



Bisi Alimi
Foundation

ACCELERATING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE
OF LGBT PEOPLE IN NIGERIA

Program's Activity Report

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Cross-section of Rainbow Academy scholars class of 2022.

"Ten years ago, when we set up the Bisi Alimi Foundation, we were very clear with our vision and mission: "to accelerate social acceptance of LGBTQI+ people in Nigeria."

While the journey has been exciting, it is fair to say that it has not been easy. In 2014, I was the only person running the organisation in my flat in London, spending hours online connecting with activists and LGBTQI+ people on the ground in Nigeria. Within a few months of starting and with support from Kings College London, we had our first intern.

In partnership with the Initiative for Equal Rights and NOI polls, with the backing from GLAAD, we were able to conduct a survey looking at the social perception of LGBTQI+ people in Nigeria. That was ten years ago. Quickly on the back of that, we conducted the "Impact of Homo/Bi/Transphobia study. We sampled over 400 LGBTQI+ people in Nigeria, and that study was also cited by the United Nations report on homophobia in Nigeria. The report has also informed all the projects in the foundation.

In the last ten years, we have trained, engaged, partnered with, and supported groups, individuals, and institutions in Nigeria. We would not have been able to do this without our donors' support and the fantastic people who allowed us to be part of their journey. I will not forget all the staff, interns, and volunteers who have passed through the foundation in the last ten years; we wouldn't be here without you.

Through this report, the first of its kind from us, I want to invite you to a possible world that has been created and will be created through resilience, partnership, collaboration, and unending support. Thank you for the last ten years, and this is to the next ten years.

Bisi Alimi
Executive Director/Founder- Bisi Alimi Foundation.

Media Justice Fellowship

The Media Justice Fellowship residential training was held in March of 2023 in Lagos, Nigeria, and is open to LGBTQ professionals and allies. This year's fellowship focused on Gender, Gender Identity, Expression and the Intersectionalities of gender concerning legal justice and societal standards of gender roles.





The fellowship comprises 12 fellows drawn from the legal and media professions; five law fellows and seven media fellows made up the 2023 cohort of our Media Justice Fellowship.



Our 12 fellows are alumni from our past Media Justice programs, and they were selected from across all regions in Nigeria through a selection process that involves their passion and determination of the course for LGBTQ rights and their past works in reporting, documenting, representing and promoting LGBTQ inclusion.

POST TRAINING FEEDBACK

From the post-training feedback, fellows expressed the importance of the program in their professions, how it has impacted them, and the lessons they took from it. Here are some responses from fellows;



Fellows during a session

Chizelu (He/Him)

“The training had a positive impact on me personally because I am now better informed on various sexual orientations, gender as well as gender identity. Professionally, I am also more informed on how best to render legal services (pro bono) in the event of any human rights violations for these special classes”.

Amb. Emmanuel (He/Him)

“I feel like a person with a higher understanding of not just issues surrounding gender but beyond that. It was indeed a FELLOWSHIP”.

Legal fellows have committed to introducing practical usage of respectful languages, pronouns, and other universal human rights laws for efficient legal representation and expertise. Media fellows shared some of their challenges in reporting and covering LGBTQ content; however, they are dedicated to LGBTQ inclusion, especially concerning topical discourse on gender, and some fellows are already using their media forum to promote and write articles that shine the spotlight on LGBTQ visibility.

Rainbow Academy

Created in 2020, the Rainbow Academy is a 12-month leadership and capacity-building training program that has successfully graduated 40 scholars over the past two years since its inception. It is currently training twenty (20) cohorts for the 2023 scholar program. The residential training and Rainbow Academy Ball are usually hosted in Lagos, Nigeria.



ABOUT RAINBOW ACADEMY

The academy focuses on improving the leadership skills of scholars, taking scholars through a journey of 12 months in areas of communication, business developments, creative writing, storytelling, media engagement, the law, sexual, mental health and mindfulness programs; engaging and collaborating with skilled expertise and professionals nationally and globally to engage and train our scholars through virtual classes and mentorship guidance.





Rainbow Academy takes scholars through self-discovery, awareness and improved mindfulness. Scholars are made to understand how their unique identities cross-matches with those of others, and they are taught to respect and appreciate the differences and uniqueness we all are, holding space for one another and understanding their power, privileges and shortcomings.

Scholars for Rainbow Academy are selected through an intensive selection and independent review process; our scholars are cut across from all regions in Nigeria, representing all rainbow spectrums.



