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Women in Law
Mentoring Programme
...advancing women's leadership in the law.

WILMP Needs Assessment Report

***Advancing
Women's Leadership
in Public Sector Law,
Lawmaking & Legal
Practice in Nigeria***

April 2025

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Developing women to build a better nation

Founder's Note

It is with immense pride and deep gratitude that I introduce the 2025 WISCAR Needs Assessment Report for the Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP).

WILMP is a strategic extension of our long-standing commitment to developing a new generation of women leaders across sectors at WISCAR (Women in Successful Careers). Rooted in our belief in mentorship as a powerful tool for transformation, this program was conceived to address the persistent gender gaps in leadership within the legal and governance ecosystem. At the heart of the WISCAR WILMP is a mission to equip women with the skills, confidence, networks, and support they need to thrive and lead in spaces where they remain underrepresented.

This Needs Assessment Report is a critical foundation for that mission. It presents a rigorous, evidence-based analysis of the barriers women face and the support they require to ascend to leadership roles.

At WISCAR, we remain unwavering in our dedication to fostering inclusive leadership through structured mentoring, capacity building, and advocacy. We believe this initiative can and must be a catalyst for meaningful change in Nigeria's legal profession and governance institutions.

I extend my deepest appreciation to our partners. I thank Gates Foundation for their generous support and steadfast belief in the transformative power of inclusive leadership. We are also thankful to FIDA Nigeria and our consultant, Habiba Balogun Consulting for coordinating the participation of legal professionals across the country through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews, and to Albright Stonebridge Group for the invaluable project support.

Let this report serve not only as a compass but also as a call to action for all who believe in a more just, inclusive, and equitable future.

With purpose and appreciation,

Amina Oyagbola, LL.M, FCIoD, FCIPM, FCIPD
Founder & Chairperson, WISCAR

Steering Committee Note

This Needs Assessment Report represents more than a body of research—it is a mirror held up to our institutions, our professions, and our collective responsibility to advance gender equity in law and policymaking in Nigeria.

As the Steering Committee, we remain deeply committed to driving institutional transformation through the WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP). This report provides the relevant data upon which we will act—with clarity, collaboration, and resolve.

We call on all stakeholders across the judiciary, legislature, executive, private sector, and civil society to engage with this valuable and insightful report, adopt its recommendations, and join us in building a legal ecosystem where women are not only present but powerful.

Boma Ayomide-Alabi SAN, OON

Vice Chair, WISCAR WILMP Steering Committee

Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR), I extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those whose commitment, expertise, and collaboration made not only the development of this Needs Assessment Report possible, but have been instrumental in the design, development, and implementation of the WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP).

To the WISCAR WILMP Steering Committee, thank you for your strategic guidance and unwavering support in shaping the vision and direction of this work.

Special thanks to our partners Gates Foundation, ASG, and FIDA Nigeria, for their strategic partnership and shared commitment to advancing gender equity and inclusive leadership through the Women in Law Mentoring Program.

We also acknowledge our consultants: Habiba Balogun Consulting, for expertly leading the Needs Assessment and the development of the Report; To our research partner, FIDA Nigeria, thank you for co-leading the needs assessment implementation.

Special appreciation goes to our strategic partners—DKK and Associates, for the design and production of this report and the accompanying outputs; SKoT Communications, for their strategic communications and advocacy advisory; Oyagbola Chambers, for leading the mentee evaluation process; AKMS Consulting, for providing essential human resources support, and Toki Mabogunje and Co. for their curriculum development expertise.

Finally, to the WISCAR Secretariat and the WILMP Team led by Mr. Mayowa Ogunmokun, your dedication and seamless coordination have been instrumental every step of the way.

This report is the result of true collaboration, and we hope it will serve as both a guide and a catalyst for advancing women's leadership in the legal profession and beyond.

Ekemini Akpakpan

Executive Secretary, WISCAR

Women in Law Mentoring Programme

Needs Assessment Report

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Glossary

SN	ACRONYM	IN FULL
1	AWLA	African Women Lawyers Association
2	DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
3	FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
4	FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
5	GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
6	GRP	Gender-Responsive Procurement
7	KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
8	MDAs	Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
9	NAWJN	National Association of Women Judges Nigeria
10	NBA	Nigerian Bar Association
11	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
12	WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment
13	WILMP	Women in Law Mentoring Program
14	WISCAR	Women in Successful Careers

Preamble

As the consultant for this critical initiative, I am honoured to present this Needs Assessment Report on Women's Advancement in Public Sector Law, Lawmaking & Legal Practice in Nigeria, on behalf of **Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR)**. I extend my sincere appreciation to WISCAR for providing this opportunity to conduct vital research to inform the foundational phase of the **Women in Law Mentoring (WILM) Program**.

I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to **the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria)** for their invaluable research partnership in conducting this assessment. Their collaboration was instrumental in reaching legal professionals across Nigeria and ensuring the findings are grounded in reality.

Deepest appreciation is also owed to the **authors of the foundational desk research** that formed a critical aspect of this assessment, and most importantly, to all the **female and male respondents** who generously contributed their time, insights, and experiences by completing the surveys or participating in interviews. Your voices are the cornerstone of this report.

This assessment, conducted between March 15 and April 18, 2025, employed a rigorous mixed-methods approach to explore the multifaceted factors impeding women's progress within Nigeria's legal and governance landscape. A subsequent Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on May 16, 2025, further validated the key findings from the desk research, surveys, and key informant interviews, ensuring the report is grounded in comprehensive insights from legal professionals across Nigeria. This sector is critical for upholding justice, addressing societal inequalities, and is integral to achieving national development goals and aligning with the National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE).

By illuminating the institutional, structural, and cultural barriers; policy implementation gaps; lived experiences; and professional development needs, this report provides the essential evidence base for the strategic design and implementation of the WISCAR WILM Program. It also informs broader efforts to **drive gender-responsive policy reforms** and contributes sector-specific insights vital for realizing the broader national goals articulated in the WEE Policy.

It is my hope that this report serves as an indispensable tool and a catalyst for meaningful action towards greater gender equity in Nigeria's legal and lawmaking spheres.

Habiba Balogun, Consultant, Women in Law Mentoring Program Needs Assessment
April 18, 2025

Executive Summary

Despite operating within a legal framework that nominally champions gender equality, women in Nigeria's public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice **confront formidable, interconnected barriers deeply rooted in cultural norms, institutional practices, and structural limitations**. These obstacles severely impede their advancement into leadership roles. Pervasive **patriarchal biases and deeply ingrained traditional gender roles** profoundly shape opportunities and perceptions, **creating an uneven playing field**. While gender-responsive policies exist on paper, their intended impact is drastically curtailed by **weak implementation and inconsistent enforcement**, often stemming from a palpable lack of political will and entrenched cultural mindsets. Furthermore, the disproportionate **burden of caregiving responsibilities, coupled with insufficient institutional support for work-life balance**, significantly constrains women's career trajectories and critical professional decisions.

Key findings from our rigorous mixed-methods needs assessment unequivocally highlight the pervasive nature of these challenges: **cultural barriers manifest as damaging stereotypes and subtle workplace microaggressions**; institutional biases are evident in **discriminatory hiring and promotion criteria and persistent unequal pay**; and structural issues include **inadequate childcare infrastructure and limited access to crucial professional networks**. In the legislative sector, the transactional nature of politics and the **potent influence of patronage** present particularly formidable and unique obstacles. Alarming, while awareness of gender-focused policies is relatively high, their perceived effectiveness and actual enforcement are consistently rated as low.

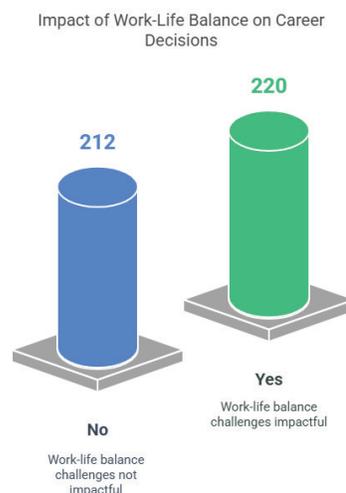


Figure 1: Work-Life Balance

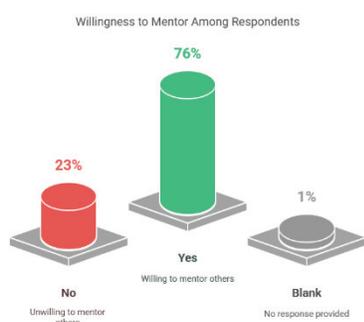


Figure 2: Willingness to mentor for WILMP

This assessment pinpoints critical needs demanding targeted interventions. **Mentorship programs, comprehensive leadership training, and the implementation of representation quotas** are consistently identified as the most vital forms of support required. Encouragingly, there is **overwhelming willingness among experienced legal professionals to serve as mentors and significant interest among others in receiving mentorship**, indicating a robust foundation upon which to build impactful programs.

In response to these findings, we propose a multi-pronged, strategic approach. This includes unequivocally **strengthening the implementation and enforcement of existing policies**; **mandating quotas and affirmative action** to dramatically increase representation across all levels; **delivering robust, tailored mentorship and leadership development programs** addressing specific needs such as negotiation, strategic positioning, and

work-life integration; actively **confronting cultural and religious biases** through targeted sensitization and reorientation efforts **involving both men and women**; significantly improving institutional support for work-life balance; **empowering women financially** to overcome economic barriers, particularly in political spheres; and **fostering powerful solidarity and collective action among women legal professionals**. This report provides compelling, evidence-based insights to directly inform the design and implementation of strategies and programs, most notably the WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP), with the clear aim of dismantling these persistent barriers and forging a more equitable, inclusive, and representative environment for women within Nigeria's vital legal and governance sectors.

1. Introduction and Project Context

This report presents the comprehensive findings of a critical needs assessment conducted to illuminate the multifaceted factors impeding the advancement of women in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice across Nigeria. This assessment was strategically undertaken as the foundational phase of the **WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring (WILM) Program**, a carefully designed initiative aimed at empowering female legal professionals with the essential skills, knowledge, and strategies required to effectively ascend to leadership positions in significantly greater numbers.

The WILM Program is situated within the complex Nigerian legal and governance landscape, a system that, while nominally upholding gender equality through constitutional provisions and national policies such as the **National Gender Policy**, in practice presents persistent and deeply entrenched barriers that severely restrict women's access to and progression within leadership roles. This national context is increasingly focused on dismantling systemic barriers to women's full participation and flourishing, guided by key national blueprints like the **National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Action Plan**, endorsed by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The WEE Policy serves as a vital roadmap for achieving Women's Economic Empowerment, aiming to accelerate structural reforms and prioritize sectoral interventions to ensure women are not left behind in the economy and to boost overall economic progress.

The legal system's fundamental role in upholding justice and addressing societal inequalities, including gender-based discrimination, necessitates a critical and urgent examination of the representation and leadership of women within this crucial sector. Achieving enhanced female participation and leadership is not merely an issue of fairness; it is vital for realizing national development goals and fulfilling global commitments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #5 on gender equality.

As of December 2024, the data starkly demonstrates that the representation of women in key legal and political positions in Nigeria remains unacceptably low across the Supreme Court, House of Representatives, Senate, Court of Appeal, and among Attorney-Generals and Senior Advocates of Nigeria. This significant underrepresentation is a critical concern because research consistently indicates that the increased presence of women in legal decision-making roles can

positively influence the perception and reality of gender bias within the justice system itself.

This needs assessment, therefore, serves as an indispensable tool, providing robust empirical evidence to directly inform the design of targeted interventions that can effectively address these disparities and drive meaningful gender-responsive policy reforms. It contributes sector-specific insights that are vital for realizing the broader national goals articulated in the WEE Policy within the critical legal and governance spheres. Specifically, this assessment aimed to identify the institutional, structural, and cultural barriers; policy implementation gaps; lived experiences; best practices; aspirations; and professional development gaps experienced by women practitioners across the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislative arms of government, thereby making a tangible contribution to the overarching objective of advancing women's leadership in the law.

2. Objectives of the Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was rigorously guided by the following specific objectives, meticulously designed to provide a robust and actionable foundation for the effective design and implementation of the WILM Program and broader advocacy efforts:

1. To precisely identify the key challenges and barriers – encompassing institutional, structural, and cultural dimensions – faced by women in legal professions and public sector law.
2. To comprehensively assess the specific needs, aspirations, and professional development gaps experienced by women practitioners across the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislative arms of government.
3. To meticulously document existing best practices and lessons learned from similar contexts, drawing insights from both within Nigeria and internationally, concerning successful strategies for the advancement of women in legal and leadership roles.
4. To develop strategic, evidence-based, and actionable recommendations aimed at effectively fostering women's leadership and significantly enhancing gender equity in law and policymaking sectors.

Needs Assessment Objectives

Objective	Description
 Challenges & Barriers	Identify institutional, structural, and cultural obstacles.
 Needs & Aspirations	Assess professional development gaps of women.
 Best Practices	Document successful strategies from similar contexts.
 Recommendations	Develop evidence-based strategies for women's leadership.
 Mentoring Needs	Evaluate learning methodologies for mentoring program.

Figure 3: Objectives

To critically evaluate specific mentoring needs and identify preferred learning methodologies to directly inform and shape the curriculum and structure of the WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program

3. Methodology

A rigorous mixed-methods approach was strategically adopted to ensure a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex challenges and opportunities for women within the Nigerian legal sector. This approach deliberately combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to effectively capture not only numerical trends but also the rich and varied lived experiences of women. The methodology was structured around four key, interconnected components:

1. **Desk Review:** An extensive review was conducted of existing literature, relevant national policies (including the National Gender Policy and pertinent constitutional provisions), legal frameworks, and comparative studies focusing on gender equity in law and governance within Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. This foundational phase provided essential contextual insights, helped identify existing knowledge gaps, and was instrumental in refining the research instruments to ensure relevance and precision.

Research Methodologies Overview

Characteristic	Desk Review	Key Informant Interviews	Online Survey	Legislative Survey
 Data Type	Qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative	Targeted
 Participants	Literature, policies, studies	Senior legal practitioners, decision-makers	Legal practitioners	Legislative professionals
 Sample Size	N/A	23	400+	6
 Focus	Contextual insights, knowledge gaps	Systemic barriers, policy gaps	Demographics, gender barriers	Unique barriers, dynamics

Figure 4: Methodology

2. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a carefully selected group of 23 senior legal practitioners and influential decision-makers representing diverse sectors (judiciary, private practice, government agencies, civil society, legislature) and geographical regions (Abuja, Kano, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Lokoja). These interviews were designed to elicit expert insights and detailed qualitative perspectives on systemic barriers, gaps in policy implementation, and potential solutions from those with significant experience in the field.

3. **Online Survey:** A structured online survey was widely administered to a broad audience of legal practitioners across Nigeria. The survey successfully garnered responses from 428 individuals, the vast majority of whom were female (99.1%). Respondents represented a wide spectrum of age ranges, years of experience, sectors of employment, and legal specializations. The survey systematically collected quantitative data on demographics, personal experiences with gender-related barriers, perceptions of policy effectiveness, access to support mechanisms, and leadership aspirations.
4. **Legislative Survey:** A targeted online survey was specifically administered to 6 professionals working within the legislature at both national and state levels. This survey was designed to focus specifically on understanding the unique barriers, dynamics, and opportunities within the critical lawmaking arm of government.

The data meticulously collected from these diverse sources were then systematically analysed using both thematic and statistical methods to identify key trends, persistent challenges, and actionable recommendations. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also planned as a crucial step to validate the preliminary findings derived from the KIIs and surveys and to gather further rich qualitative insights through group interaction.

