



REPORT WOMEN! FEMALE REPORTERS
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Impact Assessment Survey Report

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Executive Summary

The dearth of news reports about the issues of access and abuse as they affect girls and women in Nigeria was the reason the Report Women! project was initiated in 2014 by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ). Under the project, WSCIJ trained 134 reporters across the country and enabled the execution of 65 girlchild and women-focused stories.

The project has produced a documentary – The untold stories of girls and women in Nigeria to document the issues of access to education, health care, economic empowerment - as well as the issues of abuse – widowhood practice, sexual violence, forced marriage, displacement, domestic violence and other existential challenges – that women often face.

As a build up to the Report Women! project, the WSCIJ initiated the Female Reporters Leadership Programme (FRLP) in 2017 in partnership with Free Press Unlimited. One of the major activities of the initiative is the fellowship which equips female reporters with the skills, finesse, support and tools to take bold steps that help position them for the highest leadership positions in their media houses.

In the last 3 years, the fellows have produced 53 leadership projects and 65 women-focused stories. WSCIJ has also carried out three surveys. One is on the status of leadership of female reporters in the newsroom. The gender policy and practices in Nigerian newsroom is the focus of the second.

This third survey assesses the impact of the FRLP part of the Report Women programme. Apart from the surveys, we have carried out three media monitoring exercises to map the trends in reporting girls and women issues in the Nigerian media, engaged with media managers and hosted a radio programme (in partnership with NigerianInfo) on published stories. We have done all these to push the boundaries of parity between female and male persons in the newsroom and ultimately in the news.

To capture the successes, challenges and impact of the FRLP project according to its beneficiaries and stakeholders, the WSCIJ with support from FPU, conducted this survey. We intend to use it to document the experience and improve the programme in future as more collaborators get on board.

Findings from the survey revealed that the Report Women FRLP has achieved its goal exceptionally. It equipped the fellows with knowledge and capability for leadership with evidence of increased visibility for the fellows as leaders in their newsrooms. It opened opportunities for personal and professional development and changed news organisations' perception about female leadership and the representation of the voice of women as leaders in news reports. It accrued over 1,200 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

WSCIJ was convinced about the capacity of the Report women programme to be a game-changer when we started in 2014. This report proves that increased participation of female reporters who are well-trained as leaders with passion and knowledge for reporting girls and women issues correctly can engender a socially just world if we all commit to sustaining the engagement.

Motunrayo Alaka
Executive Director / CEO

ReportWomen & FRLP

TIMELINE



2014 LAUNCH

- ReportWomen! was launched in 2014 with the collaboration of the Royal Netherlands.
- 80 reporters trained.



2015 DOCUMENTARY

The Untold Stories of Girls and Women in Nigeria documentary was produced and focused on the Girl Child and issues related to Women like FGM, Rape, Domestic Violence etc.



2017 INAUGURAL FRLP FELLOWSHIP

- 58 applicants
- 14 fellows
- 31+ story and leadership projects implemented.



2018 2018 FRLP FELLOWSHIP

- 199 applicants
- 19 fellows
- 40+ projects implemented
- 200+ persons directly impacted
- Alumnae Network (ReportWomen Network) inaugurated



2019 HOUSE TO HOUSE & 2019 FRLP FELLOWSHIP

- 207 applicants
- 20 fellows
- 40+ projects implemented
- 1000+ persons directly impacted
- 9 media houses visited
- 340+ journalists engaged





Group photograph of 2017 Fellows at the closing and award event, November 2017



Group photograph of 2018 Fellows at the share-fair and award event, February 2019.



Group photograph of 2019 Fellows at the share-fair and award event, November 2019

Scope of work

The survey only assessed 67 respondents, including FRLP fellows, resource persons and mentors as well as references and direct beneficiaries from the FRLP project, with the majority being from 2019 cohort. The survey did not cover other target groups such as editors of media houses and other indirect stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Why measure impact

After six years of implementing the Report Women Initiative and three editions of the Female Reporters Leadership Programme, it became pertinent for the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) and its partner, Free Press Unlimited (FPU) to assess the impact of the work done so far by documenting the feedback of various beneficiaries of the programme. The survey was intended to capture the successes, challenges, and impact of the FRLP project among beneficiaries and documents the experience, learn, and hopefully improve the programme in the future. It will also provide clarity on next steps for stakeholders who may want to replicate the idea or join our effort.

