



Annual Report

2023

Girl Pro
Development
Initiative

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the contributions of the underlisted persons who worked tirelessly to ensure we achieved the success recorded in 2023:

Board of Trustees

Bose Ironsi - Board Chairperson
Samuel Ikani - Vice Board Chair
Dr Adedeji Ademefun - Treasurer
Joan Obeta - Member
Nihinlola Ayanda – Founder and Secretary to the Board

Esteemed Mentors:

Adesuwa Iluobe
Anuoluwapo Fashola
Dawn Dimowo
Eghosa Gbadegesin
Faith Solomon
Dr. Funmilayo Oyefusi
Oluwatoyin Adetakun-Adeyemo
Vita Moltedo

Administrative Team

Mental Health Expert: Rhoda Olanrewaju
Community Coordinator: Aderinsola Ademefun, Sylvia Maduka
Volunteers: Motunrayo Owolabi, Joy Onuorah, Mary King.



Your contributions, whether financial or through volunteering, make a real difference in the lives of those we serve.

Funded by



About Us



WHO WE ARE

Girl Pro Development Initiative (Girl Pro Africa) is a non-governmental organisation that empowers African female undergraduates and early-career professionals through transformative learning and development opportunities. We offer access to skilled mentors who can guide, support, and provide advice, as well as psychosocial support to help students cope with the challenges and stresses of university life. We are committed to creating a brighter and more equitable future for women in Africa by collaborating with stakeholders in the education and social development ecosystem to create policies and programs that support young African women's academic, personal and professional aspirations.

MISSION

Our mission is to empower African female undergraduates and early career professionals through transformative learning experiences to maximise their full potential and drive positive change in society.

VISION

Our vision is to build a supportive environment where young African women thrive academically, emotionally, and professionally, becoming leaders who shape a more equitable and inclusive world.

OUR Values are summed in the Acronym LEAD:
Leadership,
Empathy,
Accountability,
Diligence.

Message From Our Founder

Dear Girl Pro Families,

2023 was a year of resilience-building as we recorded an unprecedented request for mental health support from the women we serve. African female undergraduates, especially those in public tertiary institutions, face a unique set of challenges that can significantly impact their mental health. Transitioning to university and post-university life can be especially difficult as they navigate newfound independence, academic demands, and social pressures.

Addressing Mental Health Needs

Studies in the Pan African Medical Journal show that African female undergraduates experience higher rates of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress compared to their male counterparts. This is often exacerbated by stigma, lack of awareness, and limited access to mental health resources on campuses.

A crucial lesson we learned is that addressing the mental health needs of the women we serve is essential for their academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being. Providing accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services and destigmatising conversations around mental health can make a significant difference in their lives.

Our 2024 Initiatives

In the coming year, we will form strategic partnerships that will enable us to:

- Offer free, confidential counselling sessions led by licensed therapists and counsellors who understand the lived experiences of young African women.
- Host workshops and support groups that address relevant topics of interest to cultivate self-care practices.
- Provide mentorship opportunities that pair undergraduates with successful alumnae who can offer guidance.

Continuing Our Mission

Our mission to empower young African women through transformative learning experiences to harness their full potential and drive positive societal change is far from accomplished. We will continue to run our e-mentorship programme while collaborating with education stakeholders to improve policy and practices for transformative learning.

We applaud our esteemed mentors and look forward to onboarding more collaborators and supporters.



In 2024, we will form alliances, leverage strategic partnerships and technology to expand our reach and deliver our programmes.



With gratitude and my best wishes,
Nihinlola Ayanda

Meet The 2023 Cohort

The GPA e-mentorship programme is designed to help the young women we serve undergo a profound shift in their understanding of themselves and the world around them. It aims to empower mentees to develop critical thinking skills and the ability to solve real-world problems. The programme includes a 2-day boot camp, weekly reading and reflection activities, three months of intensive learning, and continuous development support. Topics discussed include decolonising the mind, self-esteem, mental health, work ethics, money management, goal setting, personal branding, a high-performance mindset, the art of public speaking, emotional intelligence, and more. The programme has recorded positive impacts on participants, including improved self-confidence and esteem, rediscovery of self, resilience, networking, communication and interpersonal skills. Upon completing the three-month intensive learning, the mentees become Associates and continue receiving personal and career advancement support on request while sharing their learning with peers.