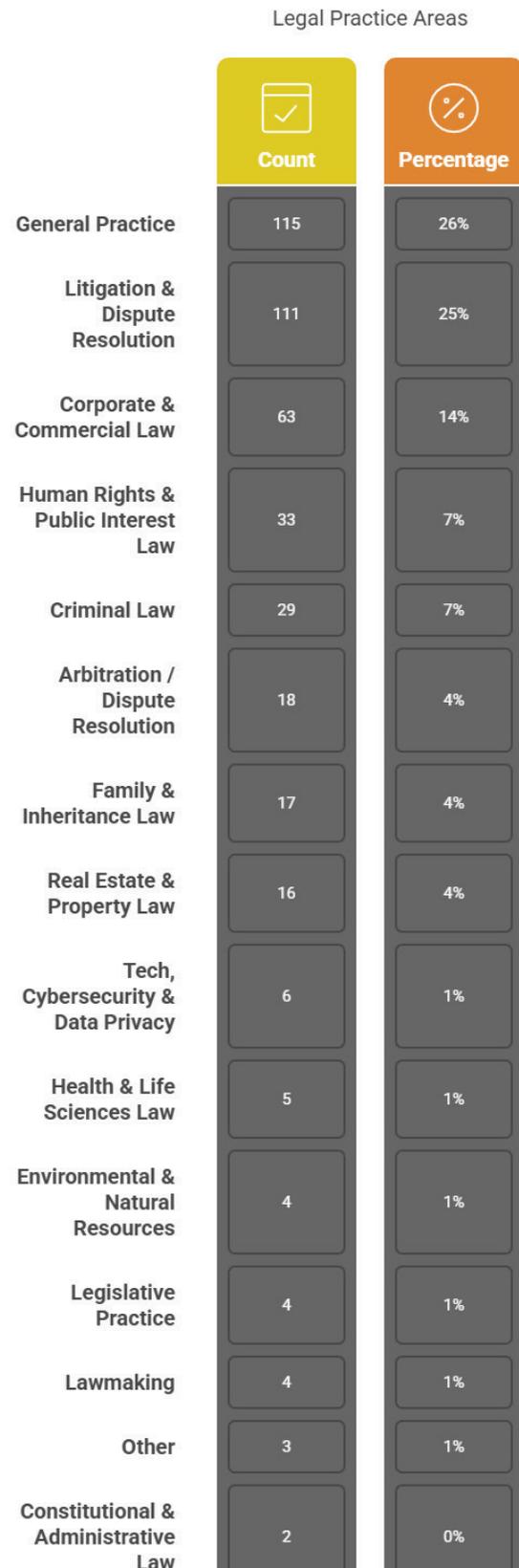


Figure 5: Legal Specialisations

3.1 Demographics

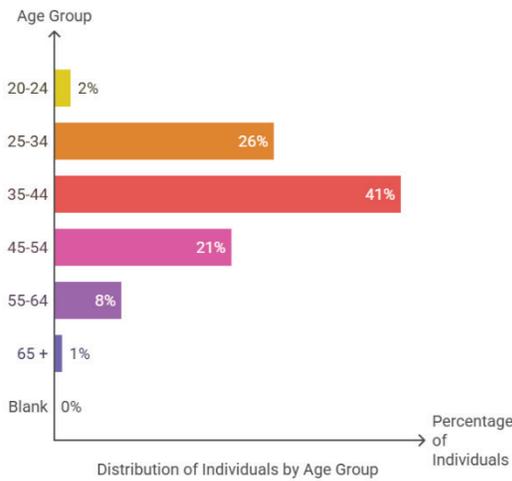


Figure 7: Age

Gender Distribution in Population

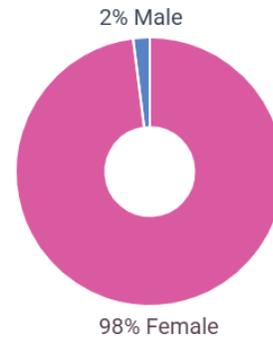


Figure 6: Gender

Marital Status Distribution

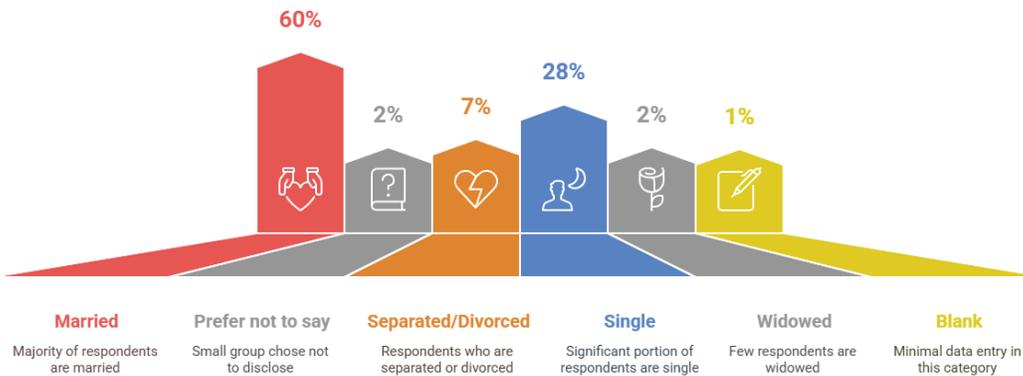


Figure 8: Marital Status

Caregiving Responsibilities of Respondents

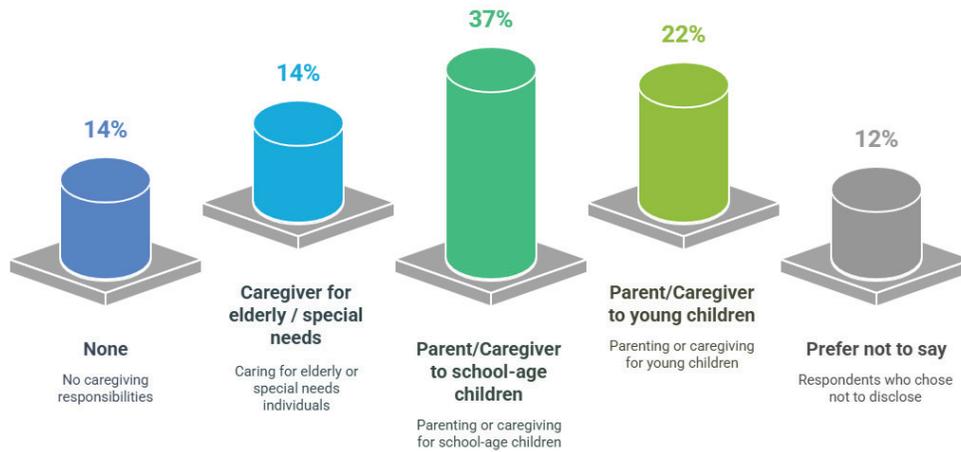


Figure 9: Caregiving Responsibilities

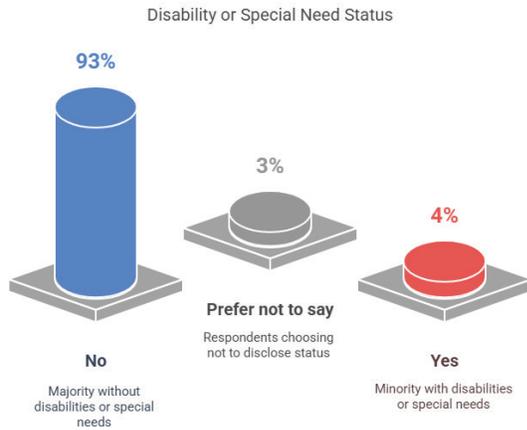


Figure 11: Disabilities

GESI Advocate Survey Results

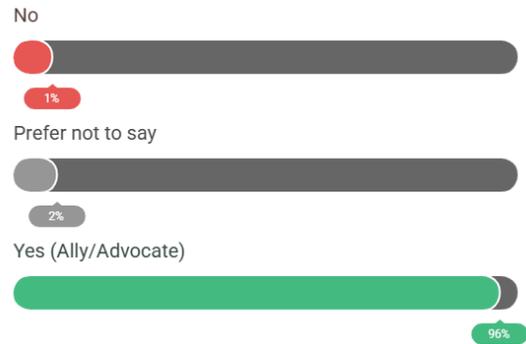


Figure 10: Gender Advocates

Distribution of Workplace States in Nigeria

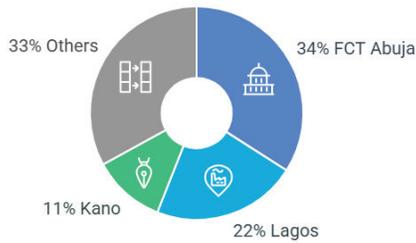


Figure 12: Workplace State

Table 1: Workplace State

WORKPLACE STATE	#	%
FCT Abuja	152	34%
Lagos	97	22%
Kano	49	11%
Bayelsa	14	3%
Kogi	14	3%
Kaduna	12	3%
Akwa Ibom	11	2%
Imo	9	2%
Ebonyi	8	2%
Niger	8	2%
Delta	7	2%
Rivers	7	2%
Ogun	6	1%
Plateau	6	1%
Edo	5	1%

Living and Working in Different States

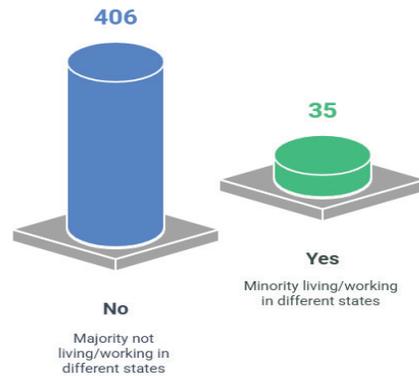


Figure 13: Different Workplace State

WORKPLACE STATE	#	%
Abia	4	1%
Jigawa	4	1%
Benue	3	1%
Cross River	3	1%
Ondo	3	1%
Osun	3	1%
Oyo	3	1%
Adamawa	2	0%
Ekiti	2	0%
Enugu	2	0%
Kwara	2	0%
Nasarawa	2	0%
Anambra	1	0%
Gombe	1	0%
Katsina	1	0%
Sokoto	1	0%
Taraba	1	0%

Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

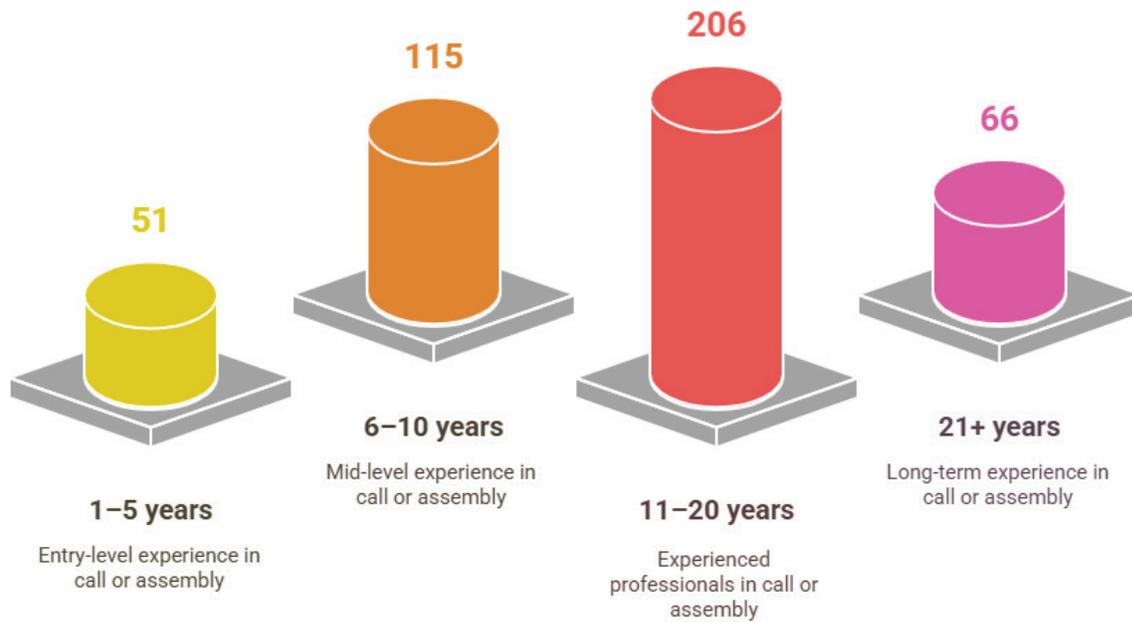


Figure 14: Work Experience from call to bar or in assembly

Distribution of Employment Sectors

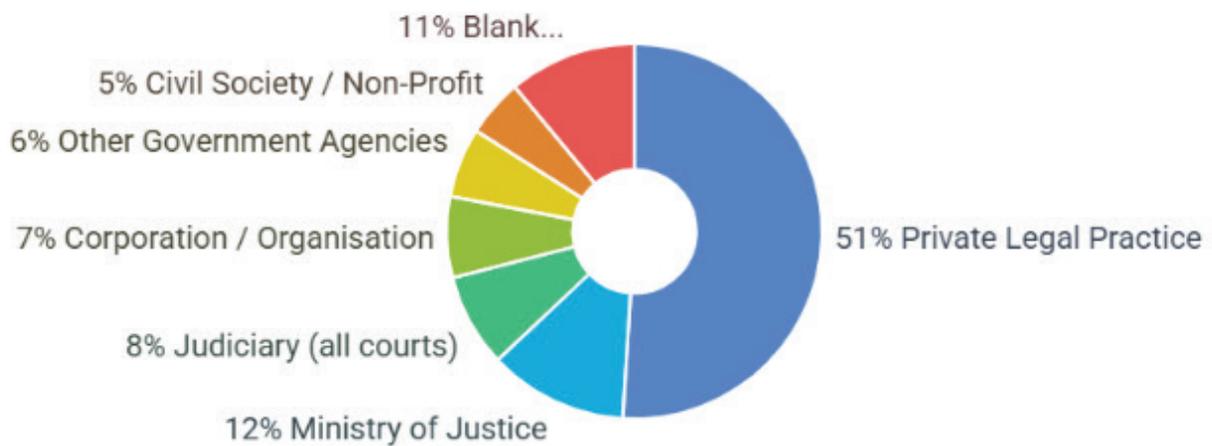


Figure 15: Sector of Employment

Political Party Membership Duration

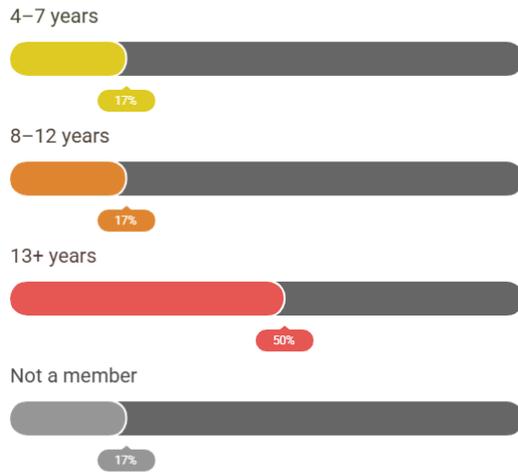


Figure 17: Political Party Membership

Political Party Status Distribution

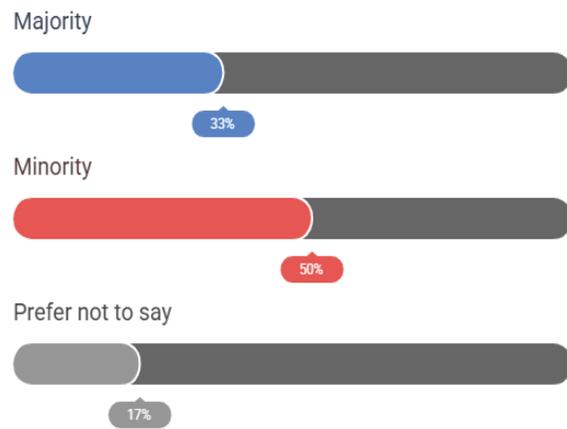


Figure 16: Political Party Status

4. Needs Assessment Findings

The findings emerging from the desk research, Key Informant Interviews, and surveys converge to paint a clear picture of the complex and interconnected interplay of factors that significantly impede women's advancement within Nigeria's public sector law and legal practice.

4.1 Status of Women in the Legal Sector

While women undeniably constitute a significant and growing portion of the legal workforce in Nigeria, their representation dramatically diminishes at senior leadership levels across the judiciary, legislature, government agencies, and private practice. The only exception is the leadership of the NBA which has achieved gender parity at the national level. Data from December 2024 starkly illustrates this critical underrepresentation in key legal and political positions:

Table 2: Female Representation in Leadership

CATEGORY	Total No. (Men and Women)	Women 2024	Percentage in 2024	35% Target 2027	Additional women required
Supreme Court Justices	21	5	24%	7	2
Justices of the Court of Appeal	66	28	32%	23	0
Justices of the High Court	74	25	34%	26	1
Magistrates	153	28	18%	54	26
Senators	109	4	4%	38	34
House of Representatives Seats	360	16	4%	126	110
Attorney-Generals	37	4	11%	13	9
Body of Benchers	350	100	29%	123	23
Senior Advocates of Nigeria	877	38	5%	307	269
Nigerian Bar Association Leadership	10	5	50%	5	0

See Appendix E for names of Women in Leadership in the Legal Sector.

Data Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justices_of_the_Supreme_Court_of_Nigeria;
<https://lagosjudiciary.gov.ng/ViewDirectories.aspx>; <https://nass.gov.ng/about/item/9>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Representatives_\(Nigeria\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Representatives_(Nigeria)); <https://virtuolutionsng.com/justice/state-attorney-generals/>; <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/bamidele-14-others-confirmed-life-benchers/>
<https://bob.gov.ng/about/>; Nigeria Bar Association: <https://www.nigerianbar.org.ng/>

Note: The 35% target for 2027 represents an ambitious yet achievable goal for significantly increased representation across these categories, a core vision of the WILMP.

Beyond these key roles, desk research indicates a concerning scarcity of detailed, disaggregated data on women's representation in various leadership ranks within specific legal sub-sectors, such as different types of law firms or corporate legal departments. Furthermore, the limited existing literature highlights significant disparities in legal academia, particularly in the ratios of female lecturers and professors.

4.2 Barriers to Advancement

The assessment identified a pervasive, deeply entrenched, and interconnected array of barriers that fundamentally hinder women's advancement throughout Nigeria's legal sector. Findings from the needs assessment strongly echo the challenges acknowledged at the national policy level. For instance, the pervasive **cultural and societal norms**, particularly patriarchal biases and traditional gender role expectations, are consistent with the WEE Policy's recognition that Nigerian women face barriers due to **patriarchy and socialization patterns**. The WEE Policy explicitly acknowledges the need to **address these barriers** to promote gender equality. Similarly, the difficulties faced by women in navigating **work-life balance** challenges due to **caregiving responsibilities** are directly supported by the WEE Policy's identification of the need for robust **Household, Workplace and Community Support Structures**. The WEE Policy highlights that support structures needed in communities and the workplace (such as paid leave and childcare) are crucial to enable women's full participation. Furthermore, the WEE Policy notes that **intersectional factors** like disability and socio-economic status can exacerbate these challenges, aligning with the report's recognition of the need to understand intersectional barriers.

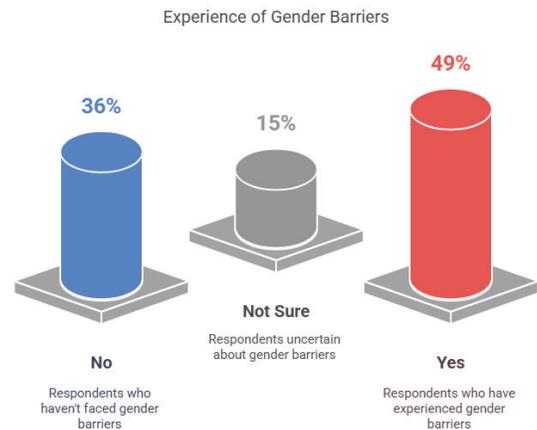


Figure 18: Experience of Gender Barriers

- Cultural and Societal Norms:** Patriarchal norms and rigid traditional gender roles were consistently cited as the most fundamental barriers. Both the online survey and KIIs revealed that a strong majority of respondents believe these norms profoundly impact women's ability to reach leadership positions. Damaging stereotypes about women's capabilities, the perception of leadership itself as a masculine domain, and societal expectations that prioritize women's roles in the home all contribute to

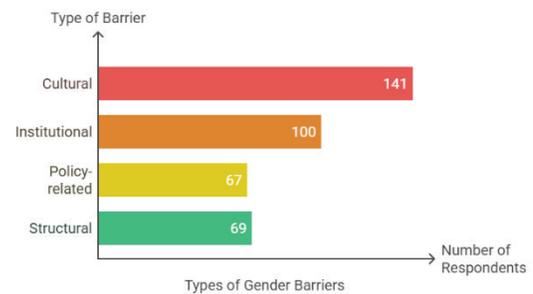


Figure 19: Type of Gender Barriers

pervasive bias. A striking 70.3% of online survey respondents rated the impact of patriarchal norms as 4 or 5 (on a 1-5 scale), signifying their overwhelming influence.

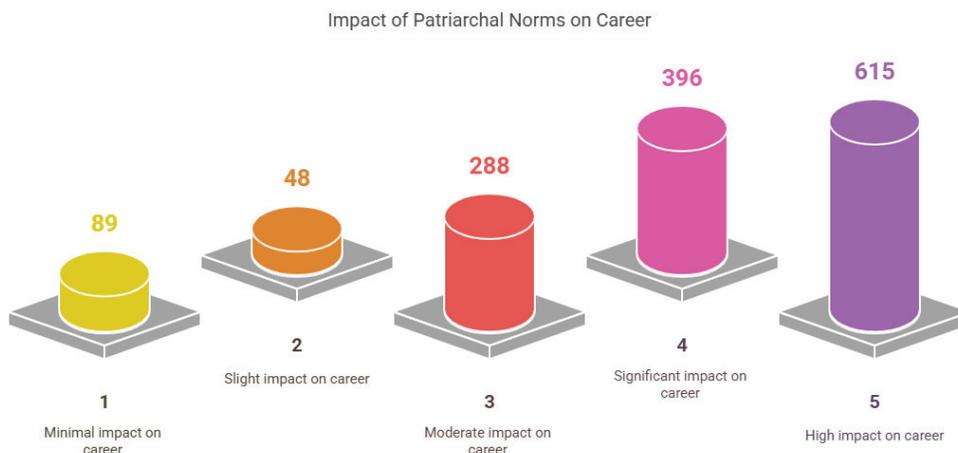


Figure 20: Impact of Patriarchal Norms

- Institutional and Structural Barriers:** Significant biases are embedded within legal institutions and political structures, affecting hiring, promotion criteria, and selection for crucial opportunities. The lack of transparent progression pathways, inadequate institutional support systems (including insufficient or inaccessible childcare facilities and rigid work hours), and unequal access to essential resources (financial capital, professional networks, critical information) were frequently reported. Institutional barriers were explicitly reported by 39.6% of online survey respondents who had faced barriers. Patronage politics, identified as a significant structural issue, was rated as having a high impact (4 or 5) by an overwhelming 83.3% of legislative survey respondents, underscoring its role as a particularly challenging obstacle in the lawmaking sector.

