



SKILL ACQUISITION  
AS A CATALYST FOR SOLVING THE  
**ALMAJIRI CRISES IN**  
**NIGERIA**

# Welcome Address



It is with great pleasure and delight that I welcome you to Laylah's Way, an initiative on the mission to empower underprivileged boys and girls through relevant education, skills development, innovative healthcare and focused livelihood programs.

This we have done over the past years and have recorded significant impact through various activities that have been beneficial to many women and young girls.

As founder and visioner, in spite of the many challenges we are faced with as a not-for-profit organisation, the vision still remains clear in sight and we continuously do our best to make sure these underprivileged women are empowered, upskilled and uplifted.

I welcome you on this journey and look forward to your continued support and contribution to this noble cause.

**Dr. Laylah Ali Othman**

Founder, Laylah's Way



#### **VISION**

We envision a day when there is no more poverty in the Horn of Nigeria and every person's dignity is protected, especially those affected by human and natural crises.



#### **MISSION**

To provide people affected by human and natural crises in the Horn of Nigeria with emergency relief, educational programs, clean water and food security, health care, protection for children and orphans, sustainable socio-economic programs, and to promote peace-building and effective governance, while integrating our values of respect, impartiality, quality, accountability, advocacy and innovation in all our work.

## CORE VALUES

#### **RESPECT**

We are committed to treat the people we serve with dignity and to listen to them for solutions that work for them.

#### **NONPARTISAN**

We believe in serving all people who are in need with impartiality and in an equitable manner.

#### **QUALITY**

We strive to meet our objectives, serve our beneficiaries and satisfy expectations of all stakeholders to the best of our ability.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

We are committed to being responsible and transparent in all our activities.

#### **ADVOCACY**

We seek to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society are able to take part in decisions that affect their lives.

#### **INNOVATION**

We are a learning organisation dedicated to seeking appropriate and effective interventions for poverty and enhancing the standard of living in the Horn of Africa.

# BACKGROUND AND HISTORY



Laylah's Way is a non-profit organization birthed by L&N group of companies which was established to execute its Corporate Social Responsibilities of reaching out to those amongst us who do not have the privilege and resources at a better life. L&N group of companies is run by Laylah Ali Othman.

As a subsidiary of Superb L&N Interior and Exterior Décor Ltd, Laylah's Way began as a reality TV show which focused on reaching out to the less privileged who lived in deplorable conditions. The project involved improving their living condition by giving their homes a total make over by renovation and furnishing. There by creating a more habitable environment for the families, empowering the women and giving scholarships to their children.

The beneficiaries of Laylah's way were selected at random after visiting their homes and analysing the situation they were in. This initiative was aimed at

creating a more productive environment for the families to thrive better. This medium was also used to showcase the beauty of interior décor with various projects spread all across the country.

Over the years, Laylah's Way has served as a mother project which has birthed various subsidiaries. This is to enable it reach out to more individuals here by meeting their most urgent and pressing needs. Some of the other projects are as follows :

## **LIBGC - Laylah's Initiative for the Boy and Girl Child Charity Foundation**

This arm gives attention to the educational need of a special group of children in need - 'Almajiri' and other under privileged children. Under this platform, an Almajiri school was established and situated in Masaka area of Nasarawa State of which caters to the educational and physical needs of over 180 children .



This project is tagged “**Street to Book for the Girl and Boy Child**”. Like the name states, children as young as 3 years old who were found begging for alms and hawking are taken off the streets, given medical attention where necessary, cleaned up and provided with clothes and shoes and put in various schools in and around their environs. Some of them are helped with the permission of their parents who can not afford to give them a better standard of living.

The **Street to book** project has carried out remarkable functions like:

- i. Distribution of food items, stationaries and toiletries.
- ii. Ramadan feeding of the poor with thousands of beneficiaries over the past few years.
- iii. Health care and medical outreach projects.
- iv. Minor and major surgeries for those in need of urgent medical attention.
- v. Adoption of children who are victims of maltreatment, malnutrition and physical abuse by their caregivers.

#### **LWSS – Laylah's Way Scholarship Scheme**

Under this scholarship scheme, about six hundred and seventy one (671) students from various states are sent to school. This project covers education from primary, secondary to higher institution. The beneficiaries of this scholarship scheme are sent to schools here in Nigeria and abroad.

This scheme has recorded a high rate of success as some of the students have excelled at all levels in their educational pursuit and graduated with honours.

#### **WEP – Women Empowerment Program**

WEP is targeted towards women with special skills who are downtrodden in the society by family and/or marital circumstances.

They are put under a mentorship program, taught the tricks of the trade and how to make it profitable.

This is aimed at harnessing and building upon their already existing knowledge of the type of businesses they already do or have interest in.

Business capital is given to them, and our representatives mentor and monitor them on how to establish and keep the business sustainable and running. Some of the beneficiaries of this program who do not have an already existing business or fresh business ideas are giving employment in various organisations, this is to enable them build a better life for themselves and their families.



### **FEP – Female Entrepreneurship Program**

The existence of countless unemployed young ladies in the society cannot be overlooked. The absence of jobs has driven some into unspeakable vices which has been most detrimental to them and the society at large.

FEP is geared towards helping young and vibrant ladies harness and develop sellable ideas into profitable businesses using the Morden day technology to help them reach out to potential clients across the globe. This project teaches them how to build themselves and businesses from the comfort of their homes using resources they already have on ground and then extend to setting up at various locations.

### **BBP – Break and Build Project**

As earlier mentioned, Laylah's Way started started by renovating the houses of those living in dilapidated and deplorable conditions. By extension BBP has improved the living standard of many In the suburbs, bearing in mind that a good living environment creates better opportunities for people to thrive and be more productive. And this is achieved one home at a time.

In conclusion, it is worthy to note that a high percentage of the earnings of L&N group of companies ( which includes Superb L&N Interior and Exterior Décor and L&N Kitchen ) is channelled towards the execution of the above mentioned projects and lots more.

## **IHERIS UNIVERSITY, TOGO**







BINDIGARI PRIMARY SCHOOL, YOBE STATE



SAHEL ACADEMY



SAHEL ACADEMY



CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



NJIWAJI PRIMARY SCHOOL



POMPAMARI PRIMARY SCHOOL



BAYAYE PRIMARY SCHOOL













I write to bring to your attention, the challenges associated with the Almajiri system of education in the country and to propose some potential areas of intervention and methods of intervention for more effective solution.







# 1

## **A Brief Background on the Almajiri System of Education**

The Almajiri system of education is an informal education system in Northern Nigeria where children from poor socio-economic background are sent to Islamic teachers to receive religious education. This system has been in existence for centuries, dating back to the pre-colonial era. The children at most times stay with teachers or their parents depending on the closeness or proximity to the teacher's abode, for moral upbringing and attend local schools.

Inspectors are assigned to each of the schools to provide oversight and report back to the local

Emirs. These Schools are funded by authorities, as well as through Zakat, Sadaqah and other sources.

However, with the introduction of British colonial system of governance, this particular system became less relevant and people developed less interest in it which consequently led to the removal of many Emirs and the loss of control of their territories as well, the Almajiri system of education.

There was an abolishment of the system and the gradual withdrawal of funding for school system and its replacement with western education. This led many students to resort to alms begging and menial labour to survive.

Today, it is estimated that there are about 7 million Almajiris which 76% are under the age of 18. These children are facing serious deprivations such as lack

of basic social amenities, poor quality teaching, and limited access to healthcare. Consequently upon this, many of them have resorted to be political thugs, drug peddlers and other criminal menace leading to the breakdown of the traditional ways of the Almajiri system of education.

## 2

### Possible Areas of Interventions

With this brief introduction of the almajiri system in the northern part of Nigeria, I believed that given an insight into the causes of this problem, it will suffice as tracing the root causes too. Therefore, I would like to proffer some solutions to you, sir, for your consideration.

- A. Need for Legislation by the National Assembly to create an office with the sole purpose of addressing the Almajiri system of education.
- B. Proper documentation of all vulnerable children in the streets of all northern states including some states in the South-West, South-East, South-South if any.
- C. Documentation of all Islamic teachers including taking census of Islamic schools and students.
- D. Providing a monthly stipend for all teachers and providing meals for the students.
- E. Allocating some portion of the national feeding programm budget to cater for such unconventional schools.
- F. Integrating conventional school teachers

remodelling the almajiri children and giving them befitting educational carrier.

- G. Appointing supervisors in each political ward to observe and report to the authorities as the case in pre-colonial times.
- H. Granting Local Councils and Traditional Rulers the authority to ensure smooth and effective implementation.
- I. Create offices to address the Almajiri system of education and take lead in changing the present system.

If these measures are implemented, Your Excellency, we expect to see a great shift in the perception of the Almajiri system of education in Nigeria.



### 3

#### Possible Methods of Intervention

Implementing this proposal might be an uphill task however, with determination and the will and desire to take care of the vulnerable children off the street of different states whose future is uncertain, there can be no service to humanity as great as this.

After a careful survey on the issue of reforms in this sector, I identified some major stumbling blocks such as the traditional ruling system especially in the Northern part of the country, their mallams which subverts every efforts of government in futility.