Tawakalitu Saludeen

GIRL PRO OF THE YEAR

Abubakar Tafawa
Balewa University



Princess Teh Wilson

LEADERSHIP AWARD
United Methodist
University, Monrovia



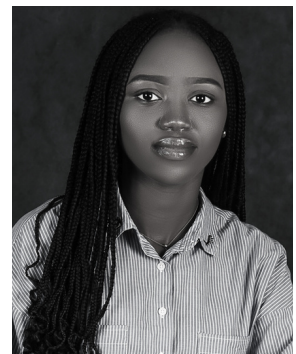
Mary Tobi King

Houdegbe North
American University,
Benin Republic



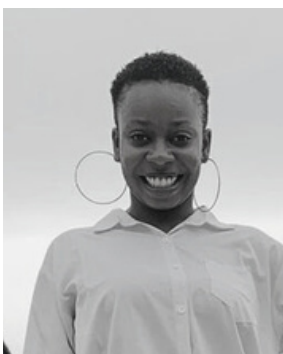
Kezia Begloe

University of
professional studies
Accra



Kanyisola Diyan

CREATIVITY AWARD
University of Ibadan



Blessing Ejukwa

University of Calabar



Esohe Izibiri

University of Benin



Toluwani Oladapo

Federal University of
Technology Minna



Chiamaka Anyanwu

Babcock University

Meet Our Esteemed Mentors

GIRL PRO VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME 2023



EGHOSA GBADEGESIN

ACCOUNTING &
MANAGEMENT
PROFESSIONAL



OLUWATOYIN

ADELOKUN ADEYEMO
COMPUTER SCIENTIST AND
SOFTWARE ENGINEER



DR. FUNMILAYO OYEFUSI

HUMAN RESOURCE &
ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
PRACTITIONER



DAWN DIMOWO

TECH POLICY
PROFESSIONAL



ADESUWA ILUOBE

WRITER &
PSYCHOTHERAPIST



VITA MOLTEDO

SOCIAL IMPACT
SPECIALIST



FAITH SOLOMON

ADMINISTRATIVE & ORGANISATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS SPECIALIST



ANUOLUWAPO FASHOLA

GENDER AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION SPECIALIST



LOLA AYANDA

DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNICATIONS
STRATEGIST

Outcome Story

The 2023 Girl Pro Mentorship Program has been a pivotal milestone in my personal and professional journey. As I navigated the complexities of life, I found myself at a crossroad, unsure of the next steps to take to reach the aspirations I had envisioned for myself. At this critical juncture, a dear friend, Joy, introduced me to the Girlpro mentorship program and encouraged me to apply.

Embracing the Opportunity

Despite my initial hesitation, I eventually mustered the courage to submit my application just days before the deadline. To my delight and gratitude, I was selected to participate in this transformative initiative. I learned from a team of experienced and dedicated mentors during the intensive boot camp. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life, as I was paired with the remarkable Adesuwa Iluobe, who became my guiding light.

Accelerating Growth and Development

The Girl Pro Mentorship Program has significantly accelerated my career and personal growth. Through the guidance, support, and opportunities provided, I have been able to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and chart a course towards my desired destination.

Career Advancement and Networking

In the realm of my career, the program has offered invaluable advice from seasoned mentors, empowering me to tackle obstacles and make strategic choices. Moreover, it has facilitated valuable networking opportunities, fostering professional growth and advancement.

Personal Transformation

On a personal level, the mentorship program has helped me identify areas for improvement and provided tailored guidance on enhancing my skills and reaching my goals. The constructive feedback from my mentor has been instrumental in keeping me on track and driving continuous self-improvement.

A Life-Transforming Experience

I am truly grateful and overjoyed for the life-changing opportunity. This experience has been a catalyst for my personal and professional development, and I am excited to continue on this transformative journey, armed with the knowledge, support, and inspiration gained through this remarkable initiative.

2022-2023 INSIGHTS

18

Mentees Graduated

13

Mentors Onboarded

2531

Online Community Followers

Clear Paths: Mary King's Reflection

It was a lonely afternoon in July, and while surfing the net, I stumbled upon Girlpro Africa's call for applications. I guess the universe could sense my frustrations with life at the time and sent me what it thought I needed. The Girlpro mentorship program 2023 cohort, which began officially on September 1, 2023, and closed on December 9, 2023, impacted me in ways I might not be able to put into writing. Before the mentorship program, I knew there were things I couldn't quite piece together, but during the program, it all started making a lot of sense. I got the guidance and support of those who had walked the walk, and I was also able to gain much-needed clarity on things pertaining to my personal life.

The Mentorship Experience

During the program, I set goals for myself with the help of my amiable coach, Dawn Dimowo. I mostly shared my struggles with her and my hopes for the future, and she helped put things in clear perspective. With time and effort, I knew that I could one day ditch my current job role for something more rewarding in tech.

My mentor and I engaged in weekly meetings, where we discussed progress, challenges, and various strategies for growth. My mentor also leveraged her connections to get me a one-on-one meeting with a human resource personnel. This helped me see things from a hiring manager's point of view, allowing me to reflect on my work, the progress made, and areas of improvement. I became more aware and started looking for ways to acquire the skill sets I needed for career advancement.