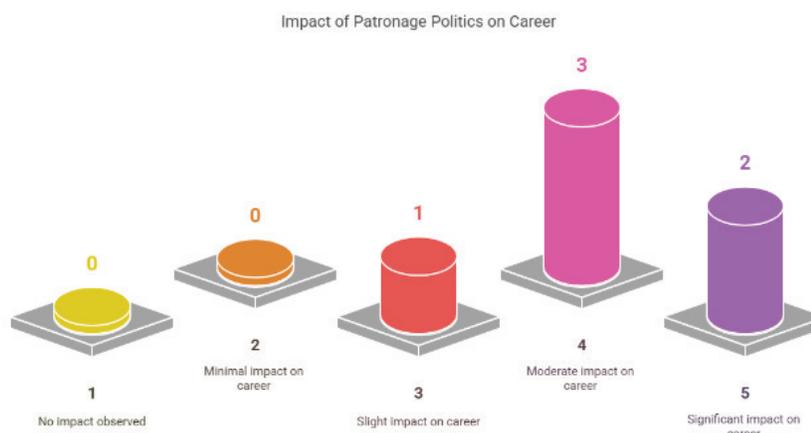


Figure 21: Impact of Patronage Politics

- Work-Life Balance and Caregiving Responsibilities:** The burden of caregiving responsibilities disproportionately falls upon women, significantly impacting their career decisions and progression. The demanding nature of legal and political work, often requiring late-night meetings and extensive travel, severely exacerbates these challenges. A substantial 65.5% of online survey respondents reported that work-life balance challenges have directly affected their career decisions, leading to difficult choices about pursuing opportunities or even pausing their careers. Similarly, 66.7% of legislative survey respondents reported that common political economy demands impacted their family or personal life. KII insights consistently reinforced that career progression is frequently interrupted by childbirth and caregiving responsibilities, with the primary burden often falling solely on women.

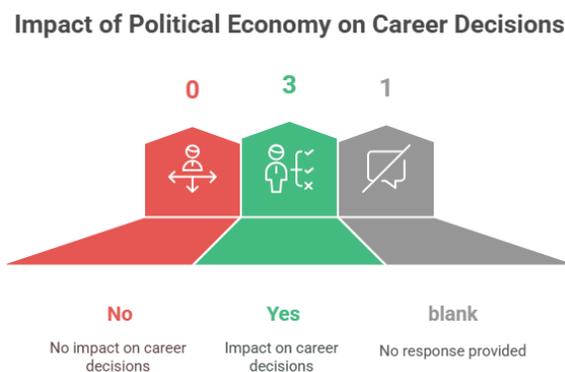


Figure 22: Impact of Out of Working Hours Activities

- Lack of Support and Networking:** Limited access to effective mentorship, crucial sponsorship, and influential professional networks significantly hinders career advancement. Over 50% of online survey respondents reported limited or no access to these crucial resources. Access to mentorship and networks for political advancement is notably inconsistent among legislative survey respondents.

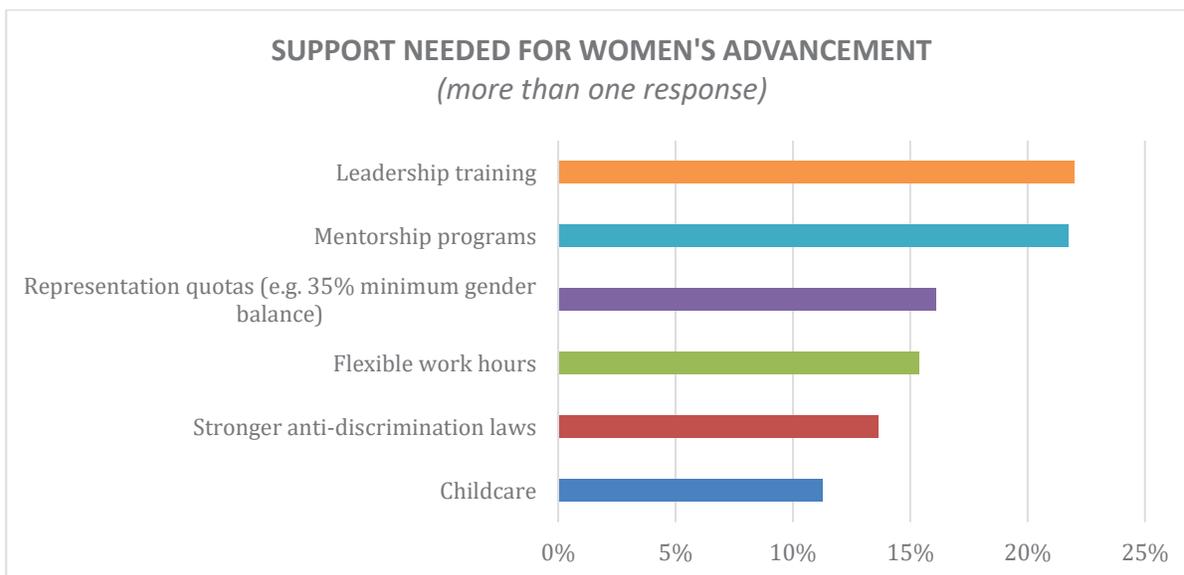
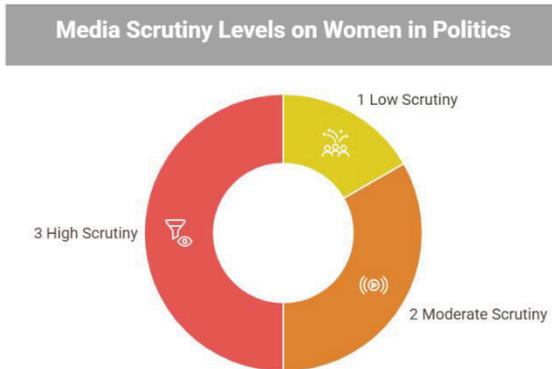


Figure 23: Requirements for Women's Advancement

- Financial Barriers:** Financial constraints and the transactional nature inherent in some sectors, particularly politics, pose significant obstacles for women, often limiting their ability

to compete effectively for leadership roles that require substantial financial investment or access to patronage networks.

- **Harassment and Discrimination:** Workplace harassment, including both overt sexual harassment and insidious microaggressions, remains a persistent barrier. Cultural barriers, explicitly encompassing microaggressions, were the most commonly reported type of barrier in the online survey (50.8%). KII insights also identified harassment and intimidation as significant impediments to women's progress.



- **Policy Implementation and Enforcement Gaps:** *Figure 24: Impact of Media Scrutiny*
While awareness of gender-focused policies is relatively high, their actual implementation and consistent enforcement are widely perceived as weak and inconsistent. Online survey opinions on the effectiveness of current gender equity policies were mixed, with a large portion rating them as moderately effective or less, and implementation/enforcement ratings were similarly low. Legislative survey ratings also strongly suggested a significant gap between policy existence and practical enforcement. A prevalent and concerning theme emerging from KIIs was that while policies often exist, their effective implementation and rigorous enforcement are severely lacking due to insufficient political will and deeply ingrained cultural mindsets that resist change.
- **Intersectional Barriers:** The intersection of gender with other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and disability, creates compounding and unique challenges. Conservative cultural and religious norms, particularly pronounced in certain regions like Kano, present unique and often more formidable barriers compared to more urban areas like Lagos and Abuja, as highlighted in both KIIs and the legislative survey. For women with disabilities, these barriers are often magnified, creating layers of exclusion that require specific attention

4.3 Policy and Support Mechanisms

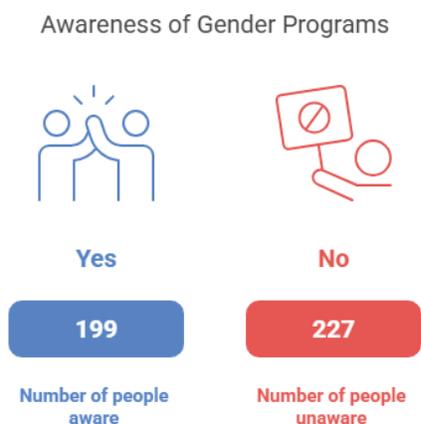


Figure 25: Awareness of Gender-Focused Programs

While the needs assessment identified the existence of gender-responsive policies in institutions, a dominant theme was the **inconsistent and ineffective implementation and enforcement**. This finding is significantly reinforced by the WEE Policy, which itself identifies the **lack of a cohesive WEE policy and action plan** as a glaring policy gap, but also critically notes that **while multisectoral policies exist, their implementation and enforcement suffer from gaps**. Key informants involved in the WEE policy development process strongly felt that **policies exist but implementation is weak**. The WEE Policy includes **Gender-Responsive and Data-Driven Government Processes** as a key crosscutting

accelerator, highlighting that **much more can be done to advance WEE through government's executive,**

legislative, and administrative functions, including policymaking, public financial management, and public procurement. The recognized need for **current, gender-disaggregated data** to ensure policies meet women's needs also aligns with the need for better data identified in this assessment. The WEE Policy's commitment to **enforcing policies like maternity protection and equal pay**, and allocating resources for **childcare options**, provides a national policy backing for the specific support mechanisms highlighted as needed by respondents in this assessment.

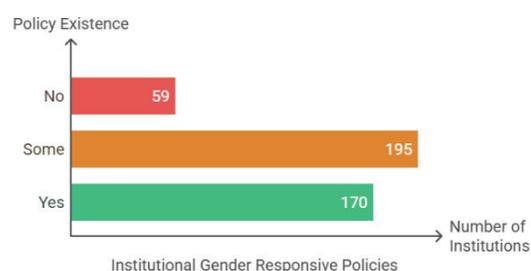


Figure 26: Existence of Institutional Gender-Responsive Policies

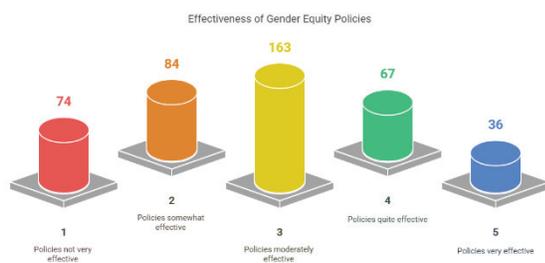


Figure 28: Effectiveness of Policies

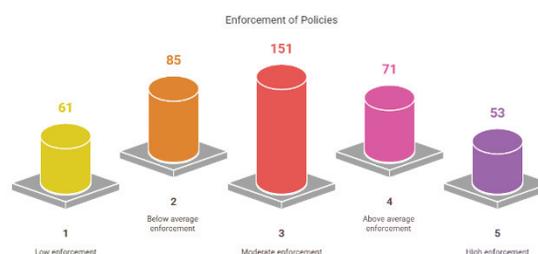


Figure 27: Enforcement of Policies

4.4 Leadership Aspirations

Despite the significant and numerous barriers they face, women legal professionals across Nigeria express strong and clear aspirations for leadership positions across all sectors and levels, including the private sector, executive roles, the judiciary, and leadership within the legislature. This indicates a clear and compelling demand for targeted support initiatives like the WILM Program and highlights the significant potential for increasing women's representation in positions of influence.

Table 3: Women's Leadership Aspirations

ASPIRED LEADERSHIP ROLE	#
Private Sector Leadership (Partner, SAN, General Counsel, Legal adviser..)	119
Judiciary (Judge, Magistrate, Registrar..)	99
Arbitration / Alternative Dispute Resolution	71
Executive (Cabinet Member, Head of MDAs, Permanent Secretaries)	45
Political Appointment (International Court, Commission etc)	43
Legislative (e.g., Lawmaker, Clerk, Administrative Leader, Aide)	35
Already in aspired leadership role	12
ASPIRED LEADERSHIP ROLE	#
Executive Leadership	4
Academic Professorship	2
Speaker of the house	1
Committee Chair	1
Party Spokesperson	1
NGO Leadership	1
	434

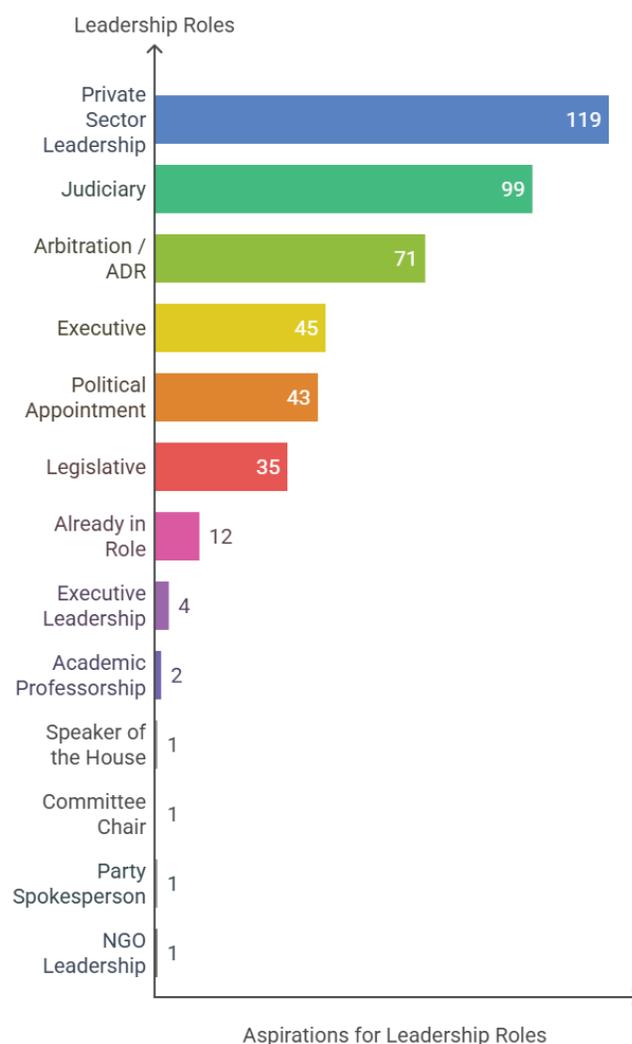


Figure 29: Leadership Roles

Table 4: Barriers to Women's Leadership Aspirations

ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP ASPIRATIONS	#
Gender Bias and Discrimination	56
Specific Situations/Circumstances	56
Personal and Internal Barriers	40
Mentorship and Sponsorship Deficiencies	33
Financial Constraints	32
Work-Life Balance Challenges	30
Lack of Access to Opportunities	21
Political and Systemic Obstacles	20
Lack of Clarity and Information	7
Cultural and Societal Norms	7
Lack of Support	6
Lack of Skills/Experience	3
Age-Related Barriers	1

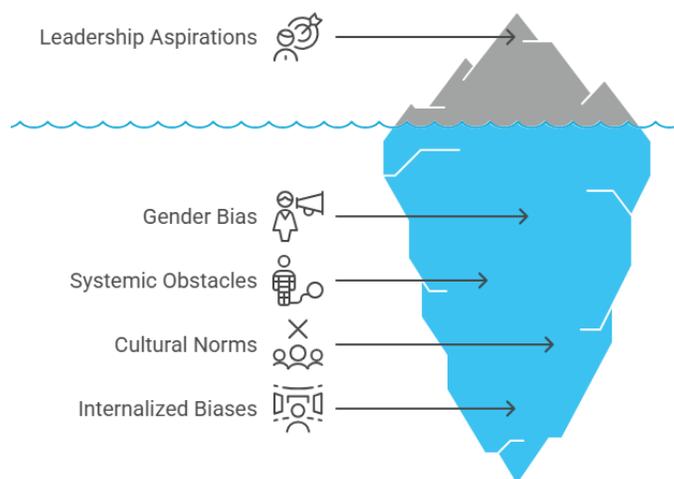


Figure 30: Barriers to Leadership Aspirations

4.5 Existing Initiatives and Success Strategies

Existing initiatives aimed at addressing gender disparities include the vital and commendable work of women's groups and associations such as FIDA, the NBA Women's Forum, AWLA, NAWJN. These organizations actively focus on advocacy, sensitization, and providing crucial platforms for networking and support among women lawyers. Mentorship programs operating within some of these organizations were also highlighted as valuable existing resources. Government initiatives and state-level agencies also play a role in promoting gender equity, although their impact is often limited by implementation challenges.

Despite the significant barriers, the assessment found compelling evidence that women have successfully employed a variety of proactive strategies to overcome them and advance their careers. These include consistently developing strong professional skills, demonstrating undeniable competence, proactively building strategic networks, actively seeking out mentorship, and engaging in powerful collective action through

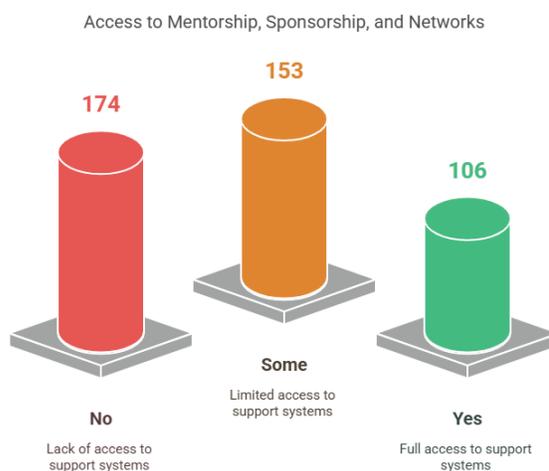


Figure 31: Access to Mentorship, Sponsorship & Networks

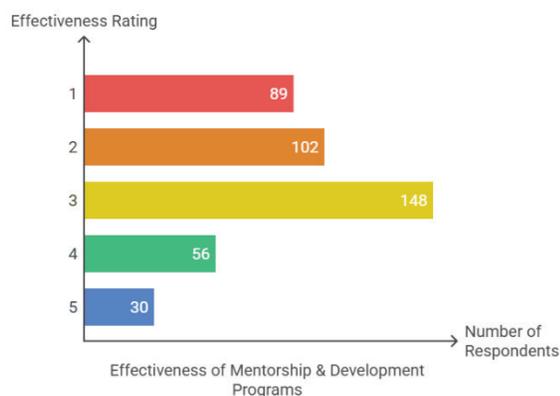


Figure 32: Effectiveness of Existing Mentorship Programs

women's associations. KII insights specifically illuminated successful strategies such as "acing skills and capacity," "competing on capacity not gender," intentionally identifying as part of a supportive community of women, cultivating boldness and assertiveness, demonstrating intentionality and unwavering commitment, dedicating themselves to hard work, building resilience in the face of setbacks, and maintaining passion for their work.

5. Recommendations

Drawing upon the comprehensive and compelling insights derived from all data sources, the following strategic and actionable recommendations are urgently proposed to effectively address the identified barriers and significantly promote women's advancement into leadership positions within Nigeria's public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice:

1. **Strengthen Policy Implementation and Enforcement:** (Links to *Finding 4.2 - Policy Implementation Gaps*) Prioritize and make substantial investments in the effective implementation and rigorous enforcement of existing gender-responsive policies across all sectors, including the private sector. Establish clear, transparent accountability mechanisms and enforce meaningful consequences for non-compliance to ensure these policies translate from paper into tangible, on-the-ground change. This recommendation directly aligns with the WEE Policy's emphasis on **robust implementation of policies and follow-through on commitments** as a catalyst for progress. Effective enforcement, as called for in this report, is essential to translate the national policy vision into tangible change within the legal and governance sectors.
2. **Enact Legal and Policy Reforms Mandating Equity:** (Links to *Finding 4.2 - Institutional & Structural Barriers, Policy Implementation Gaps*) Advocating for such reforms, including affirmative action and quotas, is strongly supported by the WEE Policy. The policy highlights global best practices like **quotas** and includes strategies such as ensuring **strong female representation (at least 35 percent) on all Steering Committees or Interministerial Committees** responsible for developing government programs. It also references successes like the **30% quota for all public procurement to go to women-owned enterprises** implemented in Ekiti State, suggesting the viability of such mechanisms in the Nigerian context. The WEE Policy explicitly calls for the **National Assembly and Federal Ministry of Justice to review and reform national legislation that relates to land and natural resources**

where statutory legal rights to land remain gender-biased, demonstrating a national focus on legal reform for gender equity.