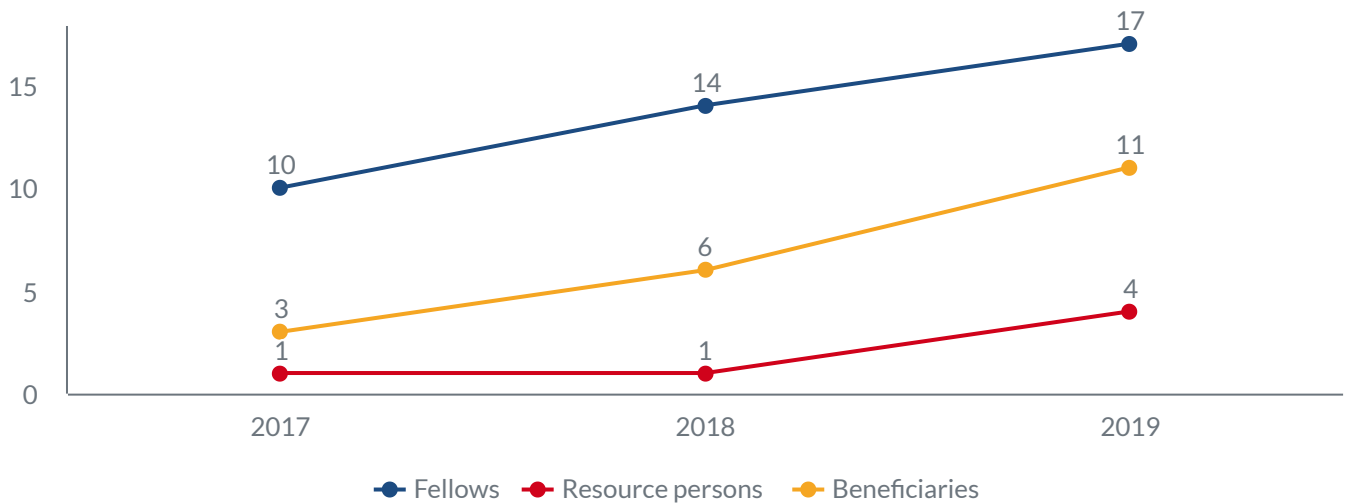
The 'How'

The descriptive design of the survey type was employed for this assessment. 67 participants were sampled through stratified sampling technique from the fellows, resource persons, and professional references of the fellows and beneficiaries of the leadership project. Three online survey tools were developed and validated internally. Each tool had carefully designed items tailored to suit one of the three categories of respondents. The survey comprised both open and closed ended questions - on basic information, professional and organisational change as a result of the FRLP fellowship and initiatives by the fellows, and lessons for future implementation of the project - structured to elicit specific responses. For a robust project assessment result, quantitative and qualitative analysis technique were triangulated. The descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages was used to determine the quantity of responses to the closed ended items, while the open and more qualitative responses were analysed by themes.

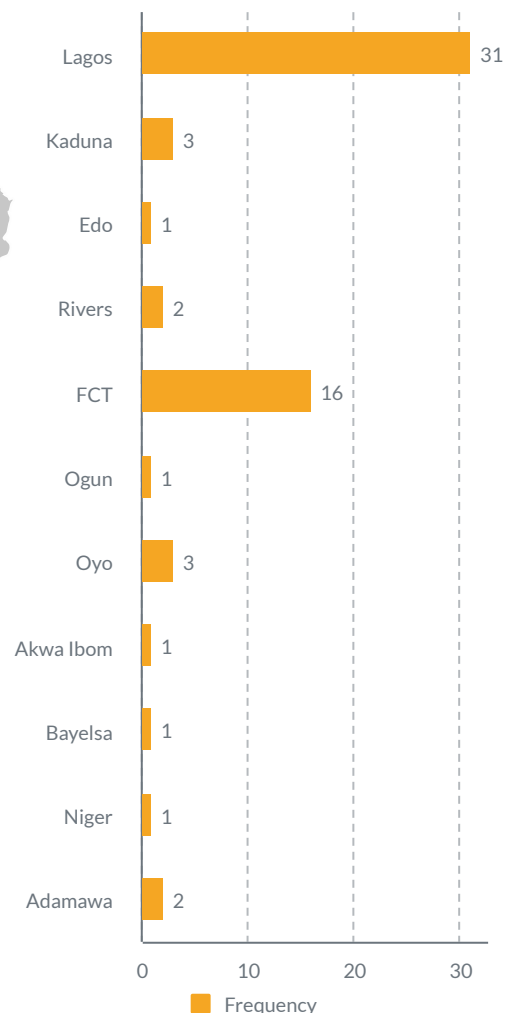
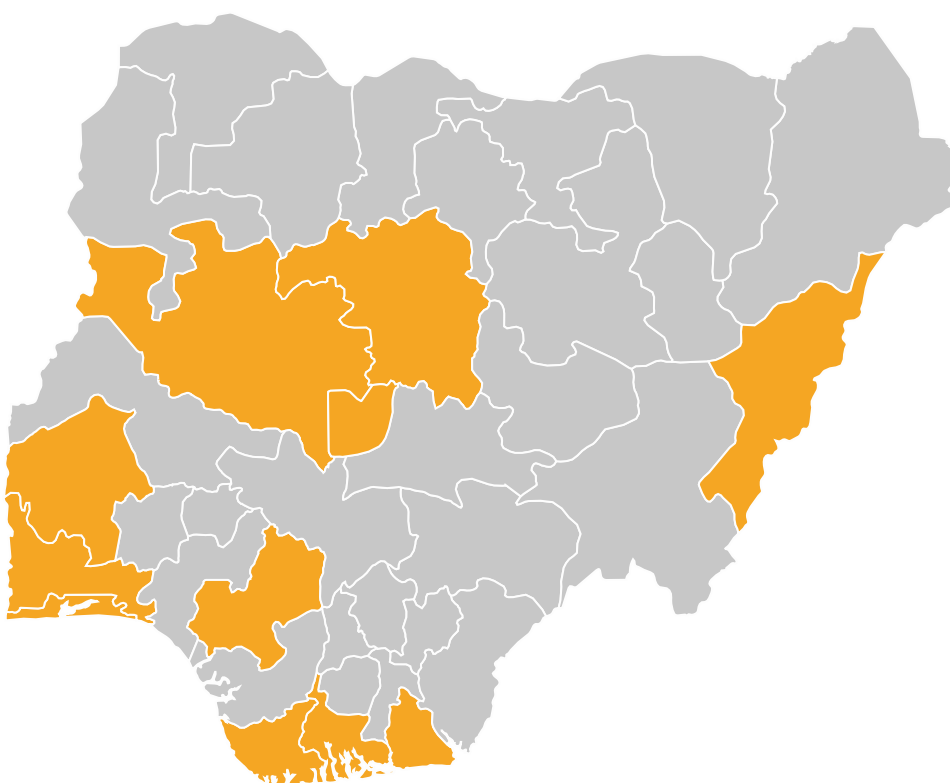
Profile of respondents

