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By Keturah Shammah

Executive Director

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OVERVIEW REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

***GIRLS EDUCATIONAL MISSION INTERNATIONAL Award-winning organization with best practice in Education and Empowerment of Girls***

***We are on a Mission to Nurture and Safeguard the Possibilities of Girls by Defending, Protecting and Promoting their Rights***

**Background**

Girls Education Mission International (GEM International) was emerged out of a pressing need among young women and girls in northern part of Nigeria who face gender-based discrimination and are therefore deprived of education and training opportunities to attain a better life. Dreamt and begun in 2007, GEM was officially registered in Nigeria in 2011 with Corporate Affairs Commission with registration number (CAC/IT/NO 45818). GEM is also registered with the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML) of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with certificate number (RN: SC 321400084). GEM is a member of the Nigerian Network of Non Governmental Organizations (NNNGOs) and has a Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of Girls Education Mission International (GEM International) is to support girls and women in reaching their potential, focused on defending, protecting and promoting their right to education

**Objectives**

1. Improve access to education
2. Support reproductive health and well-being
3. Identify and support girls and women who have experience domestic violence/abuse
4. Promote economic opportunities for women to become self-reliant

**Our Core Values**

1. Integrity— truth, openness and accountability are embedded in our programs.
2. Innovation— our approaches are new and unique.
3. Passion— we do everything wholeheartedly.
4. Commitment— we commit our time and resources above others.
5. Excellency— we give our best in whatever we do.
6. Action— through concrete action, we deliver concrete results.
7. Empowerment— everyone we work with or target must be self-empowered.
8. Empathy— we have compassion for the circumstances of other human beings.
9. Teamwork— everyone has a role to play.
10. Learning and Sharing— we generate and share knowledge.
11. Solidarity: with victims of gender-based violence, abused and discrimination.
12. Equality: we believe in equal rights and opportunities for men, women, youths and children.

**Overview of our activities**

Since inception in 2007, GEM continued with its tradition of being on the front lines of uplifting the lives of girls. We worked with over 50 schools to reach more than 2000 girls with integrated packaged of innovative life-transforming programs. Throughout the years of existence, we empowered over 3000 women and children through family, school and in the community. We delivered innovative model of educational activities placing our program participants at the center of our empowerment solutions. We attacked the root cause of factors that stands as barriers to girls’ education so that more girls can access quality education and realized full potential. We provide vulnerable girls with comprehensive package of livelihoods, scholarship, sanitary pads, Entrepreneurship and mentoring. With the support of GEM, currently, we have five girls that graduated from tertiary institution while some are currently studying and some awaiting admission. We also have those girls we support both in secondary and primary schools across the northern central parts of Nigeria. There are many of the girls who need support that we are not able to support due to insufficient resources. Beyond educational support, in our continued steps to engage public issues and influencing policies, GEM fully participated in influencing the policies both at the national, state and local levels of the Nigerian government.

**Highlights of GEM activities till date**

The tremendous challenge of GEM lies in finding funding for its activities. The globalgiving platform provided the financing for our educational support while other programs are been covered by the rewards from the founder’s initiatives and commitments.

**Educational support**

So far, GEM has awarded scholarship to 50 girls, Sanitary Pads distributed to 450, and other support including Uniforms, books, mathset, school shoes and bags to 20 girls.

**Mentoring Sessions**

GEM holds monthly meeting with girls to discuss issues affecting the girl-child especially issues that has to do with their education. We discuss barriers and solutions to the education of girls general. ‘From my Heart to Yours’ session of our mentoring program gives girls opportunity to confidently share their experiences in conducive and safe environment. Professional women of various walks of lives who overcame incredible challenges are invited to share personal touching stories of their journey to success. Girls derive inspiration and hope from these role model who not only share their stories, but also are matched with the girls for mentorship and support to ensure each girl reach her potential.

**Vocational and Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition**

Over 500 young women and girls got trained by GEM in various vocational skills such as Tie and Dye, Pomade-making, Soap- making, Baking, tailoring, beads making, etc. Trainees are also trained on entrepreneurship in order to ensure that the skills learned are put to productive use to ensure effective empowerment result. We were lucky to have one of our Vocational training to be funded by the US Embassy Nigeria in collaboration with the Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS) supported by Lere Local Government. In 2017 the GEM US Embassy funded project, trained 37 young women on various marketable skills and awarded to each, a small take-off grants with assigned mentor to provide support and monitor the progress of the business ventures. GEM has partnered with Christian Women of Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS), the Entrepreneurs Resources and Advisory Center (ERAC), and Agape Women Initiative for Sustainable Development (AWISD) for its economic empowerment projects.