3. **Targeted Mentorship and Leadership Development:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Lack of Support & Networking, Finding 4.3 - Policy & Support Mechanisms, Finding 4.4 - Leadership Aspirations)* Design and significantly scale up structured mentorship programs that effectively pair aspiring and mid-career female professionals with experienced senior leaders and champions who are committed to gender equity. Program curricula must be meticulously tailored to address the specific needs identified in the assessment, focusing on developing core leadership skills (such as advanced negotiation, strategic positioning, and impactful communication), providing guidance on career navigation strategies, enhancing financial literacy, and building essential political engagement skills. The strong reported willingness to mentor and be mentored confirms the high potential and demand for such programs. This is a core component of the proposed WILMP. The WEE Policy aims to **empower women with skills and resources** and mentions mentorship as a global best practice, particularly in areas like entrepreneurial capacity development and crossing into male-dominated sectors like law. The WEE Action Plan includes **providing increased access to training and professional development workshops** that enhance skills, directly supporting the need identified in this assessment
4. **Integrate Work-Life Support and Advocate for Enabling Policies:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Work-Life Balance & Caregiving)* Integrate dedicated modules and provide robust support within the mentorship program focused on strategies for effectively balancing demanding professional/political lives with personal and caregiving responsibilities, explicitly acknowledging the significant and disproportionate impact on women. Recommendations such as providing parental leave, childcare facilities, and flexible work arrangements are crucial for enabling women's full participation. The WEE Policy echoes this by committing to providing **relevant support structures needed in communities and the workplace** and specifically mentions enforcing policies like **maternity protection and equal pay** and allocating resources for **childcare options**.
5. **Equip Women to Navigate and Challenge Barriers:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Cultural & Societal Norms, Harassment & Discrimination, Intersectional Barriers)* Provide mentees with practical, actionable strategies and skills to effectively recognize, navigate, and confidently challenge cultural and institutional biases, workplace harassment, and discrimination. Include essential modules on asserting oneself, building confidence, developing resilience in the face of adversity, and understanding how to address intersectional forms of discrimination.
6. **Facilitate Strategic Networking and Cultivate Sponsorship:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Lack of Support & Networking)* Facilitate structured opportunities for mentees to build strong, influential, and diverse professional networks. Educate both mentors and mentees on the critical importance of sponsorship for career advancement – the active championing of an

individual's career by a senior leader – and actively work to create meaningful sponsorship linkages within the legal and political spheres.

7. **Strengthen Political Engagement and Litigation Pathways:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Financial Barriers, Institutional & Structural Barriers, Finding 4.4 - Leadership Aspirations)* For women specifically interested in lawmaking, provide specialized mentorship and training on campaign strategy, effective fundraising, and skilfully navigating the complexities and transactional nature of the political landscape. Encourage and actively support women to pursue litigation and aspire to leadership roles within this crucial area of legal practice, providing the necessary skills and networks.

8. **Address Cultural and Societal Biases Through Targeted Action:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Cultural & Societal Norms, Intersectional Barriers)* Design and implement targeted sensitization and reorientation programs for both men and women within the legal profession and broader society to actively challenge deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, harmful stereotypes, and unconscious biases. Critically, engage traditional and religious leaders as influential male allies to champion gender equity and challenge resistant cultural mindsets. The WEE Policy recognizes the deep impact of **patriarchal norms and societal biases** and includes strategies like **awareness campaigns highlighting the implications of isolating women within social norms** that limit WEE. The policy also emphasizes the need to **orient men as well as women**, aligning with the recommendation for targeted sensitization efforts involving both genders.

9. **Promote Significant Increase in Representation:** *(Links to Finding 4.1 - Status of Women, Finding 4.2 - Institutional & Structural Barriers)* Actively work towards significantly increasing the representation of women in leadership positions across all levels of the judiciary, legislature, government agencies, and private law firms through affirmative action and the implementation of mandatory quotas, with clear, ambitious, and time-bound targets (e.g., achieving 35% representation by 2027).

Recommendations for Women Empowerment

Recommendation	Description
Policy Implementation	Strengthened enforcement for better outcomes
Legal Reforms	Mandate equity through legal changes
Mentorship	Develop leadership through targeted mentorship
Work-Life Support	Integrate support and advocate enabling policies
Equip Women	Navigate and challenge existing barriers
Networking	Facilitate strategic networking and sponsorship
Political Engagement	Strengthen engagement and litigation pathways
Address Biases	Targeted action against cultural biases
Representation	Promote significant increase in representation
Solidarity	Foster powerful solidarity and collective action
Financial Empowerment	Provide tools for financial independence
Data Collection	Inclusive data for tailored interventions
Male Allies	Engage and empower male allies
DEI Initiatives	Champion and enforce DEI initiatives
Returning Professionals	Dedicated support for returning professionals
Measurable Outcomes	Advocate for and track measurable outcomes

Figure 33: Recommendations

10. **Foster Powerful Solidarity and Collective Action:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Lack of Support & Networking, Finding 4.5 - Existing Initiatives & Success Strategies)* Provide robust support and strengthen women's professional associations and networks to serve as powerful platforms for peer support, mentorship, collective advocacy on gender equity issues, and political mobilization. Emphasize the critical importance of solidarity and actively encourage women in leadership to support and mentor other women, fostering a culture of "lifting as we climb." This includes active and sustained collaboration with key professional bodies such as the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to jointly drive gender equity initiatives and implement recommendations, building on existing partnerships
11. **Financial Empowerment:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Financial Barriers)* Implement initiatives aimed at improving women's financial literacy and facilitate access to funding and resources, particularly for those aspiring to political leadership roles where financial constraints are a significant and often prohibitive barrier. The WEE Policy has a strategic goal to **accelerate efforts to tackle supply-side challenges hindering women-owned MSMEs from accessing capital** and focuses on **Financial Inclusion and Literacy**. Empowering women financially is seen in the WEE Policy as essential for overcoming economic barriers, including in political spheres, reinforcing the recommendation in the WILM report.
12. **Ensure Inclusive Data Collection and Tailored Interventions:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Intersectional Barriers, Section 6 - Knowledge Gaps)* Conduct more granular, inclusive, and ongoing data collection efforts that specifically capture the experiences and unique barriers faced by women with disabilities and from diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Utilize this disaggregated data to inform the design of tailored, equitable, and effective interventions that address intersectional challenges.
13. **Engage and Empower Male Allies:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Cultural & Societal Norms, Policy Implementation Gaps)* Actively identify, engage, and empower men who are champions of women's advancement to serve as visible allies and vocal advocates within the legal profession and broader society. Support them in challenging patriarchal mindsets and promoting gender equity among their male peers.
14. **Champion and Enforce DEI Initiatives:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Institutional & Structural Barriers, Policy Implementation Gaps)* Advocate strongly for and actively support the comprehensive implementation and rigorous enforcement of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies within legal institutions and the government. Ensure these policies are not merely symbolic but translate into tangible changes in recruitment, promotion, and workplace culture.
15. **Provide Dedicated Support for Returning Professionals:** *(Links to Finding 4.2 - Work-Life Balance & Caregiving)* Develop or integrate into the mentoring program specific support structures, resources, and "refresher clinics" meticulously tailored to the needs of women who have taken career breaks. This should include considering the development of clear

process maps for women's career advancement, particularly detailing pathways and support mechanisms for returning from maternity leave or other career breaks. This will facilitate their successful re-entry into the legal profession and support their continued advancement.

16. **Advocate for and Track Measurable Outcomes:** *(General – for data-driven reporting and evidence based advocacy)* Emphasize the critical importance of establishing clear, measurable indicators and consistently tracking outcomes (e.g., increased representation in leadership roles, improved promotion and retention rates, reduction in the gender pay gap, reported changes in workplace culture) to rigorously assess the impact of gender equity initiatives, ensure accountability, and inform future strategies.
17. **Engage the Next Generation of Women Lawyers:** *(Links to FGD Feedback: "Focus on incorporating strategies for engaging the next generation of women lawyers")* Develop and implement proactive strategies to engage, inspire, and support young girls and aspiring female law students, fostering their interest in legal careers and leadership roles from an early stage. This includes outreach programs, early mentorship initiatives, and educational campaigns aimed at building a robust pipeline for future female leaders in the legal profession."

Recommendations in this report also implicitly advocate for the specific implementation of WEE mandates within the legal and governance sectors, such as **prioritizing women in policy-making and program design** and leveraging government functions like **public financial management and procurement (including Gender-Responsive Procurement)** as strategies to advance WEE

6. Knowledge Gaps

While this needs assessment provides a robust foundation, several critical knowledge gaps remain. Addressing these gaps through further targeted research is essential for developing even more nuanced, effective, and evidence-based interventions and advocacy strategies. The identified gaps align with challenges noted in national policy frameworks like the WEE Policy.

Unveiling Knowledge Gaps in Women's Legal Advancement



Figure 34: Assessment Knowledge Gaps

- Detailed, Disaggregated Representation Data:** More granular data is needed on women's representation in leadership ranks within specific types of law firms (e.g., large corporate firms vs. smaller practices), corporate legal departments across different industries, and various government agencies beyond the judiciary and legislature. This data would allow for more precise identification of bottlenecks in specific sub-sectors and tailoring of interventions. **This echoes the WEE Policy's finding that current, gender-disaggregated data is often filled with inaccuracies or is incomplete, hindering effective policy and program design.**
- In-depth Regional Context Analysis:** Further in-depth research is required on the specific social, economic, cultural, and political contexts influencing women's advancement in different regions and states across Nigeria, moving beyond the major urban centres. Understanding localized barriers and opportunities is vital for designing contextually appropriate interventions.
- Specific Barriers for Intersectional Groups:** While intersectional barriers were acknowledged, more in-depth research is needed to understand the specific challenges faced by women legal professionals based on disability, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, and other intersecting identities within the legal sector.
- Impact of Financial/Political Economy:** A deeper investigation into the specific financial demands and political patronage systems affecting women's advancement, particularly in the legislative and executive arms, is required to develop targeted financial empowerment and advocacy strategies.
- Effectiveness of Existing Initiatives:** More rigorous evaluation is needed to assess the measurable impact and effectiveness of existing gender equity initiatives, mentorship programs, and training programs within the legal sector. This aligns with the WEE Policy's emphasis on the need for **rigorous impact evaluations to understand the**

gender-disaggregated effects of development interventions and the risk of **ignoring monitoring and evaluation** or conducting **irregular reviews**.

- **Strategies for Male Engagement and Cultural Change:** Research exploring effective strategies for engaging men as allies and challenging deep-seated cultural and religious norms within specific legal institutions and communities could inform more impactful reorientation efforts.
- **Barriers to Accessing and Navigating Justice/Policy Mechanisms:** Understanding the specific obstacles women face in utilizing formal mechanisms to address harassment, discrimination, and policy implementation gaps is essential for strengthening accountability and enforcement.

Addressing these knowledge gaps through further targeted research, while ensuring that methodology and technical measurement is clearly defined, will enable the development of more nuanced, effective, and evidence-based interventions and strengthen advocacy efforts for systemic change, leveraging data beyond research to inform government initiatives and policymaking.

7. Conclusion

The needs assessment provides compelling and undeniable evidence that achieving genuine gender equity and significantly enhancing women's leadership within Nigeria's public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice requires a concerted and multi-pronged approach to dismantle deep-seated cultural, institutional, and structural barriers. The findings in the legal sector are consistent with the broader challenges and policy gaps identified nationally in the **National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)**. As articulated in the **Presidential Charge** endorsing the WEE Policy, while progress has been made, discrimination against women and girls persists, leading to their economic and social exclusion.

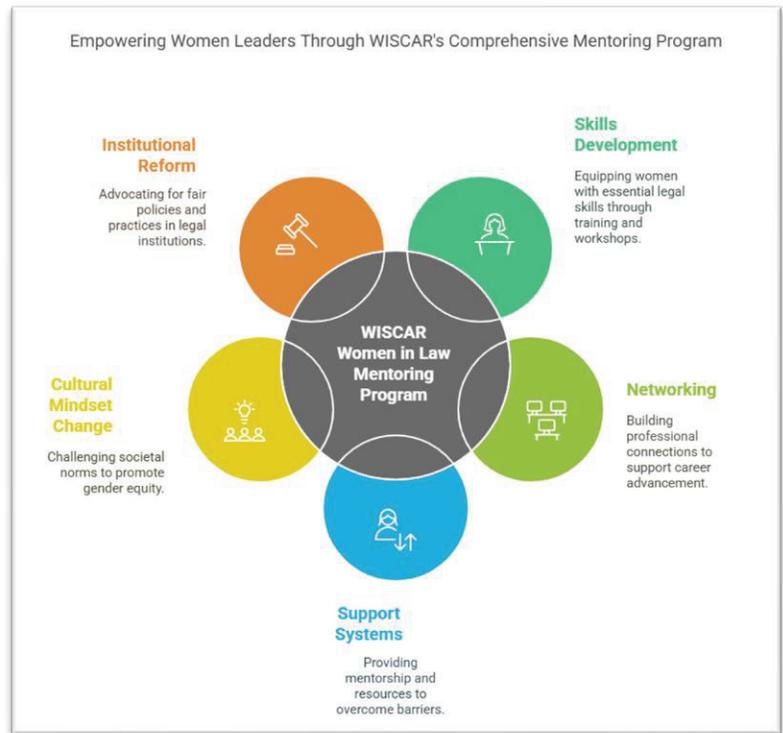


Figure 35: Elements of WILMP

This report highlights that addressing issues such as patriarchal biases, weak policy implementation and enforcement, insufficient support for work-life balance, lack of access to critical networks and resources, and financial barriers are crucial for women's advancement in law.

The proposed Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP) is strategically designed to address these identified needs and contribute to the overarching national goal articulated in the WEE Policy: to **catalyse women and girls' full participation and flourishing in Nigeria's economy**. By providing targeted leadership development, mentorship, skills to navigate barriers, and fostering solidarity, the WILMP can serve as a vital intervention within the legal sector, helping to unlock the potential of women legal professionals and enrich the public sector with the diverse talents and contributions of all its citizens.

This report provides a robust, evidence-based foundation for informing the WILMP's curriculum and activities and serves as an urgent call to action for all stakeholders committed to achieving gender equity and empowering women in the legal profession in Nigeria, thereby contributing meaningfully to the national agenda for Women's Economic Empowerment.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP) Framework

Based on the comprehensive needs assessment findings and alignment with national development priorities such as the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy, the Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP) is designed with the following overarching goal and specific objectives:

Overall Goal: To empower female legal professionals with the essential skills, knowledge, networks, and support necessary to achieve their leadership aspirations and significantly increase their representation in key leadership roles to at least 35% by 2027, and their effectiveness in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice, thereby contributing to national development goals and the objectives of the National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE).

Specific Objectives:

1. **Provide Structured Mentorship:** To establish and facilitate structured mentorship opportunities connecting aspiring and mid-career female professionals in law and lawmaking with experienced senior leaders and champions who can provide guidance, support, and strategic advice.
2. **Enhance Leadership and Professional Capabilities:** To enhance mentees' leadership capabilities and strengthen their professional skills through targeted training, development opportunities, and access to relevant resources in critical areas required for advancement.
3. **Equip for Gender Barrier Navigation:** To equip mentees with practical strategies, resilience-building techniques, and the confidence to effectively navigate and challenge the cultural, institutional, and structural barriers identified in the needs assessment.
4. **Facilitate Networking and Sponsorship:** To facilitate access to influential professional networks and actively promote sponsorship opportunities for mentees, crucial for career progression and access to leadership pipelines.
5. **Support Work-Life Integration:** To provide crucial support and resources for women professionals in balancing their professional/political aspirations with personal and caregiving responsibilities, including strategies for managing work-life demands.
6. **Foster Solidarity and Collective Action:** To foster a strong sense of solidarity, mutual support, and collective action among women in the legal profession and lawmaking, building a community for shared learning, advocacy, and empowerment.
7. **Strengthen Advocacy and Policy Influence:** To strengthen women's capacity to influence policy, advocate effectively for gender equity, and drive positive institutional changes within their workplaces, professional bodies, and the broader legal and governance sectors, aligning with the WEE Policy's call for legal and policy reforms.

These objectives are designed to be interconnected and mutually reinforcing, contributing to the overall goal of increasing women's leadership and representation in Nigeria's legal and governance landscape.

Target Audience:

Female legal professionals currently working in or aspiring to leadership roles within:

- The Judiciary (all levels)
- The Legislature (national and state)
- Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs)
- Private Legal Practice (especially aspiring partners and senior associates)
- Corporate Legal Departments (in-house counsel)
- Civil Society Organizations focused on law and governance
- Legal Academia

Specific attention will be given to ensuring the inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds, including different ethnicities, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and women with disabilities.

Program Components and Activities:

1. Mentor-Mentee Matching and Relationship Building:

- A clear application and selection process for both mentors and mentees.
- Careful matching based on career goals, areas of specialization, personality, and identified needs (e.g., leadership aspirations, specific skill gaps).
- Initial orientation sessions for both mentors and mentees to establish expectations, communication protocols, and program guidelines.
- Facilitated initial meetings to help establish rapport and set goals for the mentorship period.
- Ongoing support and guidance from program coordinators to address any challenges in the mentoring relationship.
- **Operational Detail:** Mentor-mentee pairings are proposed for a duration of 12-18 months, with recommended monthly formal meetings (virtual or in-person) and informal check-ins as needed. Expected time commitment will be clearly communicated during orientation.

2. Core Leadership and Professional Development Training:

The WILMP curriculum will be modular, flexible, and tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of mentees and mentors, drawing directly from the needs assessment findings and aligning with national priorities such as the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Policy. The program components and key curriculum topic areas are outlined below:

Program Components and Key Curriculum Topic Areas:

1. Leadership Development and Professional Skills:

- **Modules/Topics:**

1. Strategic Leadership and Vision Casting / Strategic Planning and Goal Setting
2. Effective Communication and Public Speaking
3. Negotiation and Persuasion Skills
4. Executive Presence and Strategic Positioning
5. Financial Literacy and Resource Mobilization (incl. fundraising for political roles)
6. Understanding and Navigating Institutional Politics and Power Structures
7. Board Preparedness and Corporate Governance (for private sector aspirants)
8. Legislative Drafting and Process (for legislative aspirants)
9. Judicial Ethics and Practice (for judicial aspirants)

- **Delivery:** Workshops (in-person and virtual), webinars, guest lectures by prominent leaders, case studies, interactive exercises.

2. Addressing Barriers and Building Resilience:

- **Modules/Topics:**

1. Recognizing and Challenging Unconscious Bias and Stereotypes
2. Strategies for Responding to Workplace Harassment and Discrimination
3. Building Confidence and Assertiveness
4. Developing Resilience and Managing Stress
5. Understanding and Navigating Patriarchal Norms and Cultural Expectations
6. The Intersectionality of Gender with other Identities (ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.)

- **Delivery:** Facilitated discussions, peer support groups, workshops with experts in gender and psychology, sharing of lived experiences and success stories.

3. Work-Life Integration and Well-being:

- **Modules/Topics:**

1. Strategies for Balancing Career and Caregiving Responsibilities
2. Advocating for Institutional Support Structures (flexible work, childcare, leave policies)
3. Stress Management and Self-Care
4. Support Systems and Building a Personal Village

- **Delivery:** Workshops and individual coaching on strategies for managing demanding careers and personal/caregiving responsibilities, sharing of practical tips and resources.

4. Networking and Sponsorship:

- **Modules/Topics:**
 1. Building Strategic Networks
 2. Identifying and Cultivating Sponsors
 3. Leveraging Professional Associations (NBA, FIDA, etc.)
- **Activities:** Organized networking events (mixers, roundtables, conferences) connecting mentees with senior legal professionals, policymakers, business leaders, and potential sponsors; Training on effective networking strategies and building professional relationships; Education on the concept and importance of sponsorship; Opportunities for mentees to shadow mentors or other senior professionals.

5. Policy Advocacy and Institutional Change:

- **Modules/Topics:**
 1. Understanding Gender-Responsive and Data-Driven Government Processes
 2. Advocating for the Implementation and Enforcement of Gender Equity Policies
 3. Engaging with Policy-Making and Legislative Processes
 4. Understanding and Advocating for Gender-Responsive Procurement (GRP)
 5. Strategies for Achieving Representation Targets

6. Fostering Solidarity and Collective Action:

- **Modules/Topics:**
 1. Highlighting the importance of mutual support and "lifting as we climb".
 2. Strategies for building alliances and collective advocacy.
- **Activities:** Creating a strong community among mentees and mentors; Engaging with aspiring female law students and young lawyers through outreach and early mentorship to foster a pipeline for future leadership and ensure the continuity of advocacy efforts. Encouraging participation in and leadership within women's



Figure 36: Proposed Mentorship Topics

professional associations; Workshops on building effective coalitions and mobilizing for collective advocacy on gender equity issues; Highlighting the importance of mutual support.