The key respondents to the FRLP assessment survey were the fifty-three FRLP fellows who benefitted from the programme between 2017-2019, resources persons and mentors. Others were work supervisors who spoke to the professional and personal development of the fellows after the FRLP and beneficiaries of the leadership or story projects of the fellows.

Out of the 53 fellows engaged across the three cohorts (2017-2019), 41 completed the survey. The 2017, 2018 and 2019 sets had 14, 19 and 20 fellows' respectively. Of the 41 respondents, 10 were 2017 fellows, 14 were 2018 fellows and 17 were 2019 fellows. Similarly, 6 resource persons took part in the survey, two of which were resource persons for more than one year of the fellowship, but the computation was done without counting twice. As such, the results show one from each of 2017 and 2018 fellowship and 4 from the 2019 fellowship. Also, 20 of the referees and beneficiaries submitted by the fellows took part in the survey. Of these, three took part in respect of some 2017 fellows, 6 for some 2018 fellows, and 11 for some 2019 fellows. A total of 67 respondents took the survey.



The respondents are spread across 11 states of Nigeria and two other countries – Ghana and the United Kingdom. Lagos with 36 respondents, representing 46 percent, dominated. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with 16 respondents accounting for 24 percent followed. Ghana with 4 respondents, accounting for 6 percent, and Kaduna and Oyo with 3 respondents each representing 4.5 percent followed. Adamawa with 2 respondents accounting for 3 percent followed. Edo, Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Niger and London representing 1.5 percent each.

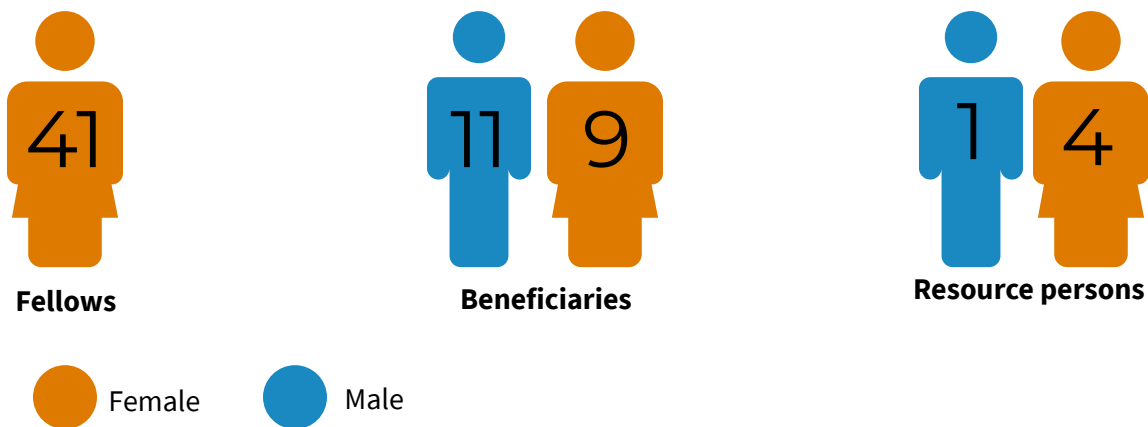


62 Nigeria **4** Ghana **1** London

Beneficiaries were from fellows' interactions with different stakeholders as a result of the implementation of their story and leadership projects. The highest number of beneficiaries impacted by individual projects carried out by the fellows was 50. Most of the beneficiaries were girls and women. Some were colleagues in the media industry and students across educational institutions. Probing further, beneficiaries' type of interaction or relationship with fellows were as a colleague, supervisor or superior, employer, partner, or beneficiary on a project. Of the 19 beneficiaries or referees who had interacted with the fellows, 9 (47%) were superiors, 7 (37%) were colleagues, 2 (11%) and 1 (5%) as a partner on project with the fellow.