Aliyah Baana (She/Her)

"My name is Aaliyah Baana Ibrahim; I am an activist and advocate for trans and gender non-conforming individuals. I identify as a transgender lesbian lady based in Kano state, Nigeria. Rainbow Academy has dramatically changed my life and day-to-day activities, using the margin and mainstream of who I am becoming and where I am. Rainbow Academy has shown me a way to accept myself, see myself beyond my identity, and sharpen to my personal development."

Edwin Wiffey (He/Him)

"I have attended a lot of trainings in my time in doing developmental work and all those trainings have only been about teaching us how to do their job and give them results. Rainbow Academy is the first time it was about me, for the first time I could see myself as the centre, I discovered ME. The most beautiful part was the fact that Bisi and the Trainers took everything that they are in total and gave it to me, show me all the keys to their success, the paths of their failures, the light of their skills and accomplishments and secrets to fame and gave it to me for Free. No one has ever done this for me, and I hope someone else is given the same opportunity as I plan to also give what I have been given. Thank you very much BAF. "

Scholars are taken through a course on Business Development and entrepreneurial studies to improve their capacity and knowledge with best business management practices and financial intelligence. We encouraged our scholars with existing businesses to submit a fundable business proposal; a £1,000 grant was invested into some businesses that submitted strong proposals. The impacts of this micro-grant on their business growth and professional development over the past months have been profound. Scholars have shared the impacts the micro-grants have had on their lives and business; permit me to share some of their testimonials with you;



Simon Sylvester (He/Him)

"Rainbow Academy transformed my life and business, Simon's Life Bank. I received a grant of NGN130,000 (\$313) to enhance my blood bank operations. This funding allowed me to upgrade equipment and secure a new shop space. Prior to joining Rainbow Academy in 2021, owning a blood bank lab seemed like a distant dream. However, after participating in the 2022 training program, I gained invaluable knowledge and support, enabling me to expand my business significantly. Today, I operate my own lab independently, equipped with the necessary machinery for blood transfusions.

Additionally, I have attracted investor interest, positioning my business to thrive as one of the leading establishments in Nigeria's capital city. My journey with Rainbow Academy has empowered me to pursue my dreams relentlessly, regardless of obstacles, and I am excited to share my story and future endeavors with the world."

Tesla Ebibami (She/Her)

"This training gave me a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the LGBTQI community. It also gave me the tools and knowledge to support and advocate for the community in my daily interactions. I now have a greater sense of purpose and a clear vision of how I can make a positive impact in the world".



Rainbow Academy scholars at RA'Ball

We understand the importance of relaxing and playing for overall well-being; hence, we need to allow our scholars to engage in extra-curricular activities that build mental alertness and physical agility and community.

Abdulquadri Bello (He/Him)

"Rainbow Academy has helped build an understanding of our different privileges and how they relate to or affects other people's lives around us without us being aware. Understanding this has helped me be more open to people's viewpoints. I was given a grant to take my business to the next level. I run an agro-based start-up, Gentry Farms and Agro Services, I was given a grant of NGN70,000 (\$168), the money was effectively used to register my business with the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission. My experience with Bisi during the coaching session is stuck within my subconscious and every time I am about projecting problems that are not real on my business processes, I reflect on that one moment when I was made to understand how I am allowing problems that are not real to affect my reality and this helps me change course on my thought process, I can calmly analyse what is now, things obtainable with what is in my reality, focus on it and make sure to utilize it for optimum productivity. "



Raymond Gigi (He/She/They)

Rainbow Academy was my breakthrough point, and I feel good about my recent development personally and otherwise. BAF RA was my gay miracle; the foundation rebranded me and made me a better person. BAF gave me an opportunity to think aloud and find solutions within; every session was on point. BAF also gave me an opportunity to better my business ethics and plans and supported me with a grant to expand my business. I am a baker and run a baking business called Arcon Bakes. The grant of NGN130,000 (\$313) was used to rent a shop space and purchase baking equipment. This has been of enormous benefit to my business development."

Nigeria LGBTQ Chambers of Commerce (NGLGBTQCC)

The Nigeria LGBTQ Chambers of Commerce (NLGBTQCC) is a network that brings together LGBTQ business persons, experts, professionals, artisans, etc., aiming at addressing the needs and challenges facing LGBTQ businesses in Nigeria, proffering solutions to meet these unique challenges. The MISSION is to “create wealth and promote financial independence of queer persons”.



It's a program for LGBTQ business owners, managers, startups and entrepreneurs to create a network of queerpreneurs to share ideas, network, mentor and form partnerships to take their business to the next level. The Nigeria LGBTQ Chambers of Commerce is a project with long-term goals of creating financial liberation/independence for queer people.