7. Support for Returning Professionals:

o Modules/Topics:

1. Tailored mentorship and resources for women re-entering the legal profession after a break. This includes developing clear process maps illustrating pathways for career advancement, particularly for women returning from maternity leave.
2. Potential "refresher clinics" on recent legal developments or changes in practice.
3. Support in rebuilding networks and navigating the return to the workplace.

Overall Delivery Methods (Summary):

The curriculum will be delivered through a blended approach combining:

- ✓ **Workshops** (in-person and virtual)
- ✓ Webinars and **online learning** modules
- ✓ **Guest lectures** by prominent leaders
- ✓ **Case studies** and interactive exercises
- ✓ Facilitated discussions and **peer support groups**
- ✓ Individual **coaching** (as needed)
- ✓ Organized **networking events**
- ✓ Opportunities for **shadowing**

Program Structure and Duration:

- The program will run for a defined period (e.g., 12-18 months) with a clear curriculum and milestones.
- Regular mentor-mentee meetings (e.g., monthly).
- Quarterly group training workshops/webinars.
- Periodic networking events.
- Dedicated program coordinator(s) to manage logistics, provide support, and monitor progress.

Selection Criteria (Illustrative):

- **Mentees:** Demonstrated commitment to career advancement, clear leadership aspirations, willingness to learn and engage, identified needs aligned with program offerings.
- **Mentors:** Established leaders in their respective legal fields, commitment to gender equity and empowering women, willingness to dedicate time and share expertise, strong ethical standing.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- To ensure continuous improvement and accountability, robust monitoring and evaluation systems will be developed to track not only program outcomes but also the broader implementation of the report's recommendations. Establish clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with program objectives (e.g., number of mentees receiving promotions, number of mentees taking on leadership roles, mentee satisfaction with mentorship and training, changes in perceived barriers).
- Baseline and end-line surveys for mentees to measure changes in skills, confidence, and career progression.

Regular feedback mechanisms for mentors and mentees.

Tracking of networking connections and sponsorship opportunities facilitated.

Qualitative data collection through interviews or focus groups to capture impact stories and lessons learned.

Measuring Quality of Mentorship: Incorporate specific survey questions for both mentors and mentees to assess the quality of the mentoring relationship, perceived value of interactions, and achievement of personal mentoring goals, going beyond just tracking meeting frequency.

Periodic program review and adaptation based on M&E findings.

Sustainability:

Develop a strong network of engaged mentors and alumni who can continue to support the program.

Explore partnerships with legal institutions, government agencies, and private sector organizations for funding and in-kind support.

Build the capacity of local program staff to ensure long-term management.

Integrate advocacy efforts to create a more supportive external environment.

This framework provides a robust structure for the WILMP, directly addressing the needs and recommendations identified in the needs assessment to effectively advance women's leadership in Nigeria's public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice

Appendix B: Needs Assessment Data Collection Tools



Data collection tools included the Survey Consent Form, Survey Introductory Message, Survey Questionnaires (Legal Practitioners and Legislature), Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide, and Document Review Framework deployed to ensure a comprehensive assessment and provide evidence-based recommendations to drive gender-inclusive legal and policymaking reforms. The research questions that the data collection sought to answer were as follows:

1. What are the institutional, structural, and cultural barriers limiting women's advancement in public sector law?
2. What gaps exist in policy implementation regarding gender equity in law and governance?
3. What are the lived experiences of women in legal leadership roles?
4. What best practices can be adapted from other jurisdictions?

Appendix B1: Survey Consent Form

CONSENT FORM for Needs Assessment on Women's Advancement in Public Sector Law, Lawmaking, and Legal Practice in Nigeria

Purpose of the Study: This survey is being conducted by Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR) in partnership with International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to understand the barriers and challenges faced by women in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice in Nigeria. The aim is to identify key issues and potential solutions to promote gender equity in legal leadership roles.

Confidentiality: Your responses to this survey will be kept **confidential** and **reported anonymously**. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Only demographic information will be used for statistical analysis.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this survey is **entirely voluntary**. You may choose not to answer any question, and you may withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty.

By clicking "I agree" or proceeding to the survey, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above and you voluntarily consent to participate in this survey.

I agree to participate in this survey.

I do NOT agree to participate in this survey.

Appendix B2: Survey Introductory Message

Dear Esteemed Members of [Org Name] Nigeria,

We invite you to participate in this important survey, a crucial initiative as part of a collaboration between **Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR)** and the **International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria)**. WISCAR is launching the Women in Law Mentoring (WILM) Program, a structured initiative aimed at empowering female legal professionals with key skills and strategies to rise into leadership in larger numbers. To ensure this program effectively addresses the real needs on the ground, we are conducting this targeted needs assessment.

This survey aims to understand the **key barriers hindering women's progression in Nigeria's legal ecosystem and identify the specific mentoring and capacity-building interventions required for meaningful change**. Your honest and thoughtful responses are invaluable in painting a clear picture of the challenges and needs within our profession.

We anticipate that the survey will take approximately **15-20 minutes** to complete. Please be assured that **your responses will be kept completely anonymous**, and the findings will be **collated and anonymised** for the program's report.

We wholeheartedly encourage you to make the time to complete this survey and to speak frankly about your experiences. Your active participation will be instrumental in shaping a mentoring program that will effectively advance women in law in Nigeria. Thank you for your contribution to this vital endeavour and Legal Practice in Nigeria. **Only respondents who WORK IN NIGERIA should take this survey**



The graphic features the WISCAR logo (a pink bird) and the Nigerian coat of arms. The main text reads: **WOMEN IN LAW NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY 2025 FOR THE NBA**. Below this, it asks: **Are you a woman in law, lawmaking or legal practice?** with a question mark icon. A call to action says: **Please complete this survey!** with a checklist icon. At the bottom, the survey link is provided: **Survey Link: <https://bit.ly/WilmNBA>**. The background of the graphic shows a smiling woman with curly hair working on a laptop.

Appendix B3: Online Survey Questionnaire

WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program – Needs Assessment Survey on Women’s Advancement in Public Sector Law, Lawmaking, and Legal Practice in Nigeria

Online Survey deployed from **15 March 2025 to 4 April 2025** by Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR) in partnership with International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to understand the barriers and challenges faced by women in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice in Nigeria. The aim is to identify key issues and potential solutions to promote gender equity in legal leadership roles

Summary of Key Insights and Takeaways Across All Questions (based on 428 respondents):

The survey of primarily female legal professionals across Nigeria reveals that despite strong support for gender equity, significant and pervasive barriers hinder women's advancement in the legal sector. These barriers are deeply rooted in cultural and societal norms, particularly patriarchal biases and traditional gender role expectations, which are perceived to have a major impact on women's leadership potential. Institutional and structural issues, including bias in opportunities and promotions, inadequate support systems like childcare, and unequal access to resources and networks, also present significant challenges. While gender-sensitive policies exist in most institutions, their implementation and enforcement are widely viewed as inconsistent and ineffective.

Work-life balance challenges, primarily driven by caregiving responsibilities, are a major factor influencing career decisions for a large majority of women, often leading them to sacrifice opportunities or adjust their career paths. This highlights the urgent need for better institutional support for work-life integration.

Mentorship programs, leadership training, and representation quotas are identified as the most crucial forms of support needed for women's advancement. There is high willingness among respondents to serve as mentors, and significant interest in being mentored, indicating a strong potential for targeted mentoring initiatives. Desired mentorship topics focus on developing leadership skills, career navigation, work-life balance strategies, networking, and political engagement.

The survey data on disability is incomplete due to the question not being included from the start for all respondents, but it indicates that a small percentage of those asked identified as having a disability. This points to a need for more inclusive data collection in future studies to understand the specific experiences and barriers faced by legal professionals with disabilities.

Overall, the survey provides compelling evidence that while support for gender equity and the presence of some policies offer a foundation for progress, addressing the deep-seated cultural, institutional, and structural barriers, coupled with providing effective support for work-life balance and professional development, is essential to enable women in the Nigerian legal profession to achieve their full leadership aspirations. The strong interest in mentorship also presents a key opportunity for intervention.

Questions and Answers

1. Your Age Range

- **Analysis of Responses:** The age distribution of the respondents is as follows:
 - 25-34: 179 (41.4%)
 - 35-44: 145 (33.6%)
 - 45-54: 65 (15.1%)
 - 55-64: 28 (6.5%)
 - 20-24: 11 (2.5%)
 - 65+: 3 (0.7%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 1 (0.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The majority of respondents are in the early to mid-career stages (25-44 years), making their perspectives on current challenges and opportunities particularly relevant. There is also significant representation from more senior age groups.

2. Gender

- **Analysis of Responses:** The overwhelming majority of respondents are female:
 - Female: 427 (99.1%)
 - Male: 3 (0.7%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 1 (0.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The survey successfully gathered insights almost exclusively from female legal professionals, aligning with the focus on women's advancement in the legal sector.

3. Do you have a disability or special need?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The distribution of responses regarding disability or special need is:
 - No: 235 (54.5%)
 - (question not included from the start): 181 (41.9%)
 - Yes: 11 (2.5%)
 - Prefer not to say: 7 (1.6%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Based on the responses from those who were asked this question, a small percentage (2.5%) identified as having a disability or special need. The significant number of respondents for whom this question was not initially included highlights a major gap in capturing comprehensive data on disability within the surveyed population. This limits the ability to fully understand the experiences and specific barriers faced by legal professionals with disabilities in Nigeria and underscores the need for more inclusive data collection efforts in the future.

4. Do you actively support gender equity (equal opportunity & representation) in the workplace?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Most respondents actively support gender equity:
 - Yes (Ally/Advocate): 411 (95.4%)
 - No: 10 (2.3%)
 - Prefer not to say: 8 (1.9%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 2 (0.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** There is strong reported support for gender equity among the vast majority of legal professionals surveyed, indicating a positive environment for implementing initiatives aimed at promoting equality.

5. Marital Status

- **Analysis of Responses:** The marital status distribution is as follows:
 - Married: 258 (59.9%)

- Single: 130 (30.1%)
- Separated/Divorced: 25 (5.8%)
- Widowed: 12 (2.8%)
- Prefer not to say: 5 (1.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The majority of respondents are married, followed by single individuals. This diversity is important when considering the impact of marital status and potential family responsibilities on legal careers.

6. Family/Caregiving Responsibilities (select all that apply)

- **Analysis of Responses:** A large proportion of respondents have caregiving responsibilities, with many having multiple types of responsibilities. The most frequent categories selected, individually or in combination, are:
 - Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years): 268 (62.2%)
 - Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years): 154 (35.7%)
 - Caregiver for elderly / special needs family members: 94 (21.8%)
 - None: 58 (13.4%)
 - Prefer not to say: 13 (3.0%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Caregiving responsibilities are prevalent among the surveyed legal professionals, particularly for children. This underscores the importance of addressing work-life balance challenges and providing adequate support for those with caregiving duties.

7. Workplace Location - Town/City:

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents work in numerous towns and cities across Nigeria. The most frequently mentioned cities (including variations) are:
 - Abuja (FCT and environs): 191 (44.3%)
 - Lagos (including various areas within Lagos State): 80 (18.6%)
 - Kano (including various areas within Kano State): 29 (6.7%)
 - Port Harcourt (including variations): 12 (2.8%)
 - Uyo (including variations): 8 (1.9%)
 - Jos (including variations): 7 (1.6%)
 - Benin City (including variations): 6 (1.4%)
 - Owerri (including variations): 6 (1.4%)
 - Warri (including variations): 6 (1.4%)
 - Ibadan: 5 (1.2%)
 - Abeokuta: 5 (1.2%)
 - Makurdi: 5 (1.2%)
 - Suleja (including variations): 5 (1.2%)
 - Yenagoa (including variations): 5 (1.2%)
 - Kaduna (including variations): 4 (0.9%)
 - Lokoja (including variations): 4 (0.9%)
 - Osogbo: 4 (0.9%)
 - Abakaliki (including variations): 3 (0.7%)
 - Dutse (including variations): 3 (0.7%)
 - Ikorodu (including variations): 3 (0.7%)
 - Minna (including variations): 3 (0.7%)
 - Other cities and towns were mentioned by one or two respondents.
 - Generic responses like "City" or "Town": 24 (5.6%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The survey captured a wide geographical representation across Nigeria, with significant clusters in major legal and political hubs like Abuja, Lagos, and Kano. This

diverse geographical data is essential for understanding regional variations in the experiences of women in the legal profession.

8. Workplace Location - State:

- **Analysis of Responses:** The states where respondents work are diverse, with the most frequent being:
 - FCT Abuja: 192 (44.5%)
 - Lagos: 80 (18.6%)
 - Kano: 31 (7.2%)
 - Rivers: 12 (2.8%)
 - Akwa Ibom: 10 (2.3%)
 - Plateau: 9 (2.1%)
 - Imo: 8 (1.9%)
 - Kaduna: 8 (1.9%)
 - Kogi: 8 (1.9%)
 - Bayelsa: 7 (1.6%)
 - Ogun: 7 (1.6%)
 - Delta: 6 (1.4%)
 - Niger: 6 (1.4%)
 - Oyo: 5 (1.2%)
 - Ebonyi: 4 (0.9%)
 - Osun: 4 (0.9%)
 - Abia: 3 (0.7%)
 - Benue: 3 (0.7%)
 - Jigawa: 3 (0.7%)
 - Ondo: 2 (0.5%)
 - Edo: 2 (0.5%)
 - Enugu: 1 (0.2%)
 - Gombe: 1 (0.2%)
 - Kwara: 1 (0.2%)
 - Nasarawa: 1 (0.2%)
 - Sokoto: 1 (0.2%)
 - Taraba: 1 (0.2%)
 - Adamawa: 1 (0.2%)
 - Anambra: 1 (0.2%)
 - Cross River: 1 (0.2%)
 - Katsina: 1 (0.2%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 12 (2.8%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The data confirms that the survey reached legal professionals across a wide range of states, providing a robust basis for analyzing potential regional differences in experiences and challenges related to gender equity.

9. Do you work in a different state from where you live?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A relatively small percentage of respondents work in a different state from where they live:
 - No: 386 (89.6%)
 - Yes: 41 (9.5%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 4 (0.9%)

- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The vast majority of respondents live and work in the same state. However, the 9.5% who work in a different state may face specific challenges related to commuting, family separation, and balancing personal and professional life across different locations.

10. If yes, please state where you live (State):

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those who work in a different state, the states of residence mentioned are:
 - Nasarawa: 11 (26.8%)
 - Lagos: 8 (19.5%)
 - Kano: 5 (12.2%)
 - Plateau: 5 (12.2%)
 - Ogun State (and variations): 2 (4.9%)
 - Osun: 2 (4.9%)
 - Abuja: 2 (4.9%)
 - Uyo, Akwa Ibom State: 2 (4.9%)
 - Rivers State: 1 (2.4%)
 - Aba: 1 (2.4%)
 - Ibadan, Oyo State: 1 (2.4%)
 - Osogbo: 1 (2.4%)
 - Suleja, Niger state: 1 (2.4%)
 - Jos, Plateau State: 1 (2.4%)
 - Benin city: 1 (2.4%)
 - Warri: 1 (2.4%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The responses highlight specific examples of interstate commuting patterns, particularly involving movement between the FCT and neighbouring states like Nasarawa and Plateau, and between Lagos and neighbouring states like Ogun and Osun, as well as instances in other regions.

11. Years of Legal Experience / from Call to Bar:

- **Analysis of Responses:** The distribution of legal experience is:
 - 11-20 years: 165 (38.3%)
 - 6-10 years: 120 (27.8%)
 - 1-5 years: 90 (20.9%)
 - 21+ years: 56 (13.0%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The largest group of respondents have 11-20 years of legal experience, indicating a strong representation of mid-career professionals. This is followed by those with 6-10 years and 1-5 years, providing insights from various stages of legal careers.

12. Sector of Employment: If Other, please specify

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents work across a diverse range of sectors within the legal field:
 - Private Legal Practice: 213 (49.4%)
 - Ministry of Justice: 64 (14.8%)
 - Other Government Agencies (MDAs, JCI, Law Reform etc.): 54 (12.5%)
 - Judiciary (all courts): 41 (9.5%)
 - Civil Society / Non-Profit / Human Rights: 33 (7.6%)
 - Corporation / Organisation: 32 (7.4%)
 - Arbitration / Alternative Dispute Resolution: 24 (5.6%)
 - Academia / Research: 12 (2.8%)

- Legislative / Lawmaking: 9 (2.1%)
- Other (including Law Student, Legal and Legislative Drafting, Social Development, Electoral Law, Administration Court Management & Policy Implementation, Criminal, Judiciary, Magistracy, Legal advice and legal drafting, Real Estate, Media, Information Technology, Professorship, Education, Corporate Consulting, Other): 64 (14.8%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Private legal practice is the most common sector, but there is also significant representation from various public sector and civil society organizations. This diversity is essential for understanding gender equity challenges and opportunities across the breadth of the legal profession in Nigeria.

13. Legal Specialization: select all that apply If Other, please specify

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents indicated a wide array of legal specializations. The most frequently selected specializations are:
 - General Practice: 172 (39.9%)
 - Litigation & Dispute Resolution: 165 (38.3%)
 - Corporate & Commercial Law: 108 (25.0%)
 - Human Rights & Public Interest Law: 64 (14.8%)
 - Criminal Law: 39 (9.0%)
 - Family & Inheritance Law: 37 (8.6%)
 - Arbitration / Alternate Dispute Resolution: 32 (7.4%)
 - Real Estate & Property Law: 17 (3.9%)
 - Constitutional & Administrative Law: 10 (2.3%)
 - Labour & Employment Law: 9 (2.1%)
 - Health & Life Sciences Law: 7 (1.6%)
 - Technology, Cybersecurity & Data Privacy Law: 7 (1.6%)
 - Tax Law: 5 (1.2%)
 - Immigration & Nationality Law: 4 (0.9%)
 - Intellectual Property & Media Law: 4 (0.9%)
 - International & Comparative Law: 3 (0.7%)
 - Other (including various specific areas like Electoral Law, Legislative Drafting, Social Development, etc., and general terms like "Other"): 57 (13.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The specializations highlight the diverse legal work undertaken by the respondents. General Practice, Litigation & Dispute Resolution, and Corporate & Commercial Law are the most prevalent areas.

14. Have you faced gender-related barriers in your career?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A clear majority of respondents reported facing gender-related barriers:
 - Yes: 263 (61.0%)
 - No: 160 (37.1%)
 - Not Sure: 8 (1.9%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Gender-related barriers are a significant and widely experienced issue for women in the legal profession in Nigeria, affecting a large proportion of the surveyed population.

15. If not sure or yes, what type of barriers have you encountered?

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those who reported facing barriers or were unsure, the types of barriers encountered were categorized as:
 - Cultural (e.g., stereotypes, workplace microaggressions): 219 (50.8%)

- Institutional (e.g., biased promotion criteria, unequal pay within organizations): 171 (39.6%)
- Structural (e.g., occupational segregation, lack of childcare infrastructure, lack of training/development, unequal access to resources, networking gaps): 158 (36.6%)
- Policy-related (e.g., inadequate parental leave, weak enforcement of anti-harassment & discrimination laws, absence of gender-sensitive policies/quotas): 154 (35.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Cultural barriers (stereotypes, microaggressions) are the most commonly reported type of barrier. Institutional, structural, and policy-related barriers are also widely experienced, indicating that challenges to women's advancement are systemic and multifaceted.