Therefore, the below identified methods in tackling these malaise could be deployed.

- A. Empowering the traditional rulers to lead these reforms in their domains, with the backing of an act of parliament.
- B. Sensitization programs should be implemented in all to all identified Local Government Areas to educate Malams on the importance of such reforms and provide a small incentive at the end of the workshops.
- C. Allocation of Land in collaboration with the States to build more schools.
- D. A pilot project should be carried out in selected Local Government Areas, construction of schools, providing affordable or free healthcare for teachers and students.

These and many more are likely to influence the perception of the sector, and the intentions therein.





## 4

### Advantages of Aggressive Intervention

It is widely accepted that education is the cornerstone of any society, and it is also a well-known fact that majority of Nigeria's population consists of youth and children. Unfortunately, in the northern part of the country, many of these young people are deprived, with no education, making them vulnerable under the manipulation of selfish politicians and extremist groups such as Boko Haram etc.

The government has failed in addressing these pathetic issues, instead, it has engaged in a not well thought-out action of awarding foreign scholarships to the children of the wealthy and ignoring the needed.

- A. Would the Almajiri system of education properly accessed, the potential to provide some far reaching growth could have been achieved in the country which would also have translated in more productive and target-oriented ventures for the youth to tap in.
- B. Could have drastically reduced crime and political thuggery.
- C. The nuisance value of the almajiri can as well be turn into productive and essentials for economic growth.
- D. It could also gained some interventions from non-governmental agencies through donor funding thus taking off some burden from government.

## 5

### Disadvantages and its attendant consequences

Often time, children who grow up without adequate care, love and affection from both parents and guardians become a great threat to society. These children may have been exposed to harsh environments, neglect, or even abuse, leading to lack of emotional stability, love and trust in authority (ies).

This position is true in some northern part of Nigeria, where child molestation by religious leaders, who are supposed to provide care for young children, are frequently found to abuse such trust given to them by parents of those children.

Without a sense of hope, these children sometimes are exposed to criminal activities such as robbery, theft, rape, and terrorism and disrupting the peace of the community thus hindering the government's ability to provide effective services.

A case in point is of a child in Zamfara who recently made news headlines due to the Malam's abuse. We also have cases of child molestation that occur throughout the world. Yours sincerely is to state that I have adopted the said child and I am pleased to report that the child is presently doing well, academically and physically indicating that with proper care and show of love, these children will have a better future.



# 6

## **Its Impact on Your Excellency's Administration**

The prospects of tackling the Almajiri system in Nigeria is critical and to the realisation of the objectives of your administration far-reaching goals. Providing access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities to the vulnerable in the society by your administration can not only eradicate poverty but will enhanced the nation's economic growth. Additionally, increased access to education will foster greater sense of civic engagement and political participation. Your administration's commitment to tackling the Almajiri system is a sure sign of greater promise for the future of Nigeria.

History will forever be indebted to you if these momentous reforms are realized during your tenure as President Sir. Your legacy will be one of the first in Nigeria to boldly tackle this formidable challenge.

The generations to come will sing your praises for providing them with a new dawn. Nigeria will be the recipient of global recognition for undertaking these reforms, and neighbouring countries will strive to emulate your successful example. Most importantly, the Almighty will bestow his blessings upon you for taking up this noble cause.



# 7

## **Women Empowerment as a Catalyst for Solving the Whole Menace**

One of the most effective solutions to the Almajiri crisis in Nigeria is to empower women. Women have the potential to be powerful agents of change and can be instrumental to tackling the Almajiri crisis.

The position of women in our society today contribute largely to the menace we have at hand. Women are agents of growth but due to some cultural beliefs and traditions, women position are mostly relegated to the back ground,

No mother, if empowered with education and the right skill set, would allow her child to wander in a faraway land in hunger and sickness in the name of acquiring knowledge. Mothers play critical roles in the upbringing of children, who are the backbone and future of any society.

It is obvious that this lack of empowerment of the women folks has led to the vex issues hand. To ensure that these are addressed, it is essential that women are provided with the necessary education and skills to enable them to participate fully in our society.

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider more than just skill acquisition and grants as a means of empowering women; deeper measures must be taken. Therefore, I recommend that you consider the following three strategies for empowering women:





### **1. Sponsoring legislation that protects the rights and privileges of women in the society:**

Most women today suffer in silence due to fear, their voices are unheard and disregarded by successive governments. To bring about true equality and justice, I propose the sponsorship of Legislation that will safeguard the rights and privileges of women in our society.

This legislation should be comprehensive and inclusive, granting women the recognition, respect, and opportunities they deserve. It should also be enacted in a way that ensures women's voices are heard and considered in decision making of our society. By doing so, we can create a more equitable world where women are empowered to live and thrive with the same chances and opportunities as men have.