Held in Lagos, Nigeria, this business development forum is designed to take queer business owners in a business and financial management course and provide mentorship support and guidance for these young queerpreneurs.

About twelve LGBTQ business owners participated in this 2-days workshop on several aspects of business development, sales and marketing, brand identity and business storytelling (pitching).



The NGLGBTQCC training had in attendance LGBTQ business representatives from trans business owners to gay, bisexual and lesbian business owners; in all, about twelve businesses were in attendance, and these businesses expressed their gratitude and drive for more opportunities and training that focuses on queer business development mentorship and etiquette financial and sales management.



“This training has shown me the need to create a visible brand. So far I am setting up a YouTube channel to show my work. And build a portfolio”.

“Personally I see myself more than just a business owner but as a **BRAND TOO**, professionally I've been able to set right records and layouts to help my business and other partners and investors see what we are doing and what are core values are”.



Queerpreneurs at the Nigeria LGBTQ Chambers of Commerce.

Queerpedia Fellowship

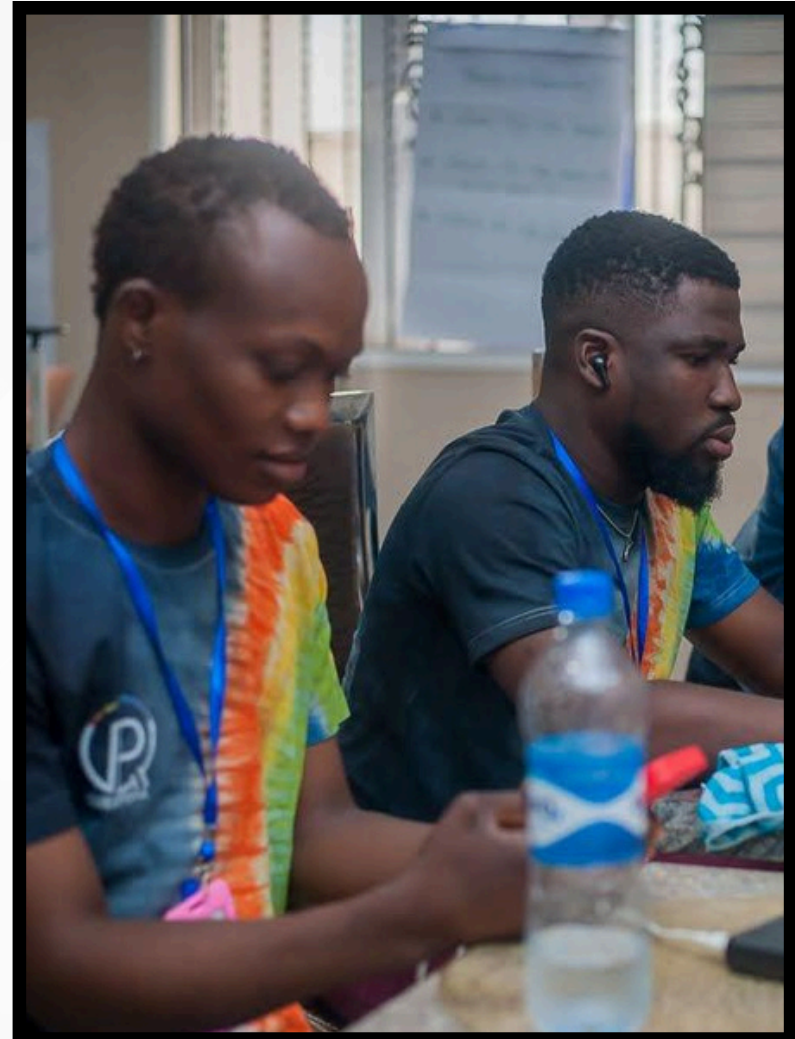
Objectives;

- Train fellows to become curators and content developers.
- Train fellows on Wikidata; this collects data for storage and information for future reference.
- Retained fellows will organise similar training in their community to train other LGBTQ individuals interested in gaining soft wiki skills.
- Increase access to knowledge and information on LGBTQ-related content for all.
- Create visibility and support LGBTQ advocacy.
- Develop the skills of LGBTQ persons in Nigeria in digital content creation.