16. To what extent do you believe patriarchal norms and biases (societal expectations about traditional gender roles e.g. the belief that men are better suited for leadership) impact women's ability to reach leadership positions in the legal profession?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents rated the impact of patriarchal norms and biases (1=No Impact, 5=Significant Impact):
 - 5: 176 (40.8%)
 - 4: 127 (29.5%)
 - 3: 74 (17.2%)
 - 1: 31 (7.2%)
 - 2: 21 (4.9%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 2 (0.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** A strong majority of respondents (70.3%) believe that patriarchal norms and biases have a significant impact (rated 4 or 5) on women's ability to reach leadership positions. This highlights the deep-seated societal influence on gender inequality within the legal profession.

17. How effective are current gender equity policies in your sector?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents rated the effectiveness of current gender equity policies (1=Not Effective, 5=Very Effective):
 - 3: 126 (29.2%)
 - 2: 101 (23.4%)
 - 4: 93 (21.6%)
 - 1: 63 (14.6%)
 - 5: 43 (10.0%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 8 (1.9%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Opinions on the effectiveness of current gender equity policies are mixed, with the largest portion rating them as moderately effective (3), followed by those rating them as not very effective (1 or 2). Only a small percentage perceive them as very effective, suggesting that existing policies are not consistently achieving their intended outcomes.

18. To what extent do you agree that women have equal opportunities for advancement in your sector?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents rated their agreement on equal opportunities for women's advancement (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree):
 - 5: 111 (25.7%)
 - 1: 89 (20.6%)
 - 4: 81 (18.8%)
 - 3: 65 (15.1%)
 - 2: 44 (10.2%)

- Not Sure: 41 (9.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** There is no clear consensus on whether women have equal opportunities for advancement. While a significant portion agrees or strongly agrees, a substantial number also disagree or strongly disagree, and a notable percentage are unsure. This indicates that the experience of equal opportunity is inconsistent across the sector.

19. Are you aware of any specific gender-focused policies or programs in your sector?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Most respondents are aware of gender-focused policies/programs:
 - Yes: 355 (82.4%)
 - No: 76 (17.6%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Awareness of specific initiatives and policies aimed at gender equity is high among the surveyed legal professionals.

20. Does your institution have gender-sensitive policies (e.g., maternity leave, paternity leave, DEI policies, flexible/remote work arrangements, sexual harassment policies)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A large majority reported their institutions have gender-sensitive policies to some extent:
 - Yes: 283 (65.7%)
 - Some: 118 (27.4%)
 - No: 30 (7.0%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Formal gender-sensitive policies are reported to be present in most institutions, indicating a foundational level of policy adoption, though the extent of these policies varies.

21. How would you rate the implementation and enforcement of these policies?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Ratings for implementation and enforcement effectiveness (1=Not Effective, 5=Very Effective):
 - 3: 118 (27.4%)
 - 2: 108 (25.0%)
 - 4: 97 (22.5%)
 - 1: 69 (16.0%)
 - 5: 35 (8.1%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 4 (0.9%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Similar to the rating of policy effectiveness, the implementation and enforcement are perceived as inconsistent and often not very effective, with a large portion of responses in the lower to middle range. This highlights a significant gap between policy existence and practical application.

22. What support is MOST needed for women's advancement? (select up to 3)

- **Analysis of Responses:** The most frequently selected types of support are:
 - Mentorship programs: 214 (49.7%)
 - Leadership training: 196 (45.5%)
 - Representation quotas (e.g. 35% minimum gender balance): 153 (35.5%)
 - Flexible work hours / Remote working: 101 (23.4%)
 - Stronger anti-discrimination laws: 68 (15.8%)
 - Childcare: 56 (13.0%)
 - Campaign funding earmarked for women: 14 (3.2%)
 - All of the above: 1 (0.2%)
 - More Representations, More opportunities: 1 (0.2%)

- Coaching: 1 (0.2%)
- Women should support women: 1 (0.2%)
- None: 1 (0.2%)
- (Combinations of 2 or 3 selected options are also present in the data, but the individual option counts above reflect the total number of times each option was selected).
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Mentorship programs, leadership training, and representation quotas are overwhelmingly considered the most needed forms of support. This indicates a strong perceived need for targeted professional development, mechanisms to ensure women's presence in leadership roles, and guidance from experienced peers. Flexible work arrangements and stronger legal protections against discrimination are also seen as important supportive measures.

23. Do you have access to mentorship, sponsorship, and professional networks for your specialisation?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Access to mentorship, sponsorship, and networks is varied:
 - Yes: 199 (46.2%)
 - No: 130 (30.1%)
 - Some: 97 (22.5%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 3 (0.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** While almost half of respondents report having access, a significant portion (over 50%) have limited or no access to these crucial resources, highlighting a gap in the support systems available for women's career advancement.

24. How would you rate the availability and effectiveness of mentorship and professional development programs for women that you are aware of?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Ratings for availability and effectiveness of programs for women (1=Not Effective, 5=Very Effective):
 - 3: 117 (27.2%)
 - 2: 103 (23.9%)
 - 1: 89 (20.6%)
 - 4: 66 (15.3%)
 - 5: 25 (5.8%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 33 (7.6%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The perceived availability and effectiveness of these programs specifically for women are rated low to moderately low by a large majority of respondents (ratings 1, 2, and 3). This suggests a significant need for improving the accessibility and impact of mentorship and professional development opportunities tailored for women in the legal sector.

25. What leadership role are you most interested in? Other (please specify the leadership role you are interested in)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents expressed interest in a wide range of leadership roles:
 - Private Sector Leadership (Partner, SAN, General Counsel, Legal Adviser, Head of Chambers, etc.): 104 (24.1%)
 - Executive (Cabinet Member, Head of MDAs, Permanent Secretary, Director-General, etc.): 94 (21.8%)
 - Judiciary (Judge at various levels, Chief Judge, Magistrate, Registrar, etc.): 72 (16.7%)
 - Political Appointment (International Court, Commission, Special Adviser, etc.): 45 (10.4%)
 - Legislative (Lawmaker at national or state level, Administrative leader in legislature): 15 (3.5%)
 - Already in aspired leadership role: 11 (2.5%)
 - Arbitration / Alternative Dispute Resolution (as a leader in this field): 8 (1.9%)

- Civil Society / Non-Profit / Human Rights (Leadership roles in these organizations): 7 (1.6%)
- Academia / Research (Professorial or leadership roles): 5 (1.2%)
- Other (including various specific roles and general leadership aspirations): 70 (16.2%)
- (Blank/Unspecified): 15 (3.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Women in the legal profession aspire to leadership positions across all sectors and levels, with a strong interest in private sector, executive, and judicial roles. This highlights a desire for greater representation and influence in various spheres of the legal and governance landscape.

26. What are the main barriers preventing you from achieving your leadership aspirations?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The main barriers identified by respondents are numerous and varied. Based on previous analysis and review of the text, these can be broadly categorized as:
 - **Cultural and Societal Norms:** Patriarchal norms, stereotypes about women's capabilities, traditional gender roles and expectations (especially regarding family responsibilities), cultural biases, religious interpretations that limit women's roles, societal prejudice, lack of societal support.
 - **Institutional and Structural Barriers:** Bias and discrimination within institutions (hiring, promotion, selection for opportunities), lack of opportunities, lack of transparent and clear progression pathways, inadequate institutional support systems (e.g., lack of childcare, insufficient parental leave, rigid work hours), unequal access to resources (financial, networking, information), patronage politics and "godfatherism," systemic biases within the legal/political system, lack of diversity and inclusion initiatives, inaccessible physical structures (for those with disabilities).
 - **Work-Life Balance Challenges:** Difficulty balancing professional and personal/family responsibilities, time constraints, demands of caregiving, impact of political economy demands (late-night meetings, travel), lack of spousal or family support.
 - **Lack of Mentorship and Sponsorship:** Insufficient access to effective mentorship and sponsorship, lack of guidance and support for career navigation.
 - **Financial Barriers:** Lack of financial resources, the transactional nature of some sectors (especially politics), unequal pay, lack of financial empowerment.
 - **Harassment and Discrimination:** Workplace harassment (including sexual harassment and microaggressions), discrimination based on gender, marital status, or other factors.
 - **Personal/Internal Barriers:** Lack of self-confidence, fear of failure, imposter syndrome, difficulty re-entering the profession after a break, lack of knowledge or experience (though often linked to lack of opportunities/support).
 - **Intersectional Barriers:** Compounding challenges based on the intersection of gender with ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and disability.
 - **Lack of Awareness/Information:** Lack of awareness of policies or opportunities.
 - **Weak Policy Implementation/Enforcement:** Existing policies not being effectively implemented or enforced.
 - **Competition and Gatekeeping:** Competition with men for limited opportunities, gatekeeping by those in power.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The barriers to leadership aspirations for women in the legal profession are complex and interconnected. Cultural and societal norms, particularly patriarchal beliefs and traditional gender roles, form a pervasive foundation for many of these barriers. Institutional biases and structural limitations within legal organizations and the broader political system significantly restrict opportunities and create disadvantages for women. Work-life balance demands, exacerbated by inadequate support systems, force many women to make difficult

career decisions. Financial constraints and the influence of patronage further compound these challenges. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive approach that tackles cultural mindsets, reforms institutional practices, provides robust support systems for work-life balance and professional development, and actively combats discrimination and harassment at all levels.

27. Have work-life balance challenges affected your career decisions? (e.g. turning down promotions or postings, changed roles, seeking flexible roles, or pausing your career)

- **Analysis of Responses:** A substantial majority of respondents reported that work-life balance challenges have affected their career decisions:
 - Yes: 282 (65.5%)
 - No: 149 (34.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Work-life balance is a major factor influencing the career paths of women legal professionals, impacting a significant two-thirds of the surveyed population and often leading to career adjustments or limitations.

28. If yes, briefly describe how work-life balance challenges have affected your career decisions

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those who answered yes, the descriptions highlighted various ways work-life balance has impacted their career decisions, including:
 - Turning down promotions, leadership roles, transfers, postings, or opportunities requiring extensive travel or long hours.
 - Changing roles or seeking more flexible work arrangements (e.g., moving from private practice to in-house, government, or starting their own practice; seeking remote or hybrid work options).
 - Pausing, slowing down, or taking breaks in their careers (e.g., due to childbirth, raising young children, or caring for elderly/sick family members).
 - Choosing less demanding jobs or roles below their capacity to accommodate family responsibilities.
 - Prioritizing family and caregiving over career advancement.
 - Difficulty re-entering the workforce after a break.
 - Making decisions based on the proximity of work to home or family.
 - Feeling overwhelmed or stressed by the demands of balancing work and family.
 - Facing negative consequences at work due to caregiving responsibilities (e.g., lower appraisals, inconsistency in punctuality).
 - Not pursuing further education or training due to time constraints.
 - Experiencing financial strain due to reduced work hours or career breaks.
 - Impact on networking and participation in after-hours professional or political activities.
 - Marital challenges or lack of spousal support impacting career choices.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The impact of work-life balance challenges on career decisions is tangible and significant. Women are frequently forced to make compromises, sacrifice opportunities, and adjust their career paths to manage family and caregiving responsibilities. This underscores the critical need for better institutional support for work-life integration, including flexible work arrangements, adequate parental leave, and childcare facilities, as well as a shift in societal expectations regarding shared caregiving duties.

29. Are you willing to be a MENTOR in the Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP) – Advancing Women’s Leadership in Law and Lawmaking?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A very high percentage of respondents are willing to be mentors:
 - Yes: 411 (95.4%)
 - No: 15 (3.5%)

- (Blank/Unspecified): 5 (1.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** There is overwhelming willingness among the surveyed legal professionals to contribute their experience and guidance as mentors. This indicates a strong potential for a successful and impactful women in law mentoring program.

30. Would you like to be MENTORED in the Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP) – Advancing Women’s Leadership in Law and Lawmaking?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A significant portion of respondents expressed interest in being mentored:
 - Yes: 198 (45.9%)
 - No: 227 (52.7%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 8 (1.9%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** While just under half of the respondents are interested in being mentored, this still represents a substantial number who are seeking support and guidance for their own professional development and leadership aspirations. This highlights a demand for mentorship opportunities at various career stages.

31. What mentorship topics would MOST benefit progression into top leadership ranks?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The most frequently mentioned mentorship topics are:
 - Leadership (general, training, skills, development): 187 (43.4%)
 - Career Navigation / Progression: 78 (18.1%)
 - Mentorship / Guidance (general): 66 (15.3%)
 - Work-Life Balance / Integration: 57 (13.2%)
 - Networking / Building Professional Networks: 52 (12.1%)
 - Strategic Positioning / Executive Presence: 45 (10.4%)
 - Political Engagement / Lawmaking / Campaign Strategy/Funding: 43 (10.0%)
 - Financial Literacy / Empowerment / Funding: 27 (6.3%)
 - Addressing / Overcoming Barriers (including gender bias, discrimination, stereotypes): 25 (5.8%)
 - Negotiation: 24 (5.6%)
 - Confidence / Self-Belief: 23 (5.3%)
 - Communication Skills: 11 (2.5%)
 - Business Development / Practice Management: 10 (2.3%)
 - Advocacy Skills: 8 (1.9%)
 - Specific legal areas (e.g., Litigation): 8 (1.9%)
 - Policy Implementation / Enforcement: 6 (1.4%)
 - Legislative Drafting: 5 (1.2%)
 - Public Speaking: 4 (0.9%)
 - Emotional Intelligence: 3 (0.7%)
 - Resilience: 3 (0.7%)
 - Ethics / Integrity: 2 (0.5%)
 - Innovation: 1 (0.2%)
 - Media Management: 1 (0.2%)
 - Building a strong professional brand: 1 (0.2%)
 - Navigating male-dominated environments: 1 (0.2%)
 - Success strategies: 1 (0.2%)
 - Understanding institutional politics: 1 (0.2%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The desired mentorship topics strongly align with the identified barriers and aspirations. There is a clear demand for guidance and development in core leadership skills, navigating career paths effectively, and strategies for integrating work and personal life.

Topics related to networking, strategic positioning, political engagement, and financial empowerment also feature prominently, reflecting the specific areas where women feel they need support to reach top leadership ranks.

Appendix B4: Legislature Survey Questionnaire

WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program – Needs Assessment Survey on Women’s Advancement in Public Sector Law, Lawmaking, and Legal Practice in Nigeria

Legislative Survey deployed from **15 March 2025 to 4 April 2025** by Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR) in partnership with International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to understand the barriers and challenges faced by women in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice in Nigeria. The aim is to identify key issues and potential solutions to promote gender equity in the legislature at all levels in both lawmaking and administrative roles.

Summary of Key Insights and Takeaways Across All Questions (based on 6 respondents):

The survey of 6 professionals in the legislature, evenly split by gender and primarily in the mid-career to senior age range, reveals that while there is strong reported support for gender equity, significant barriers impede women's advancement. These barriers are rooted in patriarchal norms, patronage politics, and the transactional nature of the political system. Media scrutiny and negative stereotypes also pose challenges.

While gender-sensitive policies exist, their implementation and enforcement are perceived as inconsistent. The demanding nature of political life, including late-night meetings and extensive travel, impacts family life and career decisions for many women. Limited access to mentorship and effective professional development programs is also a concern.

Recommendations for improving gender equity focus on policy reform and enforcement (including quotas), targeted leadership training and mentorship (addressing topics like campaign strategy and balancing political/family life), financial empowerment, and strategies to challenge patronage and assertiveness. There is a strong call for women to take initiative, prepare for political opportunities, build support networks, and support each other.

Questions and Answers

1. Your Age Range

- **Analysis of Responses:** The age ranges of the 6 respondents are distributed as follows:
 - 45-54: 3 (50%)
 - 55-64: 2 (33.3%)
 - 25-34: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The majority of respondents are in the 45-64 age range, representing the perspectives of mid-career to senior professionals in the legislature. A younger voice (25-34) is also included.

2. Gender

- **Analysis of Responses:** The gender distribution is evenly split:
 - Female: 3 (50%)
 - Male: 3 (50%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Equal representation of male and female respondents provides insights from both perspectives on gender equity in the legislature.

3. Do you have a disability or special need?

- **Analysis of Responses:** All 6 respondents indicated they do not have a disability or special need.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** In this specific sample, there were no respondents who identified as having a disability or special need.

4. What is your Marital Status?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The marital status distribution is:
 - Married: 4 (66.7%)
 - Widowed: 1 (16.7%)
 - Single: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The majority of respondents are married, offering perspectives potentially influenced by marital and family dynamics.

5. Do you have Family/Caregiving Responsibilities (select all that apply)

- **Analysis of Responses:** All 6 respondents have caregiving responsibilities:
 - Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years): 5 (83.3%)
 - Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years), Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years): 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Caregiving responsibilities, particularly for school-age children, are universal among this group, highlighting its relevance in their professional lives.

6. Workplace Location - Town/City:

- **Analysis of Responses:** Respondents work in key cities:
 - Abuja: 3 (50%)
 - Abuja Nigeria: 1 (16.7%)
 - Lagos state: 1 (16.7%)
 - Akwa-Ibom: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Respondents are located in the capital Abuja, Lagos, and Akwa Ibom, offering some geographical diversity.

7. Workplace Location - State:

- **Analysis of Responses:** The states where respondents work align with the town/city data:
 - FCT Abuja: 3 (50%)
 - Akwa Ibom: 2 (33.3%)
 - Lagos: 1 (16.7%)

- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Confirms geographical representation across key states.

8. Do you work in a different state from where you and your family live?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Responses indicate work location relative to family residence:
 - No: 4 (66.7%)
 - Yes: 2 (33.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** While most work in the same state where their family lives, a third commute across state lines, suggesting potential logistical and work-life balance considerations.

9. If yes, please state where you live (State):

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those working in a different state, their state of residence is recorded:
 - Lagos: 1 (50%)
 - Abuja: 1 (50%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** One respondent working in a different state lives in Lagos, and another lives in Abuja.

10. Years of Service in the legislature (at all levels of government including administrative roles)

- **Analysis of Responses:** The years of service vary:
 - 11-20 years: 1 (16.7%)
 - 1-5 years: 4 (66.7%)
 - Other (SA to Governor): 1 (16.7%) - *This appears to be a role rather than years of service.*
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Most respondents have 1-5 years of service, with one having more extensive experience (11-20 years).

11. Section of Employment: If Other, please specify

- **Analysis of Responses:** Employment sections within the legislature:
 - House of Representatives: 3 (50%)
 - State House of Assembly: 2 (33.3%)
 - Other (SA to the Governor of Akwa Ibom on political support groups): 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Respondents work in both national and state legislative bodies, as well as in a political support role within the legislative context.

12. Current Role If Other, please specify

- **Analysis of Responses:** Current roles held by respondents:
 - Member of the House of Representatives: 2 (33.3%)
 - Member of State House of Assembly: 2 (33.3%)
 - Administrative Officer: 1 (16.7%)
 - SA to the Governor of Akwa Ibom on political support groups: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The roles include elected officials and administrative staff, offering perspectives from different functions within the legislative environment.

13. Years of Membership of a Political Party

- **Analysis of Responses:** Length of political party membership:
 - 13+ years: 3 (50%)
 - 4-7 years: 1 (16.7%)
 - 8-12 years: 1 (16.7%)
 - Not a member: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Most respondents have long-standing affiliations with political parties, indicating deep engagement in the political landscape.

14. Is your political party currently part of the majority or minority in the legislature?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Political party status:
 - Minority: 3 (50%)
 - Majority: 2 (33.3%)
 - Prefer not to say: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The sample includes representation from both majority and minority parties.

15. Do you actively support gender equity (equal opportunity & representation)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** All 6 respondents actively support gender equity.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Consistent and strong support for gender equity among this group.