### **2. Providing access to quality and affordable education:**

Make sure that all girls and young women living in Nigeria have the opportunity to attend school and take part in educational activities. Addressing the gender gap in education should include providing girls and young women with access to books, technology, and other educational resources.

Additionally, organizations should focus on providing mentors and role models for these women, as well as providing support to those who are already in schools.

Other areas for focus should include providing educational programs designed to help women obtain business and

economic skills such as, those related to entrepreneurship and financial literacy. Additionally, organizations should focus on providing programs to help women develop leadership and self-advocacy skills. This could include offering training and development workshops, as well as creating networks for women to exchange ideas, support one another, and share resources.

Furthermore, organizations should focus on providing access to services and resources that can help women make informed decisions on their education, health, and financial security. By investing in education, Your Excellency can help to break the cycle of poverty for many women and provide them with the skills and resources to become self-sufficient and thrive.

### **3. Strengthening women's economic opportunities:**

This is vital to promoting economic growth, and financial stability. By providing access to microfinance, business training, and other resources, women can gain the skills and knowledge they need to become economically independent. Microfinance can help women to access capital and credit to start their own businesses, while business training can provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to build a successful business.

Additionally, other resources such as mentorship programs, networking opportunities and access to markets can help women to take advantage of economic opportunities and become financially empowered. Also by providing

women with access to these resources, it can be ensure that they have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully as entrepreneurs.

Women's empowerment is one of the most important elements of any solution that be proffered. By providing access to the right resources and networks, educating the girl child, creating economic opportunities, women can play key roles in solving the Almajiri crisis in Nigeria.



## 8

### **Skills Acquisition as a Catalyst for Solving the Almajiri Crises in Nigeria**

It is widely accepted that the lack of access to modern skills acquisition and opportunities are major contributing factors to the Almajiri crises in Nigeria. This lack of access to modern skills acquisition opportunities has resulted in situations where Almajiri are unable to compete in the labour market with prospects of achieving economic independence.

This is further compounded by the fact that many of the Almajiri are illiterate and lack formal educational qualifications. In order to address the Almajiri crises in Nigeria, it is essential that access to modern skills acquisition opportunities be made available to the Almajiri. These skills acquisition opportunities should encompassed in both formal and informal educational opportunities such as vocational training, technical and entrepreneurial skills, literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, these skills acquisition opportunities should be made available in different formats such as full-time courses, part-time courses, and online courses.

In recent years, Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) has become an increasingly important tool for solving developmental problems in Nigeria. ICT has the potential to provide access to modern skills acquisition opportunities to Almajiri in a variety of formats.

One of the key challenges of the Almajiri crisis is the lack of access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) education. ICT can help to improve access to education for out-of-school children. One way ICT can be used to improve access to education is through the use of distance learning. Distance learning can provide children with access to educational materials at any time, from any location. This can help the underserved communities who live in remote areas. It can be used to facilitate access to educational resources such as textbooks, videos, and online courses. ICT can also be used to provide better support for out-of-school children, by connecting them with educational and social support services. These include mentors and counsellors who can provide guidance and support.

ICT could be used to facilitate the establishment of virtual classrooms and online tutoring systems that can be useful to the Almajiris who have access to modern skills acquisition opportunities.

It can facilitate the establishment of a virtual marketplace where Almajiri can access job

opportunities and market their skills. This virtual marketplace could be used to match Almajiri with job opportunities that are suited to their skills and abilities and could also be used to provide access to mentors and other resources that can help Almajiri in their career development.

Additionally, ICT can be used to provide the Almajiri children with access to economic opportunities and to improve their socio-economic status; provide them with access to information and to increase their awareness of their rights and responsibilities; and facilitate communication between them and

their families, which can in turn help reduce the number of children being sent far away from their families for Quranic education.

The Almajiri Crises is a complex problem that requires a multifaceted approach. It is clear that access to modern skills acquisition opportunities is key to addressing the challenges in the country. ICT provide access to modern skills acquisition opportunities to Almajiri in a variety of ways and should be an integral part of any efforts addressing the Almajiri Crises in Nigeria.





# 9

## Conclusion

In conclusion, I have endeavoured to highlight the importance of the Almajiri system of education, emphasize the need for urgent intervention, identify the problems of the system and suggested some possible solutions. I have further appealed to you for consideration and suggested that a survey should be carried out by the government to ascertain the level of enrolment as well as the living condition of the almajiri students. We know who you are and we have confident in your ability to address this knotty issue. Therefore, it is my hope that the issues raised will be addressed with the same urgency it is raised in this paper.





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