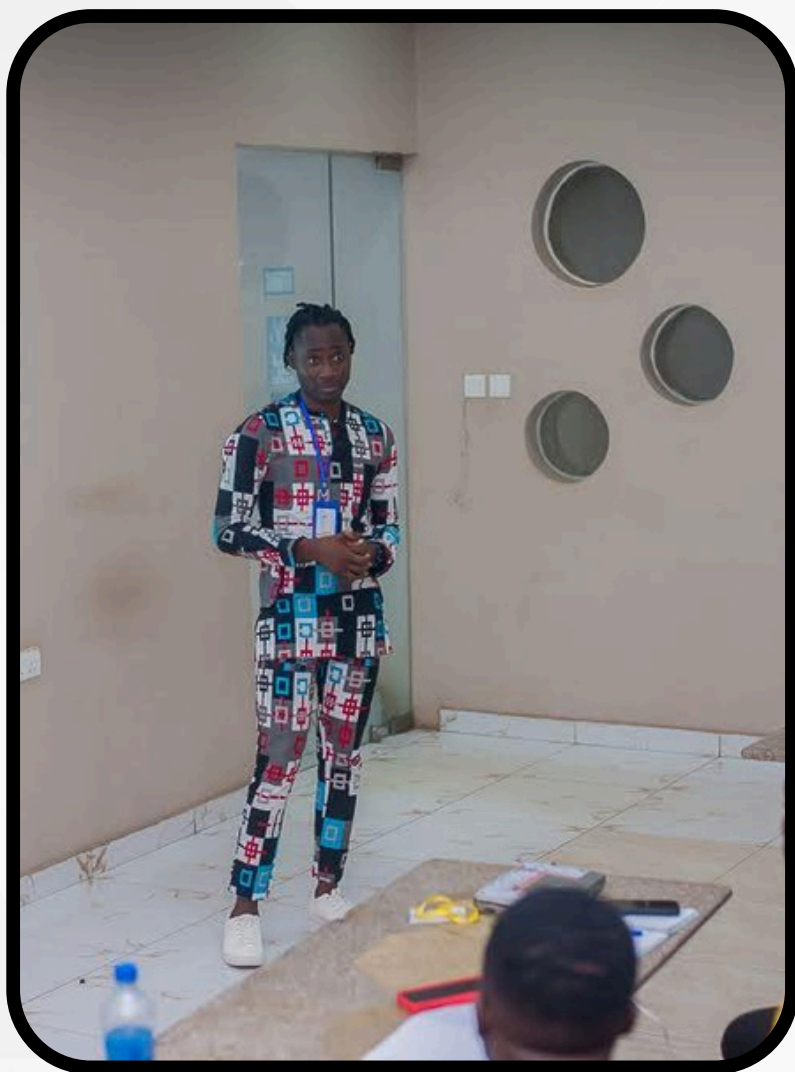


Queerpedia fellowship is a program with main intentions and focuses on increasing LGBTQ visibility online and providing free access to knowledge and information to all. This program is in partnership with the Wikimedia Foundation, and it's a Nigeria-centric project that aims at training 20 LGBTQ youths to curate, edit, translate and add LGBTQ-related content using Wikimedia software.

The future of the Queerpedia program is to spread this capacity and skill-building training across all regions in Nigeria. The program was launched this year in partnership with the Wikimedia Foundation; in its pilot year, we have twenty pioneering cohorts from two areas in Nigeria. The ancient city of Ibadan, Oyo state, hosted the southwest section of the training, while Owerri, Imo state, will play host to the Southeast section of the training.



Queerpedia Fellows 2023



Queerpedia South-western fellows were drawn from Benin, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo states.

The Queerpedia fellowship is a ten-months long program aimed at increasing visibility, and providing tools for advocacy in terms of information, resources, and data. The program will train twenty LGBTQ youth to curate, edit, translate or work queer historical events with guidance from Wikimedia skill experts. Queerpedia Fellows will be linked to the larger global Wikimedia LGBTQ networking group to foster continuity, partnerships, sharing of ideas, knowledge, and further engagements.

Fellows are tasked to develop a research topic and are supported with the right resources to dig deep and develop their ideas into visible outcomes, such as this new piece still in its developing stage:
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impact_of_Colonialism_And_Religion_On_LGBT_Q_Rights_In_Nigeria



Fellows working on a task.

Queerpedia Fellows from the Southeast region were drawn from Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River and Imo states.