16. Have you faced gender-related barriers in your in your professional growth or political career within the legislature?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A majority have faced gender-related barriers:
 - Yes: 4 (66.7%)
 - No: 2 (33.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Gender-related barriers are a prevalent issue for most female respondents in the legislature.

17. If Yes, what type of barriers have you encountered? select all that apply

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those who faced barriers, the types encountered are:
 - POLICY-RELATED (e.g., absence or ineffective implementation of gender-sensitive policies, lack of gender quotas, weak enforcement of anti-harassment & discrimination policies): 2
 - INSTITUTIONAL (e.g., bias in candidate selection or assignments, unclear progression pathways): 1
 - STRUCTURAL (e.g., limited access to training and development opportunities, lack of childcare infrastructure / flexible work arrangements, unequal access to party resources/campaign funding, networking gaps, meetings scheduled at night/remote social): 1
 - Media scrutiny of women in politics (less coverage, held to different standard, focus on appearance and femininity): 1
 - Patronage politics (e.g., favouritism in appointments, godfatherism): 1

- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The reported barriers are varied and include issues related to policy, institutional practices, structural limitations, media representation, and political patronage, suggesting systemic challenges.

18. Patriarchal norms in broader society (belief that men are better suited for leadership)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Perceived impact of patriarchal norms (1=No Impact, 5=Significant Impact):
 - 5: 4 (66.7%)
 - 4: 1 (16.7%)
 - 2: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** A strong majority perceive patriarchal norms as having a significant impact (rated 4 or 5), indicating societal beliefs are a major external barrier.

19. Media scrutiny of women in politics (less coverage, held to different standard, focus on appearance and femininity)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Perceived impact of media scrutiny (1=No Impact, 5=Significant Impact):
 - 4: 2 (33.3%)
 - 5: 1 (16.7%)
 - 2: 1 (16.7%)
 - 3: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Media scrutiny is perceived to have a notable impact (rated 3, 4, or 5), contributing to the challenges women face.

20. Patronage politics (e.g., favouritism in appointments, godfatherism)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Perceived impact of patronage politics (1=No Impact, 5=Significant Impact):
 - 5: 3 (50%)
 - 4: 2 (33.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Patronage politics is seen as a major institutional barrier, with most rating it as having a significant impact (4 or 5).

21. Are you aware of any specific gender-focused policies or programs in the legislature?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Awareness of specific gender-focused policies/programs:
 - Yes: 5 (83.3%)
 - No: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Most respondents are aware of existing gender-focused initiatives.

22. Does your institution have gender-sensitive policies (e.g., maternity leave, paternity leave, DEI policies, flexible/remote work arrangements, sexual harassment policies)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Presence of gender-sensitive policies in institutions:
 - Yes: 4 (66.7%)
 - Some: 2 (33.3%)

- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Gender-sensitive policies are reported to be present to some extent in the institutions where respondents work.

23. How would you rate the implementation and enforcement of these policies?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Ratings for implementation and enforcement (1=Not effective, 5=Very effective):
 - 4: 2 (40%)
 - 2: 2 (40%)
 - 3: 1 (20%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The ratings are mixed, with some indicating weak implementation (rating of 2), suggesting a gap between policy and practice.

24. What policies and practices would best support women's leadership? (Select all)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Suggested supportive policies and practices:
 - Leadership training: 5 (83.3%)
 - Representation quotas (e.g. Reserved seats, 35% minimum gender balance): 5 (83.3%)
 - Mentorship programs: 4 (66.7%)
 - Campaign funding earmarked for women: 3 (50%)
 - Anti-discrimination enforcement: 2 (33.3%)
 - Childcare: 1 (16.7%)
 - Flexible parliamentary schedules / remote access: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Leadership training and representation quotas are most strongly favoured, indicating a belief in the need for targeted development and mechanisms to ensure representation. Campaign funding is also seen as important.

25. Do you have access to mentorship or professional networks for political advancement?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Access to mentorship/networks:
 - Yes: 2 (40%)
 - No: 2 (40%)
 - Some: 1 (20%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Access to mentorship and networks for political advancement is not consistent, with a significant portion reporting limited or no access.

26. How would you rate the availability and effectiveness of mentorship and professional development programs for women that you are aware?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Ratings for availability and effectiveness (1=Not effective, 5=Very effective):
 - 1: 2 (40%)
 - 2: 2 (40%)
 - 3: 1 (20%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The perceived availability and effectiveness of these programs are low, indicating a perceived gap in their provision and impact.

27. What leadership role do you aspire to?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Aspired leadership roles:
 - Minister of Women Affairs or Finance: 1
 - Party Spokesperson: 1
 - Speaker of the house: 1
 - Committee Chair: 1
 - Political navigation of the environment: 1
 - (Unnamed role): 1 - *This appears to be a response to Current Role, not Aspiring Role.*
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Respondents aspire to various significant leadership roles within the executive and legislative arms, highlighting ambitions for higher positions.

28. Have common political economy demands, like late-night meetings, traveling far for party events, or needing to build connections with influential leaders, impacted your family or personal life?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Impact of political economy demands on personal life:
 - Yes: 4 (66.7%)
 - No: 2 (33.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Political economy demands significantly impact the family and personal lives of most respondents, pointing to the demanding nature of political engagement.

29. What are the main barriers preventing you from achieving your leadership or professional / political growth aspirations?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Main barriers identified:
 - Finance. The system is so transactional and it is discouraging: 1
 - It depends on patronage and what the speaker of the house has in mind for you: 1
 - None: 1
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** While one respondent reported no barriers, others highlighted financial challenges, the transactional nature of the system, and the influence of patronage as key obstacles.

30. If Yes, briefly describe: (Referring to common political economy demands impacting family/personal life)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Descriptions of impact on personal life:
 - Must have a supportive husband. Some of them are divorced or not in a close marriage. Or husband has other wives. The marital situation has to be resolved: 1
 - Late night meetings: 1
 - The late night meetings are not limited to women. You can decide to avoid late night meetings. As a man, I have avoided them, they are not a necessity. The late night meetings are the cause of the labelling and stereotyping of women in politics as prostitutes. No political meeting lasts for more than 2 hours: 1
 - I am a man, I can say it has really affected women: 1
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The need for spousal support and the challenges posed by late-night meetings are highlighted as specific impacts of political demands on personal

life. A male perspective notes that while late-night meetings are not exclusive to women, they contribute to negative stereotyping of women in politics. Another male respondent generally states that these demands have affected women.

31. Have work-life balance challenges affected your career decisions?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Impact of work-life balance on career decisions:
 - Yes: 1 (16.7%)
 - No: 2 (33.3%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 3 (50%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Work-life balance challenges have affected career decisions for a portion of respondents who answered this question.

32. If Yes, briefly describe (Referring to work-life balance challenges affecting career decisions)

- **Analysis of Responses:** Description of work-life balance impact on career decisions:
 - Children must come first: 1
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Prioritizing children is highlighted as a reason influencing career decisions related to work-life balance.

33. Are you willing to participate in the Women in Law Mentoring Program?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Willingness to participate in mentoring program:
 - As a Mentor: 5 (83.3%)
 - Other: 1 (16.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Strong willingness among respondents to serve as mentors or contribute in other ways.

34. What mentorship topics would most benefit your career in the law and lawmaking?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Suggested mentorship topics:
 - Balancing political and family life: 1
 - Campaign strategy and funding: 1
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Mentorship topics related to balancing political life with family and campaign strategy/funding are seen as particularly beneficial for career advancement in this sector.

35. What unique challenges do women face in advancing their careers in the legislature compared to other sectors?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants described unique challenges, with overlapping themes:
 - **Financial Demands and Transactional System:** The system is highly transactional and requires significant financial resources. Women often lack the money men have, making it a major barrier. The system can lead to women accepting "useless offers" if not financially strong.
 - **Patronage and "Godfatherism":** Advancement depends on patronage and the favor of political leaders. The system is described as "stage managed."

- **Late Night Meetings and Traveling:** Political economy demands like late-night meetings and extensive traveling impact family life and contribute to negative stereotypes about women in politics.
- **Negative Stereotypes and Scrutiny:** Women in politics face unique negative stereotypes and media scrutiny, with a focus on appearance and femininity. There's a risk of being labeled or misunderstood.
- **Integrity and Reputation:** Women are held to a higher standard regarding their integrity. There's a risk of falling prey to ill-intentioned individuals. Need to demonstrate strong character in public service.
- **Lack of Support at Home:** Some women lack support from their husbands, making it difficult to navigate political life.
- **Need for Character and Service:** Women need to demonstrate strong character in public service to be taken seriously and avoid unethical practices. Being of professional service and adding value helps gain sponsorship.
- **Competition and "Flexing Muscle":** Need to assert oneself and "flex muscle" to compete with men.
- **Limited Decision-Making Power:** Not a lot of women are at the decision-making table.
- **Used as Placeholders:** Women may be given positions but not be prepared, leading to others controlling decisions.
- **Lack of Preparedness for Opportunities:** Need to advocate for women to prepare themselves for political opportunities.
- **Synergy and Teamwork:** Ability to gather information and work with the right team is crucial.
- **Advocacy Approach:** Suggestion to focus on advocacy rather than activism.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The legislative sector presents unique and significant challenges for women related to its financial demands, pervasive patronage, demanding schedule, heightened scrutiny, and stereotypes. Success requires financial empowerment, challenging patronage, adapting political practices, and equipping women to navigate male-dominated environments while asserting themselves and building networks. Preparation for political opportunities is also key.

36. Do you have any additional suggestions to improve gender equity in the legislature?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants offered several additional suggestions, reinforcing previous points and adding new ones:
 - **Promote Hard Work, Integrity, and Character:** Emphasize the importance of hard work ethic, maintaining integrity, and demonstrating strong character in public service.
 - **Train Young Girls:** Educate and train young girls about the importance of their integrity and capacity, discouraging them from valuing material things over principles. Raise their consciousness about the gender gap and opportunities in leadership.
 - **Mentoring Programs:** Implement mentorship programs including modules on navigating male-dominated environments, negotiation, overcoming barriers, and

addressing sexual harassment (educating men). Include education on various forms of sexual harassment and how to address it.

- **Policies and Practices:** Develop clear policies with recourse for harassment/discrimination. Incorporate positive discrimination (e.g., male lawmakers stepping down for female committee chairs). Implement reserved seats for women.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Conduct advocacy, right from schools, to make the girl child conscious of political opportunities. Women need to come on board and actively participate.
- **Campaign Finance Reform:** Campaign funding should be taken very seriously and potentially reformed to support women candidates.
- **Women Supporting Women:** Women at the forefront should mentor and develop other women. Women should take charge, be deliberate and passionate, and form support groups. Organize town hall meetings to mobilize women voters ("Women for Women").
- **Include Male Allies:** FIDA should include men who are favourably disposed to women's emancipation to engage with other men.
- **Challenge Systemic Issues:** Recognize the need to "flex muscle" to challenge the male-dominated system. Women must deliberately push themselves to the table.
- **Financial Empowerment:** Highlight financial empowerment as a key factor.
- **Synergy and Teamwork:** Emphasize the importance of synergy and having the right team.
- **Preparation and Interest in Politics:** Advocate for women to be interested in politics, discuss it, and prepare for opportunities.
- **Reserved Seats:** Reiterate the need for reserved seats.
- **Advocacy for Opportunities:** Advocate for women to be prepared for opportunities.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Additional suggestions reinforce the need for targeted training, policy reform and enforcement, and collective action. Emphasis is placed on women taking initiative, demonstrating integrity, and supporting each other. Addressing financial and patronage challenges and engaging male allies are also crucial.

Appendix B5: Key Informant Interviews Guide

WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring Program – Needs Assessment Key Informant Interviews on Women’s Advancement in Public Sector Law, Lawmaking, and Legal Practice in Nigeria

Key Informant Interviews deployed from **21 March 2025 to 4 April 2025** by Women in Successful Careers (WISCAR) in partnership with International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to understand the barriers and challenges faced by women in public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice in Nigeria. The aim is to identify key issues and potential solutions to promote gender equity in the legal profession and legislature at all levels in both lawmaking and administrative roles.

Summary of Key Insights and Takeaways Across All Questions (based on 23 Key Informants):

The key informant interviews provide rich qualitative data highlighting that while there is strong reported support for gender equity among this group, significant and deeply rooted cultural, institutional, and structural barriers impede women's advancement in the Nigerian legal sector. Patriarchal norms, societal stereotypes, and traditional gender roles are central to these challenges, influencing biases in opportunities, promotions, and leadership perception. Work-life balance, heavily impacted by caregiving responsibilities and a lack of institutional support, forces many women to make career compromises. While gender-sensitive policies and initiatives exist, their effectiveness is severely limited by weak implementation and enforcement, often due to a lack of political will and prevailing cultural mindsets. Financial constraints and the influence of patronage also pose significant barriers, particularly in the political sphere.

To address these multifaceted challenges, key informants recommend a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening legal and policy frameworks with clear enforcement mechanisms, implementing quotas and affirmative action for increased representation across all levels (including in the judiciary and political sphere), and providing targeted mentorship and leadership training programs. Addressing cultural and religious biases through education and reorientation for both men and women is deemed crucial for long-term change. Recommendations also emphasize the importance of women taking initiative, building strong support networks, actively participating in all aspects of the legal profession (including litigation and politics), and advocating for themselves and other women. Specific suggestions for policy reform, institutional change, and individual/collective action provide concrete avenues for intervention. The interviews underscore that achieving genuine gender equity requires a concerted effort to dismantle existing barriers and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in the Nigerian legal profession.

Questions and Answers

1. Have you responded to the WILM Online Survey?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The responses indicate whether the key informants had already participated in the online survey.
 - Yes: 17 (73.9%)
 - No: 6 (26.1%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** A significant majority of the key informants had also participated in the online survey. This suggests that the insights from these interviews are largely from individuals who have already provided feedback through the broader survey, potentially offering deeper context or elaboration on their initial responses. However, the inclusion of perspectives from those who did not take the online survey also provides insights from a distinct group.

2. May I ask how old you are? (Age)

- **Analysis of Responses:** The age ranges of the 23 key informants are distributed as follows:
 - 25-34: 9 (39.1%)

- 35-44: 5 (21.7%)
 - 45-54: 6 (26.1%)
 - 55-64: 2 (8.7%)
 - 65+: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The key informants represent a range of ages across different career stages, with notable representation from younger (25-34) and mid-career to senior (45-54 and 55-64) professionals. This diverse age profile provides a breadth of perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for women in the legal profession.

3. Select Gender (Don't ask unless not sure) (Gender)

- **Analysis of Responses:** The gender distribution of the key informants is predominantly female:
 - Female: 22 (95.7%)
 - Male: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The key informants interviewed are overwhelmingly female, aligning with the focus of the needs assessment on women's advancement in law. The inclusion of one male perspective offers a limited but valuable point of comparison.

4. What is your Marital Status?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The marital status distribution is as follows:
 - Married: 14 (60.9%)
 - Single: 5 (21.7%)
 - Separated/Divorced: 3 (13.0%)
 - Widowed: 1 (4.3%)
 - Prefer not to say: 0 (0.0%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The majority of key informants are married, with representation also from single, separated/divorced, and widowed individuals. This diversity is important for understanding the potential influence of different marital contexts on experiences in the legal profession, particularly concerning work-life balance and societal expectations.

5. Do you have Family/Caregiving Responsibilities such as parenting, caring for the elderly or disabled:

- **Analysis of Responses:** A significant portion of key informants have caregiving responsibilities. The categories selected are:
 - Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years): 11 (47.8%)
 - Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years): 5 (21.7%)
 - Caregiver for elderly / special needs family members: 5 (21.7%)

- None: 4 (17.4%)
- Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years), Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years): 4 (17.4%)
- Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years), Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years), Caregiver for elderly / special needs family members: 3 (13.0%)
- Parent/Caregiver to school-age children (6-18 years), Caregiver for elderly / special needs family members: 3 (13.0%)
- Parent/Caregiver to young children (0-5 years), Caregiver for elderly / special needs family members: 1 (4.3%)
- Prefer not to say: 2 (8.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Caregiving responsibilities are common among the key informants, particularly for school-age children. Many have multiple caregiving roles. This highlights that caregiving is a significant factor in the lives of these legal professionals and is likely to influence their experiences and perspectives on work-life balance and the need for supportive structures.

6. Which town or city do you work in? Which State is that in (ask if you do not know)? (Workplace Town/City and State)

- **Analysis of Responses:** The key informants work in various towns/cities and states across Nigeria. The locations mentioned are:
 - Abuja (including FCT and variations like Jabi, Gudu, Wuse Zone 7): 10 (43.5%)
 - Kano (including Kano City and variations): 5 (21.7%)
 - Lagos (including Victoria Island, Surulere, Lekki, Ajah, Ikeja, Okota): 4 (17.4%)
 - Port Harcourt: 2 (8.7%)
 - Uyo: 1 (4.3%)
 - Lokoja: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The key informants are located in major cities across different geopolitical zones of Nigeria, providing regional diversity to the insights on barriers and opportunities for women in the legal profession.

7. Do you work in a different state from where you live?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Responses indicate whether key informants work in a different state from where they live:
 - Yes: 7 (30.4%)
 - No: 16 (69.6%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** While the majority work in the same state where they live, a notable portion works in a different state. This suggests that geographical location and

potential interstate commuting may be relevant factors influencing the experiences of some legal professionals, potentially impacting work-life balance and access to networks.

8. If yes, please state where you live (State): (State of Residence if different from Workplace)

- **Analysis of Responses:** For those who work in a different state, their state of residence is indicated:
 - Lagos: 3 (42.9%)
 - Kano: 2 (28.6%)
 - Nasarawa: 1 (14.3%)
 - Plateau: 1 (14.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The states of residence for those working in a different state are primarily Lagos, Kano, Nasarawa, and Plateau, providing specific examples of the geographical contexts influencing these individuals.

9. How many Years of Legal Experience do you have from Call to Bar:

- **Analysis of Responses:** The distribution of legal experience is:
 - 11-20 years: 9 (39.1%)
 - 6-10 years: 5 (21.7%)
 - 1-5 years: 4 (17.4%)
 - 21+ years: 5 (21.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The key informants represent a range of legal experience levels, with a significant portion in the 11-20 years range and notable representation from both less and more experienced professionals. This diverse experience base contributes to a variety of perspectives on career progression and challenges.

10. What is your Sector of Employment:

- **Analysis of Responses:** The sectors of employment are diverse:
 - Private Legal Practice: 10 (43.5%)
 - Judiciary (all courts): 4 (17.4%)
 - Civil Society / Non-Profit / Human Rights: 3 (13.0%)
 - Other Government Agencies (MDAs, JCI, Law Reform etc.): 2 (8.7%)
 - Arbitration / Alternative Dispute Resolution: 2 (8.7%)
 - Legislative / Lawmaking: 1 (4.3%)
 - Corporation / Organisation: 1 (4.3%)
 - Other (including Legal Aid Council of Nigeria): 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Key informants come from various sectors within the legal profession, including private practice, the judiciary, civil society, government agencies,

and the legislature. This provides a broader understanding of the different contexts in which women legal professionals operate.

11. What is your Legal Specialization: select all that apply

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants have a range of legal specializations. The most frequently mentioned specializations are:
 - General Practice: 4 (17.4%)
 - Litigation & Dispute Resolution: 4 (17.4%)
 - Human Rights & Public Interest Law: 3 (13.0%)
 - Corporate & Commercial Law: 2 (8.7%)
 - Family & Inheritance Law: 2 (8.7%)
 - Arbitration / Alternate Dispute Resolution: 2 (8.7%)
 - Criminal Law: 2 (8.7%)
 - Real Estate & Property Law: 1 (4.3%)
 - Technology, Cybersecurity & Data Privacy Law: 1 (4.3%)
 - Environmental, Energy & Natural Resources Law: 1 (4.3%)
 - Constitutional & Administrative Law: 1 (4.3%)
 - Health & Life Sciences Law: 1 (4.3%)
 - Other (including Legal and Legislative Drafting, Social Development, Electoral Law, Administration Court Management & policy implementation, Magistracy, Legal advice and legal drafting, Other Criminal, Other Judiciary, Other): 8 (34.8%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The key informants' specializations are diverse, reflecting various areas of legal practice and contributing to a nuanced understanding of the issues across different legal fields.