**After-School Literacy Projects**

Supported by the Community, GEM have so far trained over 250 young women who do not have access to formal educational training or have withdrawn from school as a result of barriers related to the education of women.

**Policy Engagements**

In its continued effort in influencing policies, GEM was engaged in the following public national activities:

• National Assembly Interactive Forum with Civil Society Organizations on 2016 Budget.

• Public Hearing with Minister of Budget and National Planning and Civil Society

organizations on the 2017- 2019 Mid-Term Expenditure and Fiscal Framework.

• Ministerial Public presentation of the 2017 Federal Budget Proposal.

• Media Briefing with Director General Budget Office of the Federation on the 2017

Budget

* Public presentation of 2017 Federal Government appropriation act

On advocacy for gender policies purposes and inclusiveness, GEM also paid courtesy visits to some states and Local government Authorities and other relevant stakeholders including traditional and religious leaders.

Impact of our public policy engagement as said by the GEM Director is as follows:

*“We were fortunate to have some of the Issues we raised clarified by the Director General of Budget during the recent Media Briefing he held with the civil society organizations. Even thou it wasn’t to our full satisfaction, it's more fortunate to have been given another opportunity to submit any further queries on the Budget proposal before it is passed into law hopefully. I am so impressed to have some of our queries considered and taken into action. One of our queries during the public presentation of the Budget was the (N500,000,000) Five hundred million naira allocated in the 2016 budget for International day of the Girl-Child which we had it not observed beside the Press statement from the Minister of Women Affairs who promised to hold a Women and Girls Summit. After a personal discussion immediately after the hearing with the minister of Budget, State who is a woman and expressing deep concern on the plight of Nigerian girls in the Federal Budget, she promised to take it up with the ministry of women affairs to ensure the summit has taken place. I am glad that the summit has not only reflected in the 2017 Budget but it was organized and held even before the Budget is passed into law”.*

**United Nations Day of the Girl-Child**

In 2014, GEM marked the day of the girl-child with a launch of a campaign called #GirlsEducationNowOrNever. Guided by the conviction that girls who missed-out education as children, oftenstruggle to gain prospects as adults (mothers/wives), the campaign aims at enhancing awareness and mobilizing support toward the education of girls. The title of the campaign is purposely a hashtag to maximize the vitality of the awareness raising campaign.

1n 2015, GEM observed the day of girls with distribution of books, mathsets and toiletries to 20 underprivileged girls who were at-risked of dropping out selected from various primary and secondary school. These girls have further enjoyed the scholarship GEM offered in 2016.

On 11th October 2016, GEM commemorated the International Day of the girl-child with a premier viewing of the new CNN film-“WE WILL RISE”- a documentary about girls overcoming incredible challenges to achieve their education and change their own lives, featuring the former First Lady of the United States of America Michelle Obama, Meryl Streep, Freida Pinto, and CNN journalist Isha Sesay. The events had over 50 school girls in attendance. The impact of the event attracted the attention of the media who covered the event make it published and available for the general public.

**#16days of Activism for No Violence against Women**

The #16days is an International awareness-raising campaign that takes place every year from 25th November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women) to 10th December (International Human Rights Day).

Throughout the 16 days campaign period in 2015, 25th Nov. – 10th Dec, GEM engaged 5 various groups of women and children leaders across Plateau state on capacity building. The training aimed at building their capacity on how to identify victims of violence, exploring mechanisms to ending violence and how they can become agent of ending violence against women and children.

In 2016 and on the first day of the campaign 25th November, GEM flagged-off the campaign with a twitter Teach-ins - a series of continuous tweets that revolved around exploring the multiple effects and causes of gender-based violence (GBV) and how it affects the right to education of girls. In Jos, On 1st December (World Aids Day), Joining hands in partnership with TeachAIDS who provided the TeachAIDS animations to GEM towards spreading accurate knowledge and empowering the Nigerian young women and girls to protect themselves and their loved ones, 40 school girls and 20 boys were hosted for the TeachAIDS Animation screening after which Sanitary pads and books were donated to the girls who were mostly orphans as a result of the ethno-religious conflicts in the areas.

On 10th December (Human Rights Day) 30 underprivileged girls were trained in Jos and were taught about their basic human rights especially that of education and how they can stand for their right in making sure they have obtained an education. Material was provided by the Youth for Human Right International.