Gender distribution of respondents

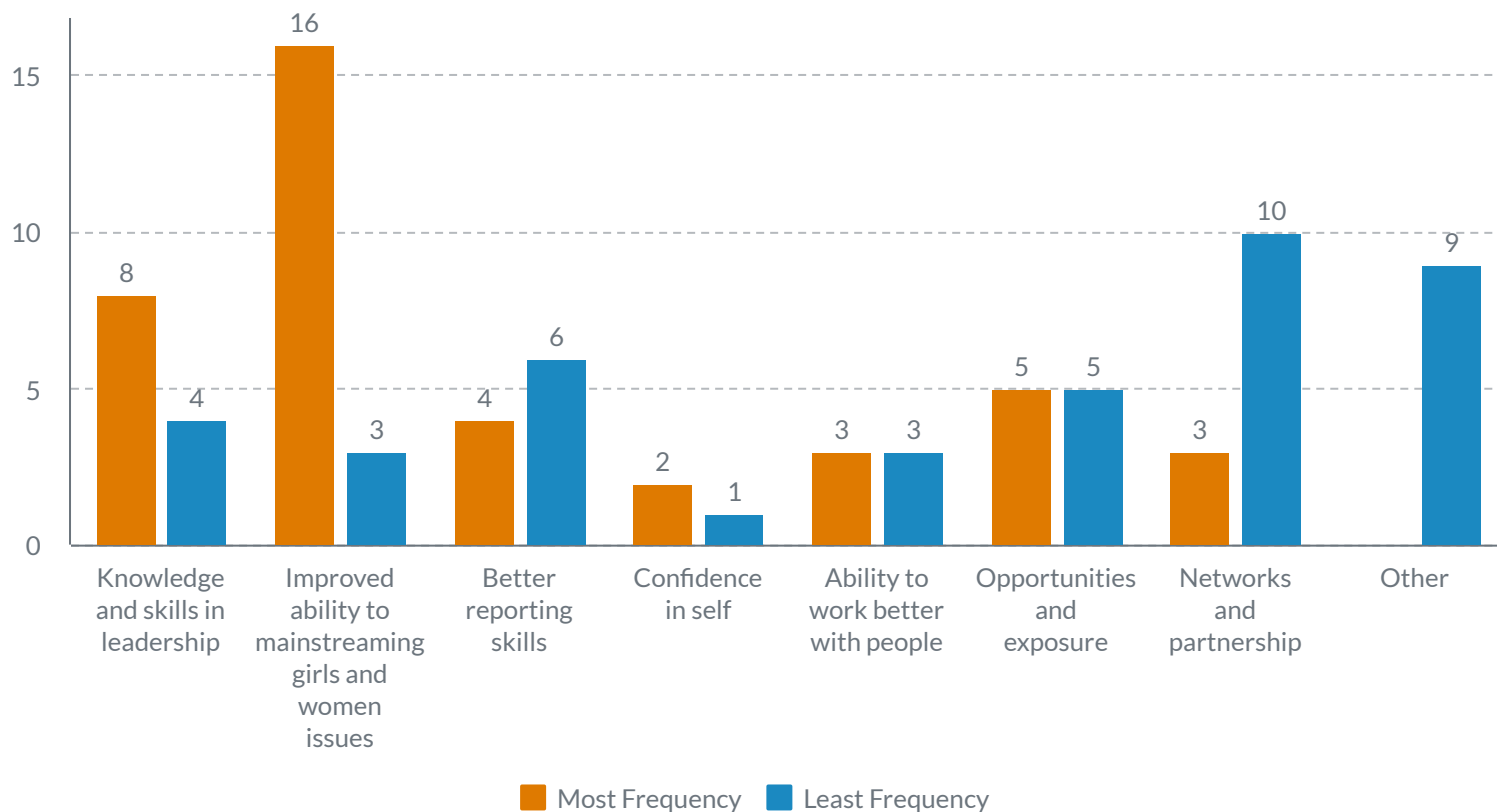
Of the 67 respondents that took the survey, 54 representing 80.6 percent were female, 12 accounting for 17.9 were male, while the remaining 1, that is 1.5 percent preferred not to say. 41 of the 54 female respondents were fellows, 4 were resource persons and 9 were beneficiaries and referees of the fellows. For the 12 male subjects, 1 was a resource person and the remaining 11 were beneficiaries and referees of the fellows.