12. Systemic Barriers: What institutional, structural, or cultural barriers hinder women's advancement in public sector law, lawmaking and legal practice in your region?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants identified a wide array of systemic barriers. These can be grouped into several key themes, with examples and specific details provided:
 - **Cultural and Societal Norms:** Traditional caregiving roles and expectations placed primarily on women, stereotypes about women's capabilities and their place being in the home, perception of leadership as masculine, societal prejudices, harmful cultural practices (e.g., related to land ownership in some regions, kola nut presentation), religious interpretations that limit women's roles in leadership and public life, indoctrination from a young age about gender roles, belief that women should not compete with men for leadership, underestimation of women's intelligence and capabilities, societal expectations for women to remain feminine and proper at work, expectation for women to serve refreshments and

pander to men, tribalism and geo-political rotational arrangements that exclude women.

- **Institutional and Structural Barriers:** Lack of clear gender equity policies in law firms and institutions, lack of women in top leadership and ownership positions in some firms, limited representation in key decision-making bodies, conscious bias in hiring and promotion processes, lack of structure to enforce gender equity policies with sanctions, weak institutions and systems that do not adequately support women, workplace policies making it difficult to balance work and family, limited demography of women in government institutions, political structures set up against women, customary courts decisions favouring men, lack of diversity and inclusion, lack of gender-responsive accommodation and accessibility for women with disabilities, politics being money-driven and not favouring women (especially with late-night meetings), systems favouring male candidates in elections, stringent requirements for career advancement (e.g., SAN, PhD) that disproportionately affect women due to work-life balance, lack of family support in some regions, organizations not adhering to policies (e.g., insufficient maternity leave), geo-political rotational arrangements excluding women.
- **Work-Life Balance and Caregiving:** Progression is interrupted by childbirth and caregiving, the sole burden for childcare often falls on women, some women have to delay career pursuits until children are grown, challenges balancing work and family.
- **Lack of Support and Networking:** Limited access to mentorship and networking opportunities, limited access to influential figures, no systemic support for women with growing families, women turning down opportunities due to lack of work-life balance support.
- **Financial Barriers:** Women not being economically buoyant enough to compete in politics, economic factors, limited access to financial resources, most economic resources controlled by men, politics is money politics, lack of financial backing.
- **Harassment and Intimidation:** Harassment and intimidation in the workplace, physical intimidation, sexual harassment and lack of understanding of consent, fear of stigmatization for reporting harassment, acceding to quid pro quo, toxic environment, female lawyers with male clients being perceived negatively.
- **Lack of Awareness and Knowledge:** Lack of awareness of existing policies and rights.
- **Internal Barriers (Women Themselves):** Lack of self-belief among women, women themselves limiting their capacity, unconscious bias within women against other women's abilities, women not putting themselves forward enough, lack of confidence, women not speaking up enough.
- **Intersectionality (Ethnicity, Religion, Socioeconomic Status, Disability):** Barriers worsened by lower socioeconomic status, making caregiving more difficult to manage, being from a minority ethnic or religious group impacting opportunities, cultural differences influencing opportunities and implementation of laws,

religious beliefs limiting interactions and job types, ethnicity influencing leadership segregation and exclusion based on demography, married women being rejected for political positions in both husband's and origin states, compounding challenges for women with disabilities (e.g., expensive management of disability, lack of structural accessibility, bias favouring able-bodied).

- **Lack of Political Will and Enforcement:** Policies existing on paper but not implemented, lack of political will, interference in cases involving political figures, inability to enforce judgments, superficial attention to issues like SGBV, wide gap in implementation across regions, weak law enforcement.
 - **Legal System Challenges:** Multiple conflicting legal regimes, circumvention of progressive laws, discriminatory existing laws, lack of clarity in defining issues like sexual harassment.
 - **Competition and Gatekeeping:** Men preferred in hiring, law firms hesitant to recruit female lawyers due to anticipated parental leave, male colleagues looking down on women's capabilities, clients preferring male lawyers, female judges being pushed to the bench (perceived as less competitive than litigation).
 - **Intermittent Progression:** Career progression interrupted by childbirth and caregiving, women stepping back due to gender roles, lack of structures for returning after breaks.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The systemic barriers hindering women's advancement in the Nigerian legal profession are deeply entrenched and operate on multiple levels – cultural, institutional, and structural. Cultural norms and patriarchal beliefs are fundamental, influencing societal expectations, perpetuating stereotypes, and shaping how women are perceived and treated within the profession and the broader political landscape. Institutional biases in hiring, promotion, and access to opportunities, coupled with a lack of supportive structures like adequate childcare and flexible work arrangements, create significant disadvantages. While policies aimed at gender equity exist, their effectiveness is severely limited by weak implementation and enforcement, often due to a lack of political will and resistance from deeply ingrained mindsets. Intersecting factors like ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status exacerbate these barriers, creating unique challenges for women from different backgrounds and in different regions. Financial constraints and the transactional nature of some sectors, particularly politics, also present significant obstacles. Addressing these complex barriers requires a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach that includes challenging cultural norms, reforming institutional practices, strengthening policy implementation and enforcement, providing robust support systems, and actively combating discrimination and harassment.

13. Probe: How do factors like ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status intersect with those barriers?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants emphasized the significant intersection of ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status with the systemic barriers, reiterating and expanding on points made in the previous question:
 - **Socioeconomic Status:** Lower socioeconomic status worsens the impact of barriers, particularly regarding the ability to manage caregiving responsibilities and access resources. Wealth provides advantages in navigating the system and accessing opportunities, especially in the capitalist and money-driven political landscape. Financial literacy and empowerment are seen as crucial for women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
 - **Ethnicity:** Ethnicity plays a huge role in leadership segregation and can lead to the denial of positions based on demography beyond gender. Geo-political rotational arrangements can exclude women. Married women may face rejection for political positions from both their husband's state and state of origin. Tribalism was highlighted as evident in recent elections. Cultural practices specific to certain ethnic groups can also act as barriers.
 - **Religion:** Religious interpretations, particularly in some regions, significantly limit women's roles and opportunities in leadership and public life. Conservative religious norms create unique barriers, affecting women's interaction with men and the types of jobs they can pursue. Some interpretations of religious texts are seen as favouring men and justifying the subjugation of women. Religious leaders' recognition of women's potential is important and varies regionally. Laws must sometimes be compliant with religious laws, impacting their effectiveness.
 - **Regional Differences:** Challenges and enforcement of laws differ significantly between regions like Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt due to varying cultural norms, religious interpretations, and levels of urbanization/modernity. Kano is consistently highlighted as particularly conservative due to the strong influence of culture and religion, impacting women's opportunities and the implementation of gender-friendly laws. Lagos is seen as more progressive with better implementation and more gender-inclusive policies in some organizations due to higher competition and urbanization. Abuja reflects a blend of these extremes.
 - **Intersectionality with Disability:** Managing disability is expensive, and women with disabilities face compounding challenges, including lack of structural environment and accessibility, and bias favoring able-bodied individuals in leadership.
 - **Poverty and Education:** Poverty can exacerbate the impact of other barriers, making it harder to access education and increasing the likelihood of early marriage and exclusion from the workforce. Higher socioeconomic status and education can provide advantages in navigating these barriers.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The intersection of ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status creates complex and varied barriers for women in Nigeria's legal sector. Socioeconomic status significantly influences the ability to overcome challenges and access opportunities, highlighting the need for financial empowerment initiatives.

Religious and cultural norms, particularly prominent in conservative regions, impose strong limitations on women's roles and hinder the implementation of gender equality initiatives. Ethnic biases contribute to segregation in leadership and political representation. These intersecting factors underscore the need for nuanced, context-specific, and intersectional interventions that acknowledge the diverse realities faced by women lawyers across different regions and backgrounds, including specific attention to the compounding challenges faced by women with disabilities.

14. Policy Effectiveness: How do current institutional policies and practices (e.g., anti-harassment and discrimination laws, parental leave) support or hinder women's leadership? What gaps exist in implementation?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants provided varied perspectives on policy effectiveness and implementation gaps, with a strong consensus on the significant challenges in translating policy into practice:
 - **Policies Exist but Implementation is Weak:** A prevalent theme is that while policies and laws promoting gender equality, anti-harassment, and non-discrimination exist on paper (including the VAPP Act and labour laws supporting women's caregiving responsibilities), their implementation and enforcement are widely perceived as severely lacking. There is a significant gap between policy provisions and the reality on the ground.
 - **Lack of Political Will:** The absence of strong political will is consistently cited as a major factor hindering effective implementation and enforcement. Leaders may not prioritize or actively support the enforcement of gender-friendly laws.
 - **Cultural Mindset as a Barrier to Implementation:** Deeply ingrained cultural norms and patriarchal mindsets among both men and women resist the full acceptance and implementation of equality policies. Traditional beliefs and interpretations of religion often contradict the principles of gender equality, making implementation difficult.
 - **Insufficient Enforcement Mechanisms:** There is a lack of adequate structures and mechanisms to ensure policies are enforced with consequences for non-compliance. Enforcement is often described as weak or selective. Even when laws exist, the ability to enforce judgments or address violations can be hindered by external interference.
 - **Limited Awareness of Policies:** Many women, even those who are educated, are not fully aware of the existing policies and their rights. This lack of awareness hinders their ability to demand implementation and seek justice. Information about policies may not be widely circulated.
 - **Inadequate Parental Leave and Childcare Support:** Policies regarding parental leave, particularly maternity leave, are sometimes insufficient (e.g., only one month in some organizations). There is a significant lack of provisions for childcare facilities or support within workplaces, negatively impacting women's performance and promotion prospects. Workplace assessments may not account for the impact of childbearing.

- **Lack of Institutional Support for Work-Life Balance:** Workplace structures and policies often do not adequately support women in balancing work and family responsibilities, making it difficult to advance.
- **Harassment Policies and Response Gaps:** While anti-sexual workplace harassment policies are being drafted, there are concerns about the institutional response when complaints are made, with one example highlighting a lack of fair hearing. The definition of sexual harassment in the Nigerian context is also seen as unclear by some. Reporting mechanisms may be weak or not utilized due to fear of stigmatization.
- **Discrimination in Private Sector:** It is perceived that private institutions are less likely to comply with gender equity policies, with instances of women being sacked for pregnancy or taking maternity leave. Monitoring and ensuring compliance in the private sector is a significant challenge.
- **Lack of Integration of Gender and Disability:** Gender considerations may not be adequately captured within disability inclusion policies, and vice versa.
- **Positive Examples (Regional Variations):** Some states, like Lagos and Ekiti, are highlighted as being more proactive and pragmatic in enforcing gender-friendly laws, particularly regarding domestic violence, with agencies like DSVAs in Lagos given as positive examples. Kano's judiciary is noted for having close to equal numbers of female judges and the Ministry of Justice is seen as fair regarding gender barriers.
- **Policies Can be seen as Tokenism:** Some policies, like providing free presidential forms for women, are viewed by some as treating women as minorities rather than equal stakeholders who should struggle for power based on merit.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The primary challenge regarding gender equity policies in Nigeria's legal sector lies not in their absence but in the significant gap in their implementation and enforcement. This gap is fuelled by a lack of political will, deeply ingrained cultural and religious patriarchal mindsets, insufficient enforcement mechanisms, and limited awareness of existing policies among women. Policies related to work-life balance, such as parental leave and childcare support, are often inadequate or not effectively implemented, hindering women's career progression. While some regions demonstrate more proactive enforcement than others, a nationwide effort is needed to ensure consistent and effective implementation across all sectors. Addressing this requires not only strengthening enforcement and accountability but also actively challenging and changing the cultural norms and mindsets that perpetuate gender inequality, and ensuring that policies are inclusive of women with disabilities.

15. Probe: Are there differences in enforcement between Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants confirmed significant differences in enforcement across regions, aligning with the points made in the previous question regarding regional nuances in policy implementation:

- **Lagos and Abuja Generally Better:** Lagos and Abuja are generally seen as having better enforcement compared to other regions. Lagos is particularly highlighted for its proactivity and the responsiveness of its agencies (e.g., DSVAs) in enforcing laws, especially regarding domestic violence. Abuja is described as improving.
- **Kano More Conservative and Challenging:** Kano is consistently cited as more conservative due to the strong influence of culture and religion, which impacts the acceptance and implementation of gender-friendly laws. Enforcement of some laws (e.g., Child Protection, VAPP Act) is noted as very low or non-existent. Religious leaders' views can hinder recognition of women's potential.
- **Variations in Enforcement:** Enforcement of laws varies from state to state, with some states being more pragmatic than others. The mode of enforcement differs regionally.
- **Influence of Socioeconomic Status and Modernity:** Regions with higher socioeconomic status and greater exposure to modern perspectives (like Lagos) tend to have better enforcement compared to more traditional or less educated environments.
- **Political Will and Desire:** The differences in implementation are often linked to the political will and desire of state governments to prioritize gender equality and enforce relevant laws.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** There are clear and acknowledged differences in the enforcement of gender equality laws and policies across different regions in Nigeria, particularly between more metropolitan and potentially less conservative areas like Lagos and Abuja, and more conservative regions like Kano. Cultural and religious norms significantly influence the willingness to implement and adhere to these laws. Effective enforcement is closely tied to political will and the proactive efforts of state-level institutions and agencies. This highlights the need for targeted advocacy and capacity building efforts tailored to the specific contexts and challenges of each region to ensure consistent application of gender equality principles.

16. Regional Nuances: How do challenges differ between Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt? Probe: Are conservative norms in one part of the country (e.g. Kano) a unique barrier compared to another part of the country (e.g. Lagos)? - only ask if not already answered

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants confirmed that challenges differ significantly across these regions, with conservative norms in places like Kano posing unique and more pronounced barriers, reiterating points made earlier in the interviews.
 - **Kano as a Unique Barrier:** Kano is consistently identified as having more significant barriers due to its strong conservative cultural and religious norms. These norms limit women's participation in public life, influence decision-making processes, and create resistance to the implementation of gender-friendly laws. Religious interpretations are seen as particularly influential in shaping perceptions of women's roles and capabilities.

- **Lagos and Abuja More Progressive:** Lagos and Abuja are generally perceived as more progressive, with families being more supportive of women's careers and greater access to opportunities. Lagos is highlighted for its competitive legal market, which may incentivize firms to adopt more gender-inclusive policies and its higher level of civilization and exposure to diverse perspectives. Abuja is seen as a blend of different influences.
- **Port Harcourt and Other Regions:** While not as extensively discussed as Lagos and Kano, Port Harcourt and other smaller towns/regions are suggested to have less accessibility to the opportunities available in Lagos and Abuja, and families may be less supportive of career women compared to those in the major cities. Cultural practices specific to certain ethnic groups can also act as unique barriers (e.g., kola nut presentation in Anambra).
- **Cultural vs. Religious Influence:** The influence of cultural norms is seen as distinct from, but often intertwined with, religious interpretations in creating barriers.
- **Urbanization and Exposure:** Higher levels of urbanization and exposure to diverse perspectives (e.g., through university education) are seen as contributing to a shift away from some conservative norms, making implementation of gender equality easier in more cosmopolitan areas.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Conservative cultural and religious norms, particularly prominent in regions like Kano, present significant and often unique barriers to women's advancement in the legal profession compared to more urban and potentially less conservative areas like Lagos and Abuja. These norms influence societal expectations, limit opportunities, and hinder the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives. Regional variations highlight the need for tailored strategies and interventions that acknowledge and address the specific socio-cultural and religious contexts of different parts of Nigeria. While urbanization and increased exposure to diverse perspectives offer some hope for shifting mindsets, targeted advocacy and engagement with cultural and religious leaders are crucial for fostering broader change.

17. Global Best Practices: What gender equity strategies from other countries or jurisdictions could work in Nigeria's legal context?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants suggested several global best practices, drawing on examples from various countries:
 - **Quotas and Affirmative Action:** Implementing gender quotas for representation in parliament (Rwanda's 50% success), government institutions (Rwanda's mandatory 30%, Norway's 40%), the judiciary (South Africa's consideration, suggesting a 40% target), and for senior roles in the NBA and law firms. Advocating for a 35% affirmative action law and understanding why it is not being done. Considering quotas for SAN ship.
 - **Strong Legal and Constitutional Frameworks:** Learning from countries with robust constitutional and legal provisions for gender equality, such as Rwanda (constitution as a template), Senegal (constitution based on local understanding, not just global declarations), Indonesia (homegrown constitution). Enacting and

domesticating gender and children-sensitive laws. Going for the laws and putting gender into the constitution, removing offensive provisions and putting gender-specific language.

- **Prioritizing Female Leadership:** Embracing female leaders in core leadership roles (as in countries with female presidents like Namibia), recognizing that this cascades down and drives change across sectors. Achieving gender parity at the level of President of FGN. Making a meritorious woman the president of the NBA who will support gender equality.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Creating structured mentorship programs, including national programs (like the USA's National Association example), pairing junior and senior lawyers, providing professional role models. Mentorship and capacity building tailored to needs. Encouraging mandatory mentorship.
- **Addressing Cultural Mindsets:** Changing societal mindsets through advocacy (Canada's approach) to reduce cultural barriers and the belief in male superiority. Involving custodians of cultural mindset (traditional rulers and religious leaders) to change mindsets.
- **Work-Life Balance Support:** Implementing policies like paternal leave and providing facilities like workplace daycare for children (Rwanda). Promoting remote working options. Designing structures for work-life balance. Having creches or caregivers in organizations with more than two women staff. Having wellness programs for women over 40.
- **Pay Transparency:** Implementing pay transparency laws where law firms disclose pay gaps (UK example). Ensuring equal pay for both genders and transparently equal opportunities.
- **Empowering Women Through Education:** Ensuring access to education, such as 12 years of free education (Vietnam example), to empower girls and women and reduce gender-based discrimination. Sensitizing the girl child from birth about gender equality. Educating law students in diversity and inclusion.
- **Data Collection and Standard Procedures:** Implementing robust record-keeping and documentation (UK practice) and standard operational procedures for case management. Advocating for measurable outcomes.
- **Context-Specific Strategies:** Tailoring global strategies to the unique context of Nigeria. Implementing policies that align with the Nigerian situation and address systemic/cultural barriers.
- **Addressing Specific Legal Issues:** Addressing issues like the lack of juvenile justice administration. Reconsidering requirements for SAN that disadvantage women due to work-life balance.
- **Promoting Women in Litigation:** Identifying and supporting women passionate about litigation to become Senior Advocates. Encouraging women to take up litigation.

- **Financial Empowerment:** Making access to finance easier for women.
- **Supporting Women Returning After Breaks:** Creating space and equipping women returning to the workforce after breaks. Legal career support programs for returnees.
- **Addressing Harassment:** Coming up with policies such as harassment and discrimination in workplaces. Implementing targeted mentoring and capacity building interventions.
- **Women Supporting Women and Solidarity:** Women helping other women to get into positions and climb up. Reducing competition and facilitating collaboration among women. Women reinforcing equity within their midst and showing solidarity. Women in leadership intentionally holding spaces for other women and handholding junior women.
- **Challenging Norms and Assertiveness:** Women coming out and participating, showing capacity, and not presenting themselves as the weaker sex. Women knowing their worth and standing their ground.
- **Political Engagement:** Encouraging women interested in politics to participate in elections. Studying to become policymakers and politicians. Engaging in politics at all levels.
- **Inclusive Structures:** Creating structures to integrate more women, considering challenges of working outside office hours. Ensuring inclusion and accessibility in women's matters (mindset, physical abilities, neurodiversity, childcare, physical structures, caregiving responsