upstream, is even smarter economics.”

*-Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (First Female & First African
Director-General of the World Trade Organization)*

Smarter economics begins with investing in girls; smarter democracy and leadership begins the same way. This book is a step toward equal representation and sustainable development in Nigeria.

It introduces young readers to leadership and democratic participation through two simple, and engaging modules. Complex ideas are broken down into clear, simple, and accessible language, providing a roadmap for girls to acquire the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary to lead and drive change.

This book was written by Ojo-Nemile Phoebe John and Faith Onomwem Waziri, 2023 Nigeria Green Academy Fellows, with support from the Heinrich Böll Stiftung - Abuja Office (Hbs).

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book is for every girl who dares to dream of a brighter future, for herself and for Nigeria. It is for the true leaders of tomorrow, girls like you, the ones Nigeria is waiting for to rewrite the story of leadership and champion a new era of change.

It is a road map for the girl who knows she is capable of greatness, who longs to touch lives and unlock every ounce of leadership potential within her.

So, what are you waiting for?

Flip the page, and let's embark on this life-changing adventure together.

MODULE 1: GIRLS AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

1. What is democracy?

Democracy is a way of running government where people like you and me get to choose our leaders through voting. These leaders then make laws and decisions on education, healthcare, safety, and other things on behalf of everyone.

It is different from a “monarchy”, where a king or queen rules and their children usually take over after them, or an “autocracy”, where one person or a small group holds all the power and ordinary people have no say.

One of the most famous definitions of democracy came from Abraham Lincoln. He called it:

“government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” But let’s break that down so it’s super clear:

- **Of the people** – The government belongs to all of us. Not just to one rich person, one family, one tribe, or even one gender. It’s for everyone.
- **By the people** – We, the citizens, choose our leaders by voting. That gives us a real say in how the country is run.
- **For the people** – Leaders are supposed to serve the people, not themselves. Their job is to make life better for everyone.

So, in simple words: Democracy means the people own the government, the people choose the leaders, and those leaders must work for the good of the people and report back to them on their actions.

In Nigeria, some of the important leadership positions that citizens vote for include:

At the Federal level:

- The President and Vice President
- Senators
- Members of the House of Representatives

At the State level:

- State Governors and Deputy Governors
- Members of the State Houses of Assembly
- Local Government Chairmen and Councilors

In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT):

- The FCT Senator
- Members of the House of Representatives representing the FCT
- The FCT Area Council Chairmen and Councilors

Note: Unlike the 36 states, the FCT does not have an elected Governor. Instead, it is directly administered by the President through the Minister of the FCT (the President appoints the Minister of the FCT).

2. Do Men and Women Have the Same Political Rights in Nigeria?

Yes, men and women have the same rights in politics. The Nigerian Constitution says both men and women have equal political rights. This means:

- Women can vote from the age of 18, which is the official voting age in Nigeria.
- Women can contest for positions in elections.
- Women can take part in political processes, just like men.

3. How old should you be to participate in Politics in Nigeria?

In Nigeria, participating in politics means two main things: voting and contesting for an office. To do each, here's how old you need to be.

Voting

To register and vote during elections, you'd have to be 18 years or older.



Contesting for Office

If you want to run for office, these are the minimum ages required:

- President – 35 years
- Governor of a State – 30 years
- Senator – 35 years
- Member, House of Representatives – 25 years
- Member, State House of Assembly – 25 years.



4. Why are women and girls important to democracy?

When we elect leaders, the choices they make affect everyone, men, women, and children. That's why it's important for all groups to be represented fairly so that they can make their contributions.

Think about it this way: if your school debate club were made up of only boys, only the views of the boys will be heard

and even if the girls had amazing ideas, no one would hear them.

The same thing happens in politics, when only men are at the table, women's voices and needs will be ignored, and their amazing ideas die.

If democracy is “the government of the people,” and “people” include both men and women. This means that real democracy only happens when everyone takes part.

However, in Nigeria today, most elected (and appointed) positions, both in the Executive and the Legislature, are still held by men, while positions held by women remain very few.

Let's take a quick look at the scorecard.



Men and Women in Nigerian Politics (2023–2025)

Federal Level (Nationwide)

1. Executive (President & Vice President (elected), Ministers (appointed))

- 0 women, 2 men → President Bola Tinubu + VP Kashim Shettima. That's 0% women.
- 48 Ministers (7 women, 41 men) That's ~15% women.

2. Legislature (National Assembly, our lawmakers)

- Senate (109 seats): only 4 women made it in. That's just around 3%.
- House of Reps (360 seats): only 17 women (around 4%).

Together, less than 1 in every 20 lawmakers is a woman.

State Level (36 States)

- **Governors (elected)**

0 women, all 36 are men.

Fun fact: Nigeria has never had an elected female governor. Only once (2006) did a woman, Dame Virginia Ngozi Etiaba from Anambra State, step in as acting governor for a short time.

- **Deputy Governors (elected)**

This is where women show up more: Nine female deputy governors.

That's like 25% women, 75% men. Examples include Kaduna, Ogun, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Ebonyi, Plateau, Ekiti, Imo, and Adamawa.