NEXT PROJECTS

Research - Assessing
the impact of the
country's anti-gay
laws on the LGBTQ
Nigerians accessing
legal and social justice

PROJECT 1

Judicial
Consultation

PROJECT 2

Pathway of Inclusion -
"Equip Religious
Leaders to Embrace
LGBTQI Diversity in
Nigeria "

PROJECT 3

RESEARCH - ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE COUNTRY'S ANTI-GAY LAWS ON THE LGBTQ NIGERIANS ACCESSING LEGAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

For years the LGBTQ community in Nigeria have been denied basic rights and services due to the country's law that criminalises same-sex marriage and public display of romantic affection for same-sex persons. These laws include the penal code of Northern Nigeria, which adopted the Islamic Sharia laws, which punish homosexuality by death. The criminal code of Southern Nigeria proscribes up to 14 years imprisonment for same-sex sexual activities against the order of nature, and the national anti-gay law (SSMPA) criminalises same-sex marriages in Nigeria.

These laws over the years have hindered LGBTQ Nigerians' access to social justice and inclusion; the psychosocial effects and impacts of these laws on the community in Nigeria have not been fully studied. This Research will focus on Assessing the impact of the country's anti-gay laws on the LGBTQ Nigerians accessing legal and social justice. This research seeks to sample the views and opinions of over a thousand LGBTQ Nigerians living in Nigeria who have faced domestic, institutional and societal prejudice, harassment and discrimination based on their real or perceived identity.

This research aims to engage key policymakers and community leaders with data and information on the challenges facing the LGBTQ community in seeking justice. The recommendations and findings will be explored with community stakeholders and leaders to build on community movement and strategic engagement with policymakers and state actors.

Objectives;

- Detailed comprehensive reporting and documentation of LGBTQ Nigerians' struggles with legal justice.
- Investigate the usage of the Rule of law application towards LGBTQ Nigerians.
- Promote using the Rule of law to address LGBTQ Nigerians' concerns.
- Explore pathways to legal intervention, assistance and representation for LGBTQ Nigerians.

Judicial Consultation

This project will be implemented in partnership with the Nigeria Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The consultations will explore avenues of judicial engagements with allied queer/civil societies in Nigeria to develop pathways for LGBTQ Nigerians facing discrimination, persecution and unlawful harassment to seek and access legal guidance towards upholding their fundamental human rights.

The findings from the research will be used thoroughly throughout the consultations to channel discourse and explore areas of collaborations, partnerships, and actions to be implemented as recommended by the report findings.

Objectives:

- The judicial consultation explores opportunities for collaboration and engagements with the Nigeria Bar Association to seek legal justice pathways for LGBTQ persons facing unlawful persecution.
- Create a system of pro bono legal experts linked to a support chain tasked with offering legal services to LGBTQ Nigerians.

Pathway of Religion Inclusion

This project seeks to “Equip Religious Leaders to Embrace LGBTQI Diversity in Nigeria” it aims to facilitate a positive shift in attitudes and practices of religious leaders towards LGBTQI individuals. By empowering religious leaders in Nigeria with knowledge, empathy, and inclusive values, the program strives to foster a more inclusive and accepting society in Nigeria where all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are respected and protected.

Pathway of Inclusion will engage with religious and traditional leaders, LGBTQ community leaders, and key policymakers to drive the discourse and implementation of this project.



Pathway of Religion Inclusion

Objectives

- Empower religious leaders in Nigeria to embrace LGBTQ diversity within their religious teaching and practices.
- Provide religious leaders with accurate information and education about sexual orientation, gender identity, and the experiences of LGBTQI individuals.
- Addressing common misconceptions and stereotypes through open dialogue and critical reflection.

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness and knowledge among religious leaders about LGBTQI issues, leading to a more accurate and compassionate understanding of LGBTQI individuals.
- Strengthened collaboration between religious leaders and LGBTQI organisations, promoting joint efforts to foster social inclusion.
- Enhanced public discourse on LGBTQI rights, leading to broader acceptance and tolerance within Nigerian society.

How You Can Support

Support our work by engaging and donating to our programs

Spread the word about our work and program by amplifying and sharing with your networks.

Volunteer your skill, expertise, knowledge, or guidance in any area of our programs or engagement.

[DONATE](#)



Our Vision

The programs in Bisi Alimi Foundation are focused on increased awareness and human capital development of LGBTQ persons and allies; we aim to create a society where people are appreciated and seen for who they are and their impacts on society. These are reflected in the operational conduct of our programs, visibly seen in the impacts they have on the lives of all participants who have passed through them.

Our Programs teams are actively looking for avenues to re-invent itself, build on past successes, and employ modern best practices in developing innovative programs that empower and encourage the creativity of LGBTQ persons for sustainable growth. We are happy to work and collaborate with anyone who buys into our vision of “accelerating social acceptance of LGBTQ person”.

Thank you to our donors over the past 10 years!




Bisi Alim Foundation

THANK YOU

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