

EDUCATE, EQUIP AND EMPOWER 230 WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Educate, Equip & Empower (EEE) project is designed to tackle poverty; retention, enrollment and completion of girl child education; enable networking and mentoring between female students and women professionals around the world and provide access to opportunities for women and girls in Nigeria.

DECEMBER 2019 - FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

EWEI Online, our online community for horizontal learning, exchange and mentorship, has in the last quarter:

- Marked one Observance Day: The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; **"16 Days of Activism"**), in which discussions featured 6 unique responses, 5 stories and 1 challenge across 2 countries on the platform. Since survivors of different forms of violence hardly speak out about their experiences, EWEI online encouraged all the members to share their different experiences of Gender-based violence (GBV) on the platform.

The screenshot shows a Slack channel interface for #ewe-online. The channel header includes the workspace name 'Empowering W...', the channel name '#ewe-online', and a search bar. The date 'December 2nd, 2019' is displayed. The conversation history shows:

- A message from EWEI Nigeria at 1:23 PM: "Hello ladies, trust you all had an awesome weekend."
- A message from EWEI Nigeria at 2:04 PM: "Welcome to day 7 of 16 days of activism against rape." This is followed by a paragraph: "In our culture, rape is a source of shame, so it often goes unreported. In some cases, the offender is rich or powerful or has higher social status than the victim. For example, a 60-year-old neighbor sexually abused a 3-year-old girl. He was rich and the parents of the victim couldn't afford the trial expenses. So, they took compensation and settled the case." Another paragraph follows: "There are cases that go unreported because of shame. There are cases in which the daughter is raped by her step-father and the mother dare not report it. There is a great need to raise awareness about this issue. But in the context of our culture, it is a difficult issue to talk about between parents and children. We have to overcome this."
- A message from EWEI Nigeria at 2:19 PM: "Below are some stories of survivors. Disclaimer: Names are not real." followed by three yellow speech bubble icons.
- A message from EWEI Nigeria at 2:43 PM: "It's a beautiful thing, to be a survivor of something so heinous."

The bottom of the screenshot shows a message input field with the text 'Message #ewe-online' and a rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, link, code, list, and link, along with text color and background color options.

Empowering W... **#ewe-online**

☆ | 👤 136 | 🗨️ 0 | ➕ Add a topic

December 3rd, 2019

In the years after the assault, Sandra experienced depression, anxiety, PTSD, and flashbacks. "My story replayed in my mind over and over again. Sometimes I'd have flashbacks and it was like I was there in that room going through it all over again."

As a coping mechanism for what she was going through, Sandra started to do self-harming behaviors, such as cutting, practicing unsafe sex, and abuse of drugs and alcohol. "I didn't care about my body. I didn't care about anything. One day I looked in the mirror and just started crying and I didn't recognize who I had become. This wasn't me at all."

Years later, when Sandra had her son, she felt that she had to get help not only for herself but for his sake. "For many years, I didn't want to be here—I didn't want to live. He changed my life. He is my reason for being here, and I'm so grateful for that."

Didi 2:21 PM

The country has an extremely low conviction rate for rape and sexual abuse, despite an increase in violence against women in recent years. It hurts me because some [instances of] rape are not recognised in the eyes of law. Sometimes, after medical examination find no signs of force or bruising, the law does not recognise that as rape.

It is so painful when one has no where to go in this instances, we need more open support groups.

#unitedagainstape

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December 4th, 2019

Message #ewe-online

B **I** **Aa**

Empowering W... **#ewe-online**

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December 4th, 2019

EWEI Nigeria 4:52 PM

"I didn't tell anyone because I kept thinking: Do I have a right to feel this way? Am I taking up space that I don't deserve? It took me a long time to get to a point where I realized I had a right to be heard, a right to speak my truth."

James Landrith is a survivor of sexual violence, former U.S. Marine, and long-time part of the RAINN team, including over 5,000 hours he has worked as a hotline support specialist and manager for the DoD Safe Helpline.

When he was 19 and on his first active duty assignment, James was sexually assaulted by an acquaintance who was not in the military. Because the perpetrator was a woman, he did not feel that he would be believed or taken seriously if he told anyone. Soon after the assault, he was deployed to the Gulf War. He served six years, rose to the rank of Sergeant, and was recognized for his service with a Navy Achievement Medal and a Navy Commendation Medal.

"I had to put it in a box and not think about it so I could keep going and fulfill my duties. I'm proud of my service. I had many good experiences along with some difficult ones. It has made me the person I am today."

For 17 years, James did not tell anyone about the assault and struggled with unhealthy coping mechanisms. Several loved ones shared their own experiences of sexual violence with him, but he didn't feel that he could identify as a survivor himself. He eventually opened up to a coworker about what happened to him, and she validated that it was wrong. "That's when I finally decided to use the word. To call it what it was—rape. Even though I knew how it had hurt me, I had never given myself permission to label it as sexual violence. That's why I never told anyone; as a man, I didn't think I could be a survivor. I didn't think I had the right to say it."

Safiya Ibn Garba 5:37 PM

Interesting.

Message #ewe-online

B **I** **Aa**

Violence against women and girls (VAWG); one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. For this reason, we did not hold any live-chat during the quarter due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

- Shared 2 global funding opportunities for members. These opportunities were aimed at fostering members professional development, empowerment, grass root Impact and women leadership.

Empowering W... | EWEI Nigeria

#ewe-online | 136 | 0 | Add a topic

December 20th, 2019

Wednesday, February 5th

Vivian Oseni 11:06 AM
Good morning everyone

Monday, February 10th

Hauwa David Laaki 12:25 PM
Good Afternoon Ladies

EWEI Nigeria 1:07 PM
Good Afternoon Ladies!
Applications are open for the **5th African World Heritage Youth Forum**, a capacity building exercise focusing on **Youth, Entrepreneurship and Heritage Sustainability in Africa**.
To apply, visit the link below.
<https://awhf.net/5th-awhf-regional-youth-forum-call-for-applications-2020/>

Deadline: Feb 23 2020

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Message #ewe-online

During the quarter, membership rose from **128** to **136** members, a 5.9% increase. Despite this online participation on the platform still remains a major challenge largely influenced by difficulties with the application which has been observed to be not as user-friendly as required and device selective.

CHALLENGES

The major challenge we have been faced with during the last quarter is that most members are not familiar with the slack application interface. The feedback from members showed that the application is device selective and data consuming which is a significant challenge for the target population.

MITIGATION AND NEXT STEPS

In the buildup to International Women's Day (8 March 2020), EWEI Online will be migrating to a more user friendly and generally accepted application. The day will be marked with at least 80 women in attendance who will be required to join EWEI Online. This will boost engagement and participation. In addition, more hangouts at venues where participants can be provided free Wi-Fi services will be organised.