- **State Houses of Assembly (like mini state parliaments)**

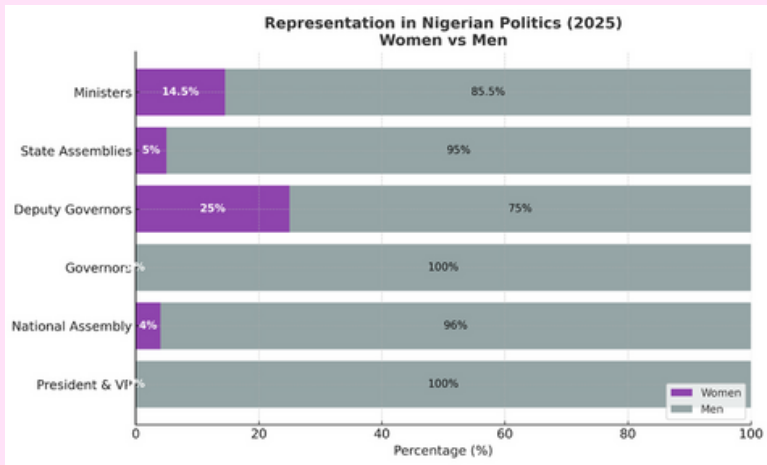
Across all 36 states, there are 993 seats.

Only 54 women won, which is about 4.5%.

Fun fact: 15 states didn't elect any women at all.

Quick Look (Women and Men)

- President & VP: 0% women vs 100% men
- National Assembly: 4% women vs 96% men (this is for both Senate and House of Representatives).
- Governors: 0% women vs 100% men.
- Deputy Governors: 25% women vs 75% men.
- State Assemblies: ~5% women vs 95% men.
- Ministers: 14.5% women vs 85.5% men



Women and Girls make up almost half of Nigeria's population, but when it comes to leadership and governance, the number of women in those spaces is still very small.

Now imagine this: at home, only your dad makes the shopping list. He might forget to buy hair products, sanitary pads, or even your favourite snacks, not because he doesn't care, but because he doesn't use them himself.

Or think about it this way, what if only boys' shoe sizes were made in the whole of Nigeria? The girls would have to wear shoes that don't fit.

That's what it's like when women's voices are missing in leadership. The decisions made don't always fit everyone's real needs.



That's why your voice, your perspective, and your experiences matter. Women and girls see things that men and boys might not notice because they live those realities every day. When more women take part in leadership, the solutions become fairer, smarter, and more complete for everyone.

So, if we want a fair and balanced democracy where everyone's voice matters, we need to have more women in leadership. This means creating space for women to step forward and contest for positions. And it begins with young girls like you learning about civic participation and leadership. After all, the women of tomorrow are the girls of today, and early preparation makes all the difference.

5. MYTHS ABOUT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND THE TRUTH



Myth 1: “People don’t want women leaders.”

Truth: Nope, not true. Half of Nigerians actually believe women should have the same chance as men. The world is ready for you to step up!

Myth 2: “Girls aren’t into politics.”

Truth: Wrong. Women make up almost half of Nigeria’s voters! Girls do care about the future.

Myth 3: “There are already enough women in government.”

Truth: Far from it! Women are only 4 out of 109 Senators, and we do not have any female governor yet. That means there’s space waiting for YOU to break barriers.

Myth 4: “Politics is too dangerous for women.”

Truth: Yes, women face extra hate and intimidation. But every time a woman stands strong, she proves politics isn’t just for men. Every new girl who pushes through makes it easier for the next.

Myth 5: “Women’s representation is already improving.”

Truth: Sadly, it’s gone down. That’s why your generation needs to rise up and push the numbers higher.

Myth 6: "Culture and religion won’t allow women leaders.”

Truth: Culture matters, but systems can change. Rules about money, party tickets, and security make a bigger difference, and those can be reformed. Look at Hajiya Aisha Jummai Alhassan (Mama Taraba), who ran for the position of a governor and nearly won.

Myth 7: “Even if women lead, nothing changes.”

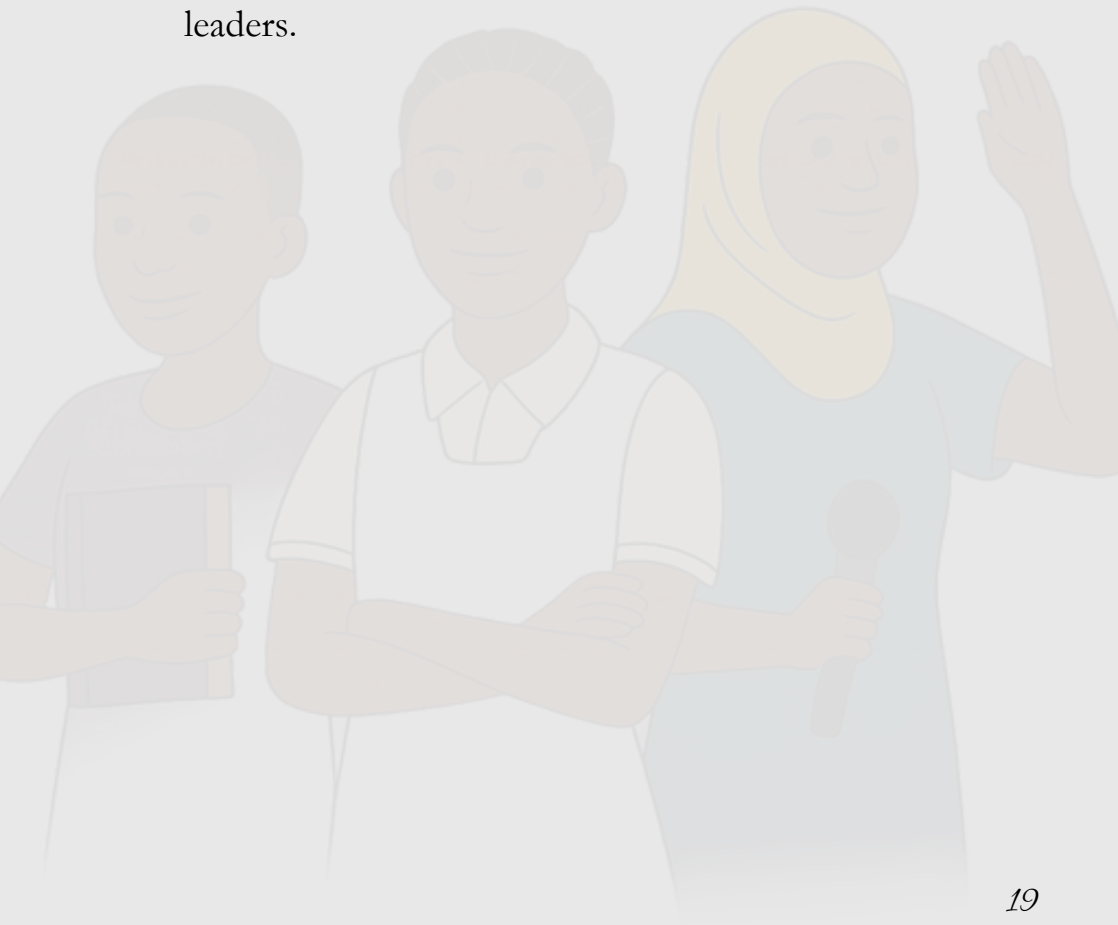
Truth: Not true! Women leaders have brought powerful reforms worldwide and in Nigeria, too. When women lead, societies thrive.