Despite the fact that my mentor and I weren't in the same time zone, this also taught me a bit of time management lessons, as I had to fix my schedule to fit hers. I also had to juggle mentorship commitments and other work-life responsibilities. On a personal note, I gained deeper insights into my strengths and weaknesses and possible areas for change and growth. I also expanded my network, connecting with a team of young women hungry for more out of life, just like I was. It felt good to know that I was not alone.

Next Steps and Forging Ahead

Switching career paths was the top of my goals during the mentorship, and I secured a social media manager/digital marketing internship in the following weeks. I intend to continue pursuing learning and skill development opportunities in the areas discussed during the programme and nurture the connections established.

Gratitude

I express my profound gratitude to the entire Girlpro team for this opportunity and the mentors' guidance and support throughout the program. The mentorship program was instrumental to my growth, providing valuable guidance, support, and opportunities for learning. I am grateful for the experience and exposure, and I look forward to further applying the insights gained to improve my quality of life.

Mary King
LAGOS



Emboldened by Mentorship : Tolu's Story

2023 was a transformative year for me. I completed my undergraduate studies, returned home to await my final results, and enrolled in my country's mandatory youth service program. During this time, I was determined not to be idle. I actively searched for platforms where I could access free online courses and certifications to continue developing myself.

As I explored these learning opportunities, my social media feeds started displaying sponsored ads related to my search interests. This was when I discovered Girlpro and another mentorship program. Recognising the value of having a mentor to guide me at this pivotal stage of my life, I immediately applied for both programs.

To my delight, I was selected to participate in the Girlpro mentorship program, while the other program did not work out. I consider myself fortunate to have been chosen for the Girlpro program, as it proved to be a fulfilling experience.



Toluwani,
FUT Minna

The Mentorship Experience

The Girlpro mentorship program paired me with Dr. Funmilayo Oyefusi, who took the time to understand me and was committed to supporting my growth. I shared my plans and aspirations with her, and she provided invaluable guidance on how to achieve them. She approached our mentorship with a maternal warmth, offering sage advice and encouragement every step of the way. Dr. Oyefusi's mentorship helped me develop a stronger sense of self-belief and focus on the goals I had set for myself. She consistently provided practical tips and strategies to help me make informed decisions and navigate the various choices before me.

The Program's Impact

The Girlpro mentorship program was a true eye-opener for me. It came at a time when I was feeling uncertain about the next steps in my journey, and the program's support proved to be instrumental in shaping my personal and professional development. Through the program, I experienced significant improvements in my interpersonal skills, leadership abilities, and public speaking confidence. These newfound capabilities have been invaluable as I navigate the next chapter of my life. In retrospect, the Girlpro mentorship program was one of the most meaningful and impactful experiences I had in 2023. I am grateful for the opportunity and hope that many other young women like myself will have the chance to benefit from this transformative program in the years to come.

Building Resilience: Inspiring Change and Leadership



After graduating from the Girl Pro Mentorship programme in 2022, I participated in Nigeria's mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme. During this time, I faced a series of challenges, and I was fortunate to have the unwavering support of Girl Pro. They provided me with mental health and financial assistance when I needed it most, helping me through a difficult period.

Facing Job Search Struggles

Upon completing my NYSC, I began applying for jobs but was surprised by the lack of positive responses. This starkly contrasted with my corps member experience, where I received encouraging feedback. The disappointment and frustration took a toll on my emotional well-being, and I turned to my mentor for solace and encouragement.

Determined to improve my situation, I invested in a laptop and embarked on a data analysis and storytelling journey. Girl Pro Africa further supported me by helping me secure a paid virtual internship role with a UK-based charity, allowing me to continue exploring this new path while actively seeking my desired job.

Inspiring Change and Leadership

During my NYSC, I encountered a notable event that showcased my leadership abilities, which inspired other young women. When I wanted to contest for the platoon leader position, I was told it was impossible because I was a girl. Undeterred, I waited for another opportunity. When assigned to a Community Development Service (CDS) group, I campaigned and advocated for a change in the narrative. My efforts paid off, and my CDS group had a female president and vice president for the first time. I attribute my courage and inspiration to the support and encouragement I received from the Girl Pro community. They have been instrumental in my life, and I know they will continue to be a source of love and support as I navigate my journey towards a better future.

My story is a testament to the power of mentorship and its transformative impact on an individual's life. The Girl Pro Mentorship programme has been a steadfast companion, providing me with the resources, guidance, and emotional support needed to overcome challenges and pursue my aspirations. As I continue to strive for a better future, I can take comfort in knowing that I have a family in Girl Pro who will be there to support me every step of the way.