In extension of the campaign, on 13th December, GEM launched the ‘I AM POSSIBLE’ Campaign with over 400 girls representing 15 schools at Government Girls Secondary school Kawo Kaduna State during the 2017 girl-child support project hosted by the Privileged Foundation Nigeria. The Campaign is aim towards exploring with girls on how they can nurture and safeguard their possibilities, protecting their right to obtaining quality education.

**#OrangeTheWorld Campaign**

In context of the UN Secretary-General’s #OrangeTheWorld UNiTE to End Violence against Women Campaign, GEM launches the #OrangeTheWorld Campaign in all the various groups and communities where they carry out the #16days campaign activities with Kaduna and Plateau States respectively.

**Digital Literacy**

Supported by the Women and the Web Alliance, in February 2017, GEM has begun a digital empowerment program that aim at increasing the digital literacy of women and girls and providing peer network of support to sustain their engagement and socio-economic empowerment online. So far over 150 women have benefitted from the digital literacy training. Keturah Shammah the Executive Director at GEM, after the Women and Web Alliance technology trainings, participated in the Intel Learning Easy Steps (ILES) Course in Lagos, a course that made her an Intel Master Trainer whose is licensed to train trainers who will train others .

**Awards and Honors**

Highlighting our success, and for added credibility, reflecting our hard work, perseverance, and tremendous accomplishment and continued future success, Girls Education Mission International and its Founder Mrs. Keturah Shammah have been recognized both on the local and international scenes for contributing to life and service to humanity. These include:

* Nigerian Top Executive in Public Administration; ‘Excellence Award 2015’
* Greatnonprofits: ‘Top rated Awards 2015, 2016’
* Youth Education and Leadership Initiatives; ‘Change Ambassador for Peace and Humanity Award 2016’
* Women4Africa; ‘International Humanitarian of the year’ 2016, 2017 finalist’
* Lifteffects; ‘2017 Star Award’
* True African Heritage Awards; ‘2016 Nominee-TAHA Ambassador’
* International Achievers Awards; ‘Female Role Model nominee 2016 finalist’
* Privilege Foundation Nigeria; ‘Outstanding Young Person Award 2016
* Extraordinary African Woman Achievers; EAWA Awards finalist 2017
* Young African Leaders Initiative ‘YALI Human Rights Champion’
* Listed in the 2016, 2017 Women4Africa extraordinary Gold List

**Strengths and areas of growth of GEM**

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| **Strengths** | **Areas of growth** |
| Legal status | Financial dependency |
| Recognition and acceptance by government, and LGA | Inadequate and unsustainable financial resource base |
| Experience in Management Information System | Inability to meet girls expectations |
| Project management | Inadequate mobilized resources |
| Financial accountability | Inadequate fundraising structure |
| Collaboration and networking with local bodies | Inadequate mechanism for networking |
| Special Consultative with United Nations | Inadequate working gears |

**GEM Plans**

* On a digital front, Girls Education Mission International, in Jos Plateau State, hopes to formally launch a digital empowerment project that will kick start in January 2018. Currently GEM is working in establishing collaboration with Intel, Worldpulse, Airtel, Andela and Technovation to further in providing basic skills in computer, mobile app development, entrepreneurship and making the Internet more accessible, relevant and engaging for girls and women as well as providing them with ongoing support
* As GEM marks its 10th year anniversary, on Wednesday 11th October 2017, GEM will launch a Girls’ Global Awards and in collaboration with Lere Local Government Honor the pioneer GEM scholars who overcame incredible challenges to attained education beyond Secondary School and have now secured jobs supporting themselves, their families and their communities.
* As part of the #IAMPOSSIBLE Campaign GEM will begin the monthly distribution of free sanitary pads to girls beginning January 2017.
* A new GEM Strategic plan 2018-2020 is on the pipeline.

**Challenges and a Call to Action**

Societal challenges and economic climate in Nigeria have been unfolding so rapidly and have demanded the planting of new roots and there has been nothing more exhilarating for me than to harness best critical and creative thinking to ensure a strong future for GEM and our girls. Our girls deserve nothing less than our best effort on their behalf. As we prepare these young women for the opportunities and challenges of the future, we also recognized our limitation as an organization both in human and capital resources. For us to accomplish amazing things and experience rich fruitfulness in every aspect of activities, we required passionate persons and organizations who are willing to render their resources, skills, talents, expertise, energy and time for the sake of our teeming mothers and leaders (Girls) of tomorrow.

**Highlights of GEM Activities in Pictures**

    

    

    

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