Perception

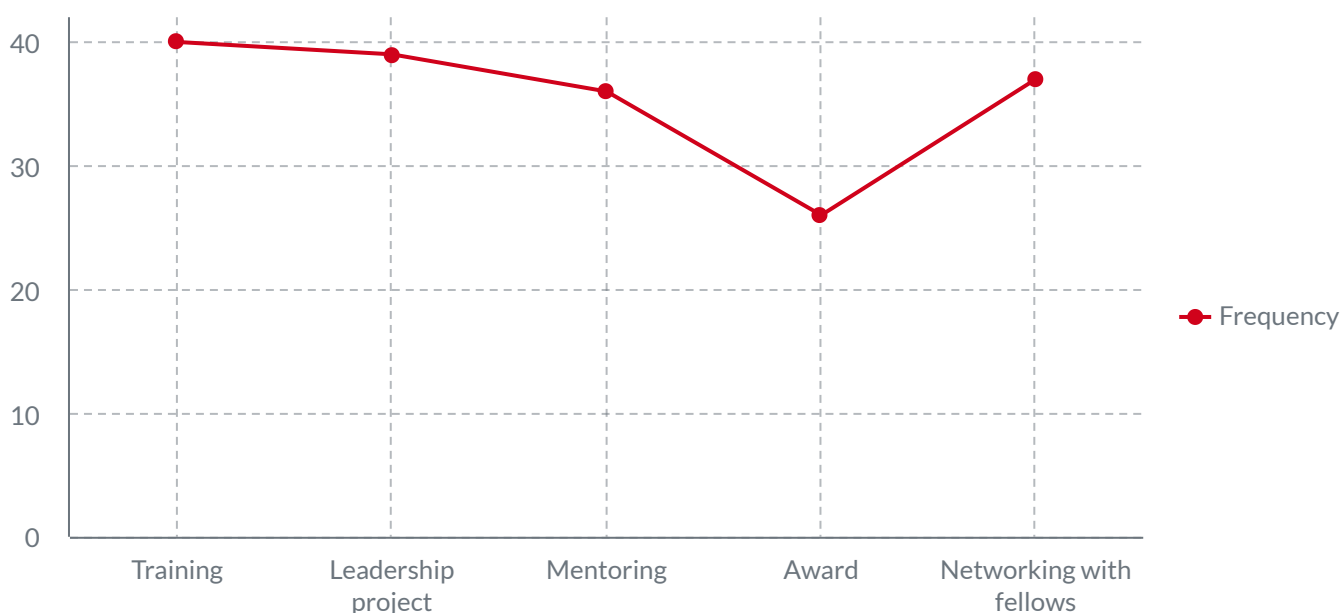
The fellowship programme had varied impacts on the fellows across the three cohorts, including improved knowledge and skills in leadership, improved ability to mainstream girls and women issues, better reporting skills, networking, among others. The most beneficial impact of the FRLP was improved ability to mainstream girls and women issues into news reporting. A total of 17, representing 39 percent of respondents stated this as the most beneficial impact of the FRLP. Knowledge and skills in leadership with 20 percent, opportunities and exposure with 12 percent, better reporting with 10 percent, ability to work better with people with 7.3 percent, networks and partnership with 7 percent, and confidence in self with 5 percent followed respectively. Mainstreaming girls and women issues in news reporting greatly improved in the fellows' stories output.

Measuring beneficial impact



Among the fellows, respondents' perception of the FRLP reveal that the training component is the most useful and the award component is the least useful. Whereas the respondents observed that every part of the programme was useful to them, 40 (97.6%) indicated that the training was the most useful, 39 (95.1%) indicated leadership project, 36 (87.8%) indicated mentoring, 26 (63.4%) indicated the award ceremony, and 37 (90.2%) indicated networking with fellows. The FRLP programme is implemented in different stages with a four-day training followed by three-month of mentoring, during which the participants are required to implement their leadership and story projects, after which an award ceremony is held to close the fellowship. The rationale for the award being the least useful may be because of the short time frame in convening fellows for recognition. Because it is a one-day event, fellows are mandated to dedicate as much resource, time and energy required for attending the training and mentorship within a maximum time frame of four hours.

Most useful part of the FRLP programme





L-R: Shola Soyele, Runner up, Azeekat Adedigba, Winner and Theresa Igomu, 2nd runner up at the 2019 award event of the Female Reporters Leadership Fellowship



Mr. Lekan Otufodunrin, mentor, facilitating a class session at the 2018 Female Reporters Leadership Programme Training



L-R: Michel Deelen, Deputy Head of Mission, Kingdom of Netherlands in Nigeria presenting dummy cheque and other award packages to Juliana Francis of New Telegraph, the 2017 first runner-up, during an award/appreciation event.

What did the FRLP Change?

Investing in the leadership capacity of female reporters yields great results

There have been exceptional professional and personal changes among the fellows, resource persons and beneficiaries as a result of the FRLP programme. Fellows added skills, knowledge and improved capacity for leadership. Fellows have become more confident than they were at the point of engagement. They speak with confidence on a broad spectrum of issues. They undertake initiatives and make decisions. They have become trainers and subject matter experts on the intersection between their beats and related girls and women issues.

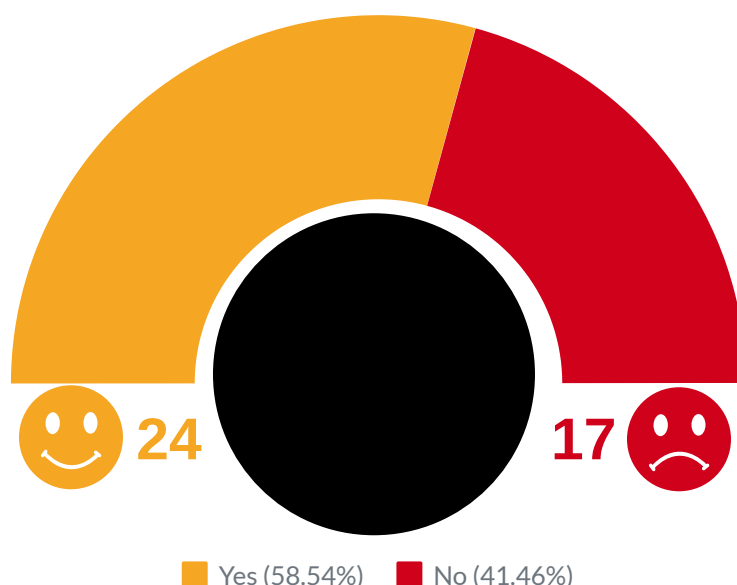
Promotions galore

Of the 41 fellows who completed the survey, 24, representing 59 percent, have been promoted or given higher responsibilities in their organisations after the fellowship. The level of promotion among fellows varies. Some were appointed to the management team in their organisation, some were made heads of sub-unit desks, some were given new portfolios to manage, while some were made heads in the newsrooms in their organisations.

A number of the fellows were promoted into management position in their organisations. Amaka Okoye, a 2019 fellow, was promoted into the management team of her organisation and became an authority and leader in her newsroom following the FRLP exposure. 2017 fellow, Funke Fayemi, became the head of women's unit in her organisation. Kikelomo Oduyebo who was a fellow in 2019 now heads a sub-unit for Lagos State Ministry of Information and Strategy weekly public enlightenment programme which initially had one female but now has five.



Promoted or given higher responsibility after FRLP experience



Yes (58.54%) No (41.46%)

Taking initiatives for leadership

By drawing the attention of relevant authorities to a water challenge in Ijabisa community at the outskirts of Abuja, 2019 fellow, Chika Mefor- Nwachukwu's career was showcased as an outstanding community-based reporter. Aside learning to work faster on social media, Ifeoma Okeke, a 2018 fellow, was also nominated to head an upcoming online TV programme in her organisation, while 2018 fellow, Opeoluwani Akintayo, was elected the public relations officer of the National Association of Energy Correspondence, a male dominated oil and gas focused media association.

Juliana Ebere Francis, a 2017 fellow, registered her youth project 'Youthlens Development Initiative' which was conceived during the FRLP programme. 2019 fellow, Azeezat Adedigba has sustained her initiative on 'Journalism and Women' for female campus journalists. 2017 fellow, Nafisat Abdulkarim, set up a group called 'Media Freelancer Network' to provide support to young media students. Josephine Akonor, a 2019 fellow launched her press club in secondary schools in Ghana for mentoring students.

Mentoring other reporters

Leading and helping young journalists to find their path in the field of journalism are ways some of the fellows are sustaining the impact of their work. Till date, about 70 percent of the fellows have continued their mentoring in secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning to young female journalists. Stephanie Adams, a 2018 fellow, leads a team of media and development experts to mentor young female journalists with women-centric story ideas for impact. Another fellow from the 2018 cohort, Nneka Luke, started mentoring IT students in her office. Theodora Aidoo, also of the cohort, secured internship placements in Ghana for most of her female mentees and continues to offer career and personal counsel on WhatsApp group.

Networking and collaboration

About all the fellows learnt the art of networking among and outside their cohorts. Through the Report Women Network, they collaborate on projects for impact and freely share sources. Others have added knowledge on managing newsroom conflicts and have become mentors to younger colleagues and interns in their respective organisations.

Reporters who understand girls and women issues can change media narratives

The FRLP immersive training helped fellows better understand the issues and provided the push to consistently do stories that focus on girls and women as leading voices in the news. The fellows have mainstream gender in storytelling by ensuring that issues affecting women and girls reflects in their news reportage and that the reportage is balanced with perspective about women as well as men. Many now have the exposure and capability to contribute to international publications and high-level meetings and conferences. 2018 fellow, Queen Esther Iroanusi, sustains gender in her reporting by publishing routine reports, special reports and analysis with women and children as focus. 2018 fellow, Yinka Olatunbosun stated that after the fellowship, she published stories about women, including the Berlin national newspaper and other articles and publications regarding women.

Funke Fayemi, a fellow from the 2017 class now contributes to various discussions on women and girls' issues on radio, twitter and webinars. Reporter with Metropolitan Broadcasting Corporation in Ibadan, Oyo State and a 2019 fellow, Omobolanle Adesuyi, continues to work with newsroom staff in turning around news bulletin as quickly as possible and anchors programmes to enlighten the public on the dangers of female genital mutilation, which was the focus of her story project.

Increased army of advocates for girls' and women's issues

To increase the quantity and quantum of reports about women and girls' issues, fellows implemented 65 girls and women focused stories and also built on some of the story projects implemented during the fellowship. They have expanded advocacy for the issues raised in their projects by calling out the attention of relevant stakeholders. To address the challenges confronting women, issues of abuse, and success of women in different fields, Emiene Erameh, a 2019 fellow, started a podcast on Anchor FM. On her part, Wemimo Adewuni, a 2018 fellow ensured the dedication of a telephone line for female callers to join the conversation on issues affecting women and girls through a radio programme.

2018 fellow, Enato Isukul continues to ensure gender balance in her newsroom reports and presently partners with an NGO in Bayelsa to rehabilitate girls and women involved in drug addict. So far, a victim of drug addict has been discharged through her efforts. Theodora Aidoo, a 2018 fellow from Ghana has written over 600 published articles on a news website (<https://face2faceafrica.com/>) while Stephanie Adams of Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism handles most of the women-centric activities in her organisation and also speaks at conferences and high-level meetings on the need for including girls and women.

The fellows have sustained their initiatives after the FRLP programmes through weekly check-in among colleagues, interns, upcoming journalists, secondary school students on physical and virtual platforms of press clubs where the projects were initiated.

Unintended impact

Other than the goals of FRLP, the project achieved impacts that we did not envisage. Chika Mefor, a 2019 fellow, connected a female carpenter to sponsors through her pro-women publications. The FRLP opened up opportunities for paid trainings, conferences and seminars based on stories by fellows. 2017 fellow, Funke Fayemi received recognition and award as one of the 'Most Inspiring Women in 2020' by a non-governmental organisation and became a trainer for WADATA Communications and Institute for Media and Society.

Elfredah Kevin-Alerechi, fellow and journalist with Today FM radio, Port Harcourt received grants from different international organisations to tell impactful stories. She won fellowships with the Accountability Lab, Dubawa, and Civic Hive. 2018 fellow, Funmi Ogundare secured a training scholarship funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation based on her development stories on women and girls.

The perception of the FRLP among the mentors have generated several interests. This include interest on gender initiatives by Mrs Bimbo Oloyede to train female journalists and politicians, Mr Lekan Otufodurin’s new idea of producing a yearly gender audit of leadership in the Nigeria media and Mrs Comfort Ogunye’s online media platform (FLF UPSCALE) for young women to share experiences and knowledge on leadership and enterprise. Beneficiaries and references attested to gaining knowledge about gender sensitivity and mainstreaming, leadership, and confidence, reporting for impact and leading in the newsroom.

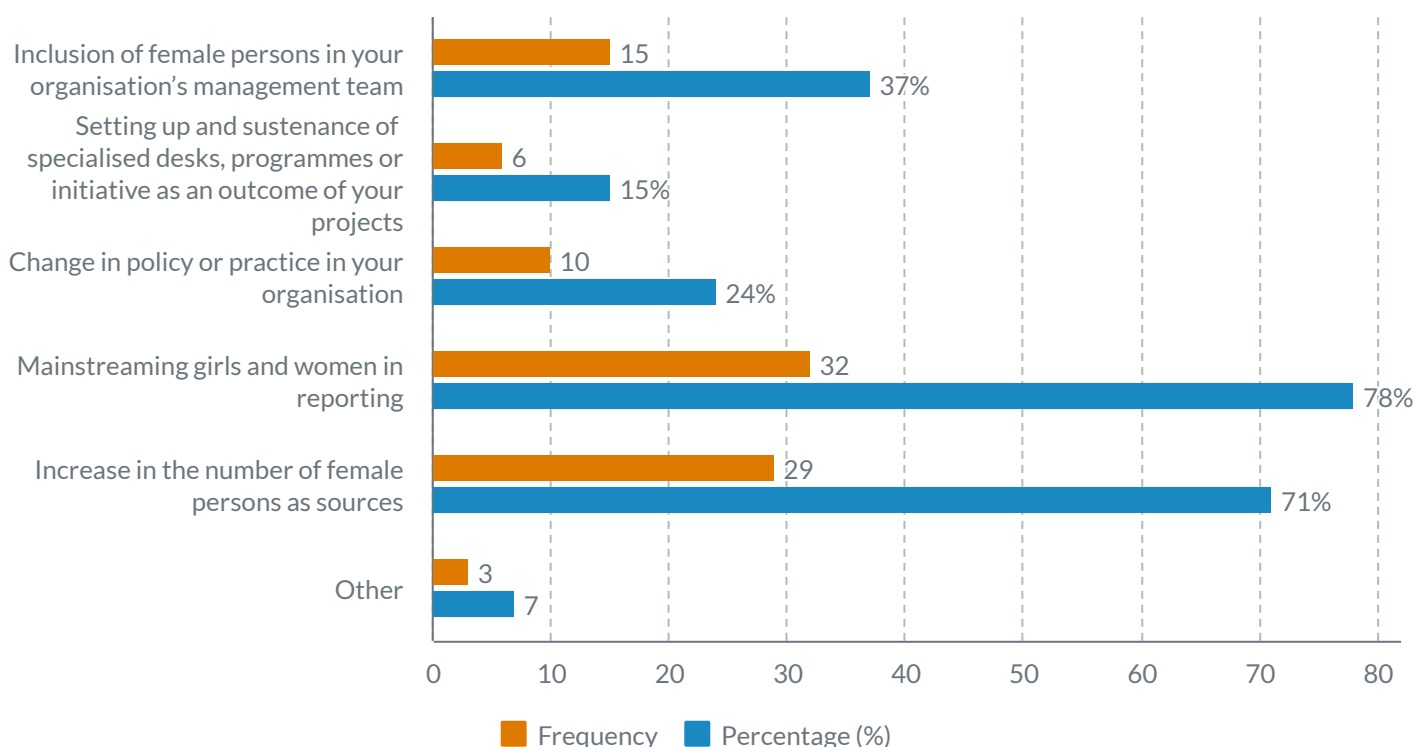
Feedback from beneficiaries and supervisors of fellows reveal that fellows have better understanding of gender issues as reflected in their reportage of women and girls. Other feedbacks include willingness to take risks and initiatives, ability to work better in a team and without supervision, improved analytical thinking, professionalism, and hard work.

Clear impact for Report Women FRLP

The fellows’ participation in the FRLP fellowship has triggered significant undebatable changes. Responses from a multiple option question on how the fellowship exposure affected reporters and their organisations showed that mainstreaming girls and women in reporting and increase in the number of female persons as sources were the highest changes the fellows indicated took place in their organisations given a selection by 32 (78%) and 29 (71%) of the respondents respectively. Inclusion of female persons in the management team (37%), change in organisation’s policy and practice (24%), and setting up of specialised desks, programmes and initiatives (15%) followed. Apart from the five specific changes, 3 respondents (7%) indicated other changes, including increased engagement with female audiences, creation of a fact-checking desk for fellow to manage, more structured engagement with interns.



Changes in respondents’ organisation





Cross section of 2017 fellows jotting copiously at the share fair of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism's Female Reporters Leadership Programme in Lagos, Nigeria



Top 3 Fellows of the FRLP with Staff of WSCIJ and Mentors at the 2018 award event



Motunrayo Alaka, Executive Director, WSCIJ (first left) looks on as Bethel Tsegaye, erstwhile Programme Coordinator, Free Press Unlimited (standing) contributes to the proceedings during the 2017 FRLP training session

Improving future FRLP project

There is a huge demand and appetite for the programme among female journalists in Nigeria, and among media organisations and managers. Hence it is important to consider all the useful suggestions made by all the survey respondents as next steps for future implementation of the FRLP. The suggestions can be summed up in one word.

- 1 Increase yearly intakes to two cohorts of fellows
- 2 Design robust selection of resource persons
- 3 Increase engagement with story projects
- 4 Dedicate more time to training and story project
- 5 Update curriculum and improve class delivery
- 6 Improve post-fellowship engagement
- 7 Improve mentoring process
- 8 Include training for male media managers
- 9 Enable peer mentoring and training for students of journalism

Conclusion

The impact of the Report Women Female Reporters Leadership Programme is undebatable. The initiative meets clear needs and can significantly impact the structure and content of the newsroom and the news as demonstrated by the survey. First, the programme has revolutionised the media in Nigeria and changed the face of female leadership in newsrooms across Nigeria. Several benefits, knowledge and impacts accrue from the implementation of the programme which has accelerated professional and personal development for quite a number of fellows based on change of jobs, exposure to training opportunities and recognition of awards.

Fellows have improved their understanding of the gender dimensions of issues about women and girls as seen in their reportage. They have become more confident, more professional, able to take initiatives and own their space. Mentors and resource persons have also been challenged to initiate and continue initiatives that promotes women's and girls' issues.

The FRLP has opened the eyes of many stakeholders to see where the gaps are and where they can plug in their efforts. References and beneficiaries of the programme confirm positive change following their interactions with the FRLP fellows. Overall, the FRLP is adjudged relevant in equipping female reporters with the skills, finesse, support and tools that position them for the highest leadership positions in their media houses.

In addition to the current activities of the programme a lot of work still needs to be done. We need to provide a platform that helps the media better access female expert sources and equip media managers and owners to intentionally create opportunities and environment for female journalists to thrive as much as their male counterparts.



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