2023 Plans

1

Organisational
Capacity
Strengthening

2

Partnerships
and Alliance
Building

3

Recruitment,
training and
placement of
new cohort of
mentees

4

Call for mentors

5

Periodic
e-safe space
sessions and
continous support of
Associates

6

Resource Mobilisation

7

Biannual Meeting
of the Board of
Trustees

8

Online Community
Growth and
Support

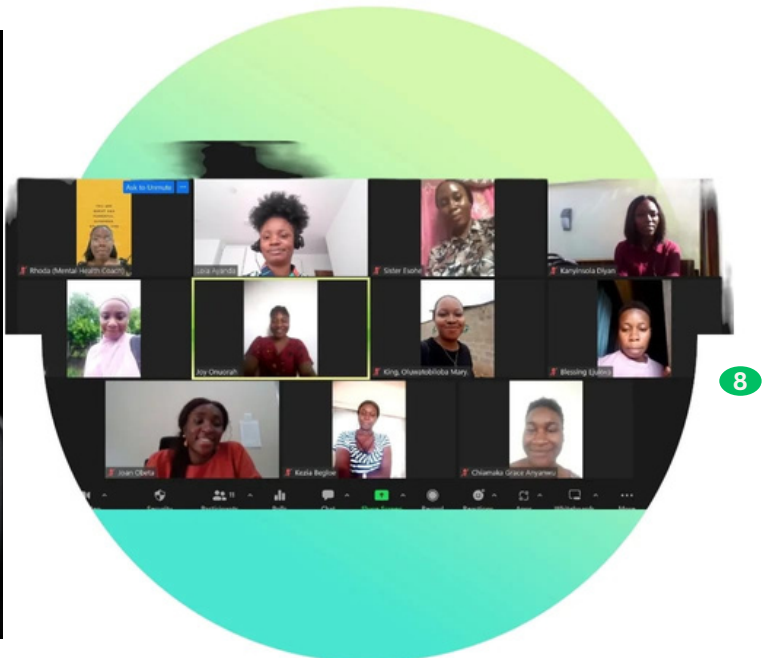
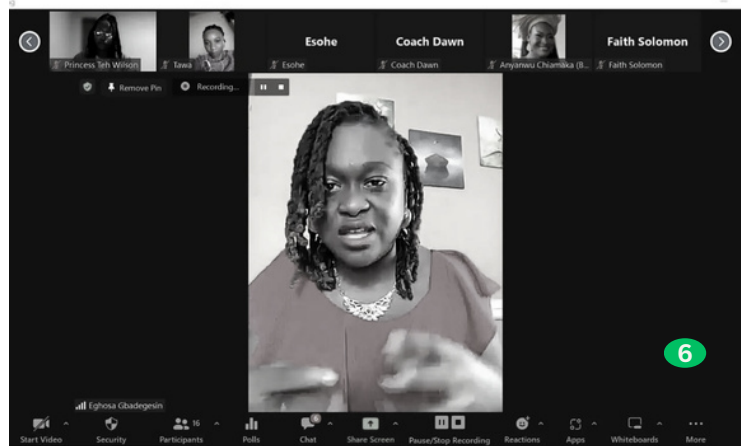
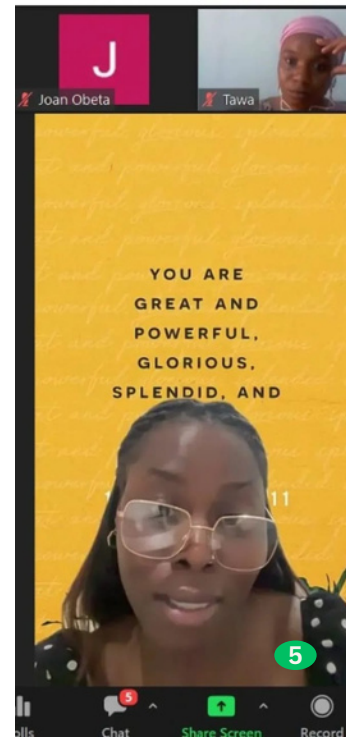
2023 PHOTO REEL

1



- 1 | Six mentors received the GPA 2-Star Awards in 2023.
- 2 | 3 | 4 | Dr Funmilayo Oyefusi, Adesuwa Iluobe, and Anuoluwapo Fashola presented the GPA 2-Star Awards by Barakat Owolabi, a member of the 2022 cohort of mentees.
- 5 | Rhoda Olanrewaju, mental health expert, held group and one-on-one mental health consultation sessions with the mentees.
- 6 | Coach Eghosa shared on money management during the opening boot camp.
- 7 | In memory of Tawakalitu Salaudeen, an exceptional mentee and the Girl Pro of the Year 2023, who passed away after a brief illness on October 19, 2023. She is sorely missed.
- 8 | Snapshot from one of the weekly reflection sessions.

PHOTO REEL



2023 Budget

NGN1,345,255 (1000 USD)

This includes monthly stipends for mentees, media engagements, website and statutory fees.

100%

funded
by Insightful Media.

2024 FUNDRAISING GOAL

NGN 13,452,550
(USD10,000)



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