Myth 8: “Women are not as smart as men, so men make better leaders.”

Truth: Intelligence and leadership have nothing to do with gender. Women and men are equally capable of making great decisions, solving problems, and leading with vision.

Myth 9: “Women are nurturers, so they don’t belong in leadership. They should only manage the home.”

Truth: Women can lead at home and in society. In fact, having qualities like empathy, resilience, and problem-solving make women excellent leaders.



6. Iconic Women in Nigeria's political history who shattered barriers.



Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (1900–1978)

The Lioness of Lisabi



Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was one of Nigeria's most fearless women's rights activists and political leaders during colonial times.

Born on October 25, 1900, in Abeokuta, Ogun State, she was among the few girls of her generation to get a formal education. Unlike many families of that era, her parents strongly believed that girls deserved education too. By age 24, she had become a teacher.

At the time, women faced heavy restrictions. In Abeokuta, they paid taxes from as young as 15, yet had no say in governance. This injustice drove Funmilayo to act.

In 1946, she founded the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU), which united thousands of women to fight unfair taxation and demand representation.

Their slogan was: “No taxation without representation.”

From 1947 to 1948, Funmilayo and members of the AWU organized continuous protests against the Alake of Abeokuta, the traditional ruler.

They marched to his palace, insisting that it was unjust to tax women while denying them representation, forcing him to temporarily step down.

A year later, 4 women, including Funmilayo, won seats in the Egba Central Council, the town’s ruling body, breaking barriers in leadership.

But she did not stop there. She used her voice to push for women’s political rights across Nigeria, and her efforts helped secure voting rights for women in Southern Nigeria in 1954.



Margaret Ekpo (1914–2006) — The Market-to-Parliament Trailblazer



Margaret Ekpo was a Nigerian politician and Women's rights activist born July 27, 1914, during colonial rule. Margaret's father was Igbo, and her mother was Efik.

Before colonial rule, women in both cultures participated in the political and social activities of their towns, but with the onset of the colonial government, women were sidelined.

Margaret was educated and knew how important it was for women to have a say in the affairs of governance. She believed that if women's lives were to be improved, they needed to get involved in decision-making processes and in activities that affect their well-being.

Sometimes, she stood in for her husband, a doctor, at community meetings. There, she noticed that women were excluded from the decision-making process, and so she began to use the opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of women.

By 1946, her activism led her to join the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) political party. She went from town to town, encouraging women to participate in politics.

In 1948, she invited Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti to speak to the women of Aba, encouraging them to stand up for their rights.

Margaret's leadership quickly gained recognition. In 1951, she became the first woman vice president of the NCNC Eastern Working Committee.

Three years later, she organized the Aba Market Women Association, bringing the women of Aba together to ensure that they were not left out of the decision-making process.

Her advocacy even took her abroad. In 1953, she represented the NCNC at the London Constitutional Conference, where she argued that Nigerian women must have the right to take part in politics, a demand that was accepted.

In 1961, after Nigeria's independence, she was elected into the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, where she served until 1966 when the military took over government.

As a female politician, Margaret triumphed over every obstacle that was meant to stop women in politics and inspired other women, too.



Fun fact: The Calabar International Airport is named after her.

Hajaratu Gambo, popularly known as Hajiya Gambo Sawaba (1933–2001) — Northern women's fearless voice



Hajiya Gambo Sawaba was a Nigerian politician and women's rights activist who stood up for the rights of northern women to take part in politics.

She was born on February 15, 1933, in Kano and grew up in Zaria, where she attended Native Authority Primary School. Gambo was very bright, but after her father died, she could not continue her schooling.

So at the age of 13, she was married off to a soldier, but her marriage did not last as her husband disappeared a few years later when she was 16.

At that time, women in Northern Nigeria were not allowed to participate in politics or decision-making. They were often forced into early marriages and denied education.

Living through these struggles herself as a single teenage mother, Gambo knew how unfair it was.

She knew that if women were ever to be free from such restrictions, they had to speak up and demand a seat at the table.

So at the age of 17, Gambo joined politics, becoming the first woman in Northern Nigeria to fully enter politics. She became a member of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and began speaking in public about women's right to education, health, and the right to vote.

Her boldness shocked many people, and she was often arrested and beaten. In fact, she was imprisoned 16 times for criticizing the government and defending women.

But every time she was released, she went back to



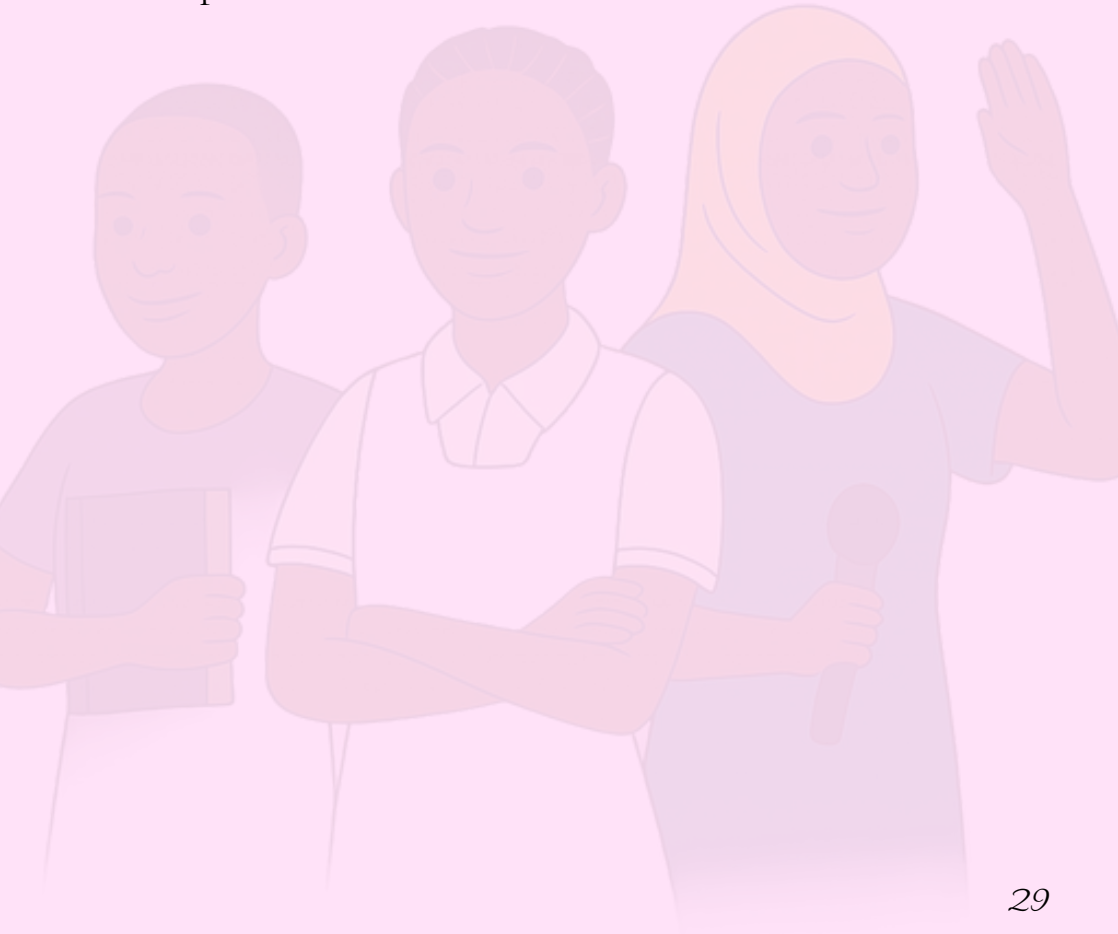
campaigning even stronger than before. Her courage and leadership earned her the nickname “Sawaba”, meaning Freedom.

In the 1950s, she became the leader of the NEPU women's wing. She traveled from town to town, encouraging women in markets, schools, and villages to stand up for themselves. She taught them that their voices mattered in politics and in society.

Even though women in southern Nigeria had begun gaining political recognition, women in the north were still being held back by tradition and religion. Gambo Sawaba worked tirelessly to close that gap so that northern women could also enjoy opportunities in education and governance.

Finally, through her activism and that of other women, Northern women were finally allowed to vote in 1979.

Despite facing opposition, intimidation, and hardship, Hajiya Gambo Sawaba never gave up. She remained a fearless fighter until she died in 2001. Today, she is remembered as one of the most courageous women in Nigeria's history, a pioneer who broke barriers and inspired others to rise.



**Aisha Jummai Al-Hassan
(1959–2021) — Mama Taraba**



Aisha Jummai Al-Hassan, popularly known as “Mama Taraba”, was a Nigerian politician, lawyer, and women’s rights advocate who made history as one of the first women from Northern Nigeria to rise to high political office. She was born on September 16, 1959, in Jalingo, Taraba State.

She studied law at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and later became the first female Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice in Taraba State. She also rose to the position of a judge in the Federal Capital Territory Judiciary, where she served until she voluntarily retired to go into politics.

Mama Taraba's political journey began with the People's Democratic Party (PDP), but she later joined the All Progressives Congress (APC).

In 2011, she was elected as the first female senator from Taraba State, representing Taraba North Senatorial District. Her strong voice in the Senate earned her national recognition.

In 2015, she contested for the governorship of Taraba State and became the first woman in Nigeria to ever run for governor under a major party (APC) and nearly won in Taraba State.

Although she did not win, her courage and popularity made history, and many Nigerians celebrated her as a trailblazer.

That same year, she was appointed Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development by former President Muhammadu Buhari.

In this role, she worked to promote the rights of women and children, support widows and orphans, and push for more opportunities for women in politics and business.

Throughout her career, Mama Taraba earned respect for her honesty, humility, and courage. She was not afraid to speak her mind, even when it went against her political party.

Mama Taraba passed away on May 7, 2021, but her legacy lives on. She is remembered as a courageous leader who opened doors for women in northern politics and inspired many young girls to dream big.

7. HOW CAN YOU FLIP THE SCRIPT?

If you dream of leading, start small and start now.

Join debates, take up roles in school, and speak up in your community. Read books on political participation and leadership like this one. These steps will help you practice leadership and build confidence.

That way, when the time comes, you'll be ready to contest bigger positions with the right skills and knowledge.

In the next chapter, we'll explore how to become a leader!!!

MODULE 2: BECOMING AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

1. Who is a Leader?

A leader is someone who guides and motivates themselves and others to reach a goal.

Examples of leaders include class captains, school prefects, club leaders, teachers, principals, governors, and even Presidents.

But leadership is not just about having a big title. What matters the most is not how high the position is, but how well you inspire and help others to achieve desired goals.

That's what makes the difference between an effective leader and an ineffective one.

2. What are the different leadership styles?

i. Autocratic Leadership

In this style of leadership, the leader makes all the decisions without asking for anyone's opinion. It's like a class captain who gives strict instructions and expects everyone to follow them without question.

This style often makes people feel left out or controlled; however, it can be effective in emergencies when quick decisions are needed.

ii. Democratic Leadership

In this style, the leader allows everyone to share their ideas before decisions are made. She then listens, considers different opinions, and then guides the group toward the best choice. For example, a class prefect who asks the class for suggestions before planning an event is using democratic leadership.

This style builds trust and teamwork, but it can take longer to reach decisions.

iii. Laissez-Faire Leadership

This type of leader gives people freedom to do their own thing with little direction. Imagine a group project where the leader just says, “Do whatever you think is best.” It can only work well if the team is very skilled and nobody needs to be reminded of what they need to do, but often people get confused or unorganized without guidance. So, this does not work well sometimes, and people will not respect you if you're this type of leader.

Which Leadership Style Is Best?

The democratic leadership style is often the best because it balances a leader's authority with teamwork, allows everyone's voice to be heard, and still gives direction. It is also the best because people are more likely to follow a leader who listens to them and respects their opinions.

3. What Qualities Do You Need to be an effective Leader?

To be a great or effective leader, you need to have the following qualities.

- **Self-Confidence**

Self-confidence means believing in yourself and in your decisions. It is the backbone of leadership. As a leader, it will be hard to express your ideas and convince others to follow you if you don't first believe in yourself.



To build self-confidence, don't waste time comparing yourself to others on social media or in school. Don't let unkind words from your friends or anyone make you doubt your worth.

Remind yourself that you are unique, gifted, and capable. Focus on getting better at the things you are good at instead of focusing on the things you are not so good at and making yourself feel bad about them.

- **Scholarship (Love for Learning)**

You've probably heard the phrase "Readers are leaders". Well, it's true. Great Leaders never stop learning. When you read, you find out new and better ways of doing things and overcoming challenges.



Knowledge gives you confidence and makes people trust you more because people won't follow someone who doesn't know what they're talking about.

Think about the fact that when you are confused about a topic, you are most likely to ask someone in your class who you know has read it and understands it well. Or imagine you're leading your school debate team. If you've taken the time to read widely and understand the topic, your team will trust you to lead them and win the Prize.

- **Discipline**

Discipline is doing what you need to do, even when you don't feel like it. Every great leader needs discipline to reach their goals. Sometimes, it's not easy, but the rewards are always worth it.

For instance, you might want to scroll through TikTok when you know you need to read for your exams or practice for inter-house sports.



Choosing to study shows discipline, and when the results come in, you'll see that your hard work paid off.

Great leaders understand that short-term sacrifices bring long-term success. Whether it's training for your inter-house sports competition or waking up at night to study, discipline helps you shine.

- **Effective Communication**

As a leader, you must be able to clearly express your thoughts and ideas through words and actions. If people don't understand what you mean, they won't know how to follow you. But good communication is more than just talking; it's also about listening.



For example, if you're the head girl of your school, you need to encourage your schoolmates, explain instructions clearly, and also listen to their concerns. When people feel heard and understood, they'll respect your leadership and follow your instructions.

• Time Management

Time management means being punctual, staying organized, and knowing how to prioritize. As a leader, you will have many responsibilities, so managing your time wisely is very important.



For example, if you're a class captain, the teacher might ask you to collect assignments and also tidy up the board. If the teacher urgently needs the assignments for grading, you know that collecting them comes first before erasing the board.

A great leader can tell what is most important at any moment and act on it.

- **Foresight / Vision**

Foresight means being able to think ahead and plan for the future. A great leader doesn't just focus on what's happening now, but also imagines what could happen next and prepares for it.



For example, if you're leading a club in your school, and you realize that exams are coming up soon, you may plan your meetings earlier so members can still participate before they get too busy.

Vision helps leaders guide others towards long-term goals, not just short-term wins.

- **Self-Awareness**

Self-awareness means understanding your own strengths and weaknesses. A great leader knows what they're good at but also admits where they need help. This honesty makes people trust you more.

For instance, if you're good at public speaking but not very good at organizing events, you might assign the planning to someone else while you handle the speech.

Knowing yourself makes you a wiser and more balanced leader.

- **Courage & Resilience**

Courage means being brave enough to do the right thing, even when it's hard. Resilience means not giving up when challenges come your way. Every leader will face criticism, failure, or tough situations, but the best leaders don't quit.



For example, if you try to start a peace club in your school and people laugh at the idea, courage helps you keep going, and resilience pushes you to prove them wrong.

Great leaders rise every time they fall, and that's what makes others believe in them.

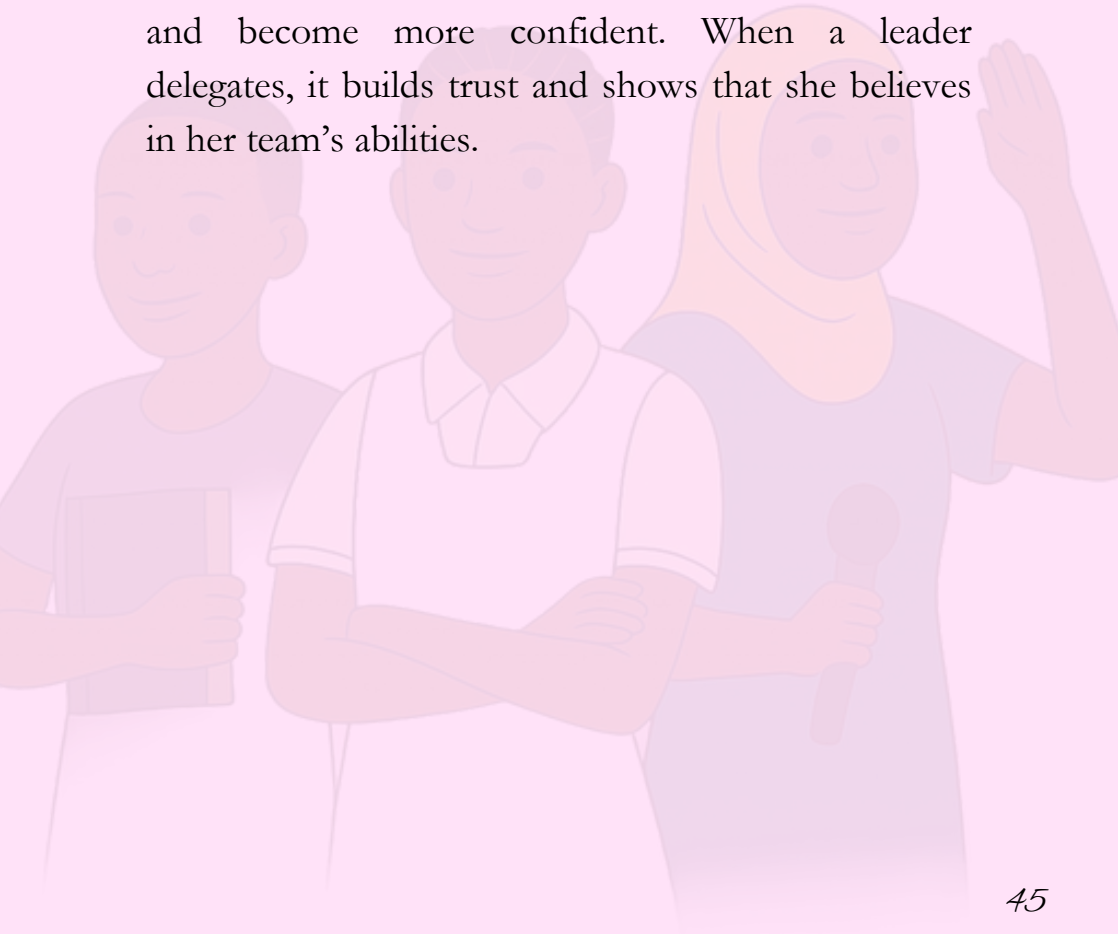
- **Delegation**

Delegation means sharing responsibilities with others instead of trying to do everything yourself. A good leader knows how to assign tasks based on each person's strengths, trusting others to handle their part.



Delegation is important in leadership because it helps everyone feel included. It saves time and lets the leader focus on the most important tasks.

It also helps team members learn new skills, grow, and become more confident. When a leader delegates, it builds trust and shows that she believes in her team's abilities.



4. Handling Conflict, Criticism, and Adversity as a Leader

1. Conflict

Conflict simply means a clash or disagreement between people, usually because they want different things or see things differently.

As a leader, you'll definitely come across some conflict; it's part of dealing with people.



It can happen in your class when classmates argue over ideas, on your sports team when players blame each other, or even with friends when opinions don't match. Sometimes, people may not agree with your ideas or may challenge your vision.

That doesn't mean you are wrong or that they are bad people; it just means you need wisdom to handle the disagreement and keep the group moving forward.

Here are five (5) practical steps for managing conflict:

- **Manage your emotions:** Don't react in anger. Take a moment to calm down. Staying calm shows maturity and will earn you respect.
- **Raise the issue early:** Don't let conflicts grow bigger by ignoring them. Bring them up politely but firmly once both parties are calm and able to listen. When raising the issue, try using 'I' statements to express your feelings and needs without assigning blame.
- **Practice active listening:** Pay attention to what others are saying, hear everyone's side of the story without interrupting. You may discover useful insights.
- **Find common ground:** Focus on what you agree on, not just your differences.
- **Agree on a way forward:** Set clear solutions or rules everyone can follow.

2. Criticism

Criticism is feedback, positive or negative, about your work or ideas. Every leader faces it, and just like conflict, criticism tests your leadership.

Criticism can be:

Helpful or Constructive: This is when it shows you how to do better. For example, if a teacher says your presentation needs clearer examples, that's a chance to improve.

Harmful or destructive: If it's meant to discourage or tear you down, then it's destructive. For example, if someone says, "You'll never be a good leader because you're too young," then that's not constructive, it's destructive.

The trick is to filter criticism, learn from what's useful, and ignore what's meant to bring you down.

So, the next time someone criticizes you, ask yourself: Is this helping me improve, or is it just noise I should ignore?

3. Adversity

Adversity means facing tough challenges or setbacks. Every leader will encounter them, whether it's losing an election, being rejected, or managing a team that isn't cooperating. What matters is not the setback itself, but how you respond and what you learn from it.

Here are three ways to handle adversity:

- Stay focused on your goals: Don't let challenges distract you from what you want to achieve.
- Ask for support: A good leader knows when to ask for help from friends, mentors, or teammates. They can give you helpful advice and step in to assist you with tasks.

- Celebrate small wins: Little progress can motivate you to keep going.

Great leaders face adversity with courage and resilience. They don't give up when things get tough; they rise, learn, and come back stronger.

And remember, conflict, criticism, and adversity are not signs of failure. They are opportunities that shape you into a wiser, stronger, and more respected leader.

5. Practical steps to leadership

If you want to become a leader, it starts with **YOU**.

1. Lead yourself first: Start by deciding what you want and have the discipline to follow through.

2. Focus on improving your strengths and confronting your weaknesses: For example, if you're afraid of public speaking, keep practicing until you become more confident.

If your goal is to improve your grades, make a plan. You could create a personal timetable, join a study group, and stay consistent until you see results. That's self-leadership, the foundation of leading others.

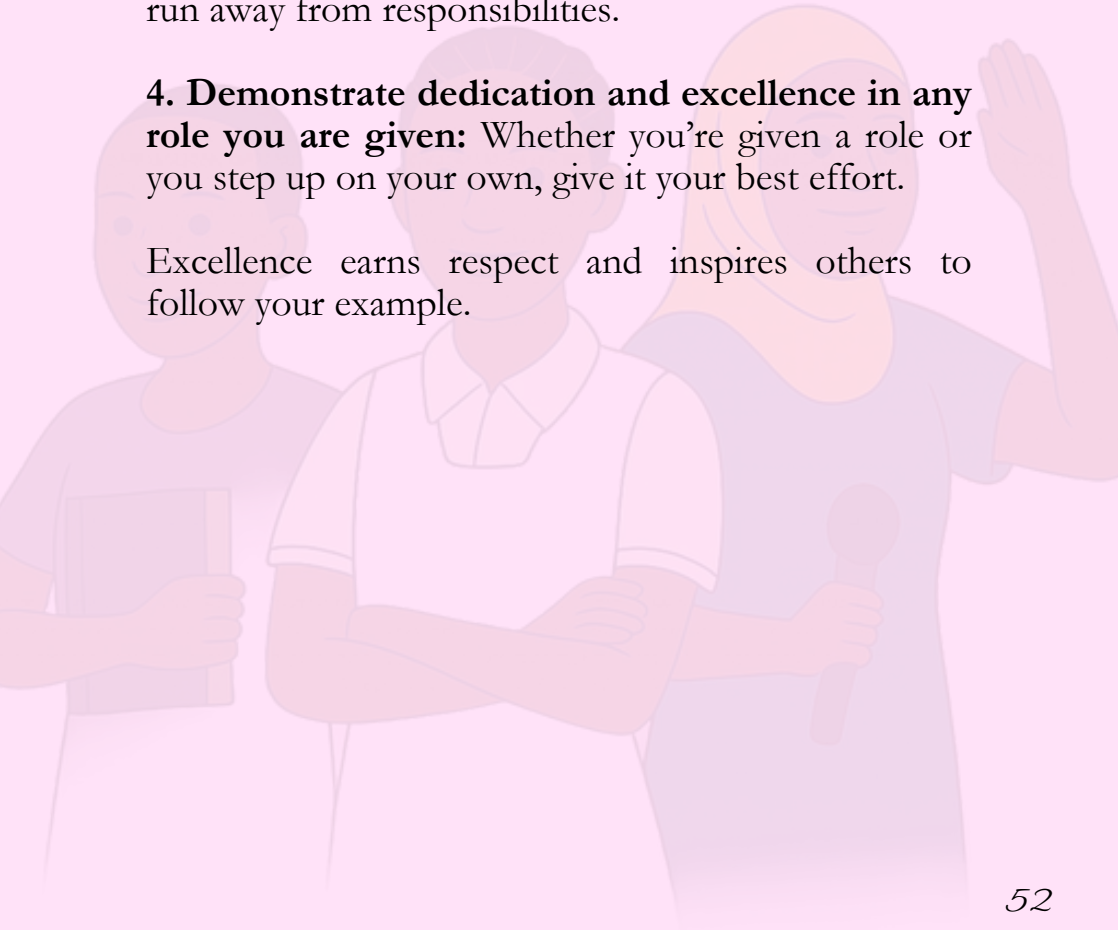
When you succeed at leading yourself, then you are truly ready to lead others.

3. Be bold, speak up, and be willing to take responsibility: Leaders are not afraid to share their ideas politely.

They don't wait for others to speak up first before they support an idea they believe in, and they don't run away from responsibilities.

4. Demonstrate dedication and excellence in any role you are given: Whether you're given a role or you step up on your own, give it your best effort.

Excellence earns respect and inspires others to follow your example.



GLOSSARY

- Advocacy – Speaking up, taking action, or standing for something you believe in.
- Authority – The power or right to give orders, make decisions, and expect others to follow.
- Cabinet/Minister – The President’s team that helps run important areas like health, education, and security.
- Colonial rule – When another country takes control and governs a place that isn’t theirs.
- Dedication – Giving your best effort and staying committed to a role or task until it’s done well.
- Executive – The part of government that makes sure laws are followed and manages the country’s day-to-day affairs.

- Grassroots – Everyday people in the community, not the rich or powerful.
- Leader – Someone who guides, inspires, and helps others work toward a goal.
- Leadership – The ability to influence, motivate, and support others to achieve something together.
- Legislature – The group of people (like the National Assembly or State Houses) whose job is to make laws.
- Responsibility – Owning your actions and duties, and not shying away from challenges.
- Right – Something a person is entitled to simply because they are human, or a citizen of a country.
- Government- The group of people and institutions that have the authority to make laws, run the country, and provide services for the people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

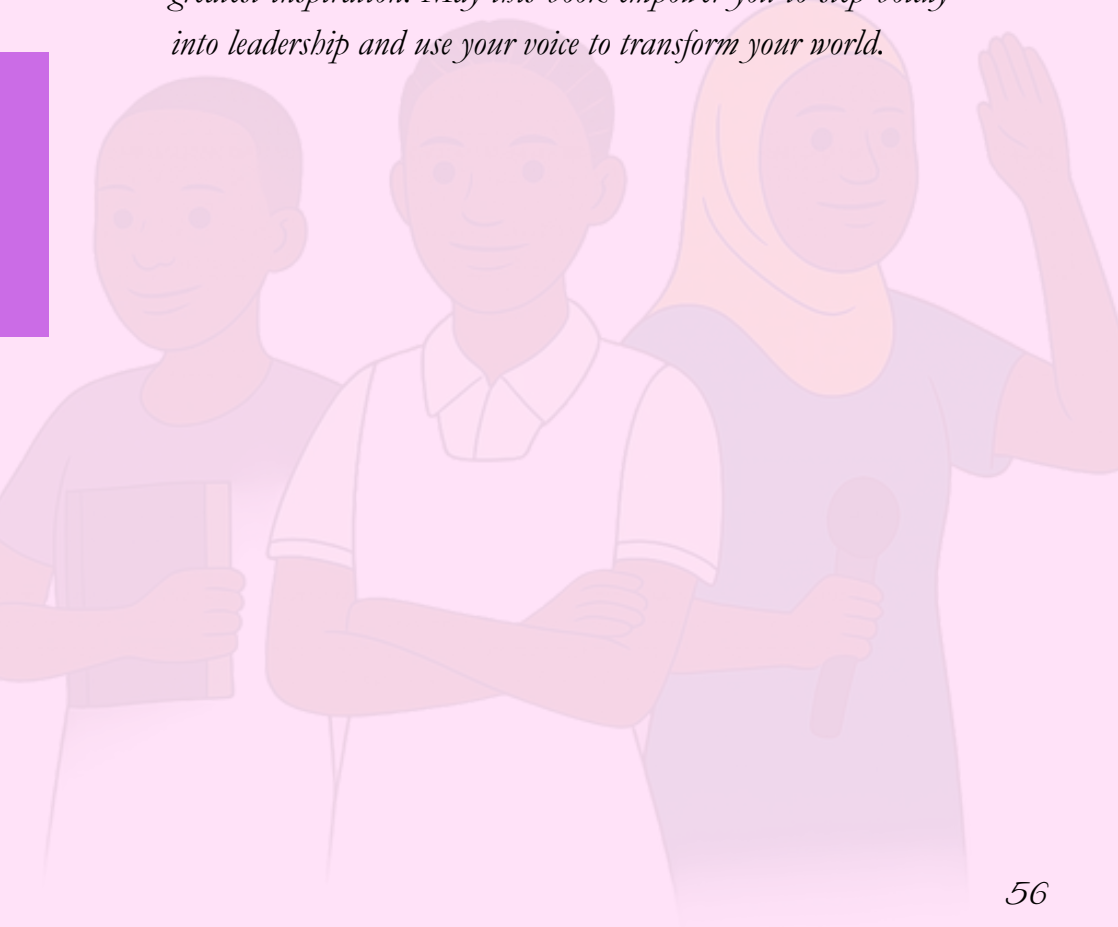
We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who made this project possible.

We are especially grateful to the Heinrich Böll Foundation Abuja (HBS) for generously funding this project through the Green Academy Fellowship. Your support gave us the platform to bring this vision to life and to create a resource that will positively impact the lives of young girls across Nigeria.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to our mentor, Mrs. Ere Amachree, whose supervision, guidance, and encouragement were invaluable throughout this journey. We deeply appreciate Dr. Aṣeṣeṣat and Ms. Juliet, Esq., for graciously writing the foreword, and Mrs. Odi Lagi, along with the women leaders, past and present, who have paved the way for us. Their courage and leadership continue to remind us that no dream is too big and no girl is too small to lead.

Our gratitude also goes to the schools and teachers we worked with on this project and our fellow cohort member, Excel Olayemi-Oludairo who generously volunteered during the implementation of this project.

Finally, to every young girl who picks up this book, you are our greatest inspiration. May this book empower you to step boldly into leadership and use your voice to transform your world.



About the Authors

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Phoebe John is a lawyer and women's rights advocate who believes in the power of girls to lead change. She graduated with First Class honours from the Nigerian Law School and now works to help young people and communities access justice.

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For more girls leadership content from the author, follow @GirsLeadng on Instagram and Tik'Tok.



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The women of tomorrow are the girls of today. Leadership starts here.

This guide is for every Nigerian girl who dares to dream of a brighter future—for herself and her country.

- ✓ Stories of Iconic Nigerian women leaders
- ✓ Step-by-step leadership skills for girls
- ✓ Practical civic knowledge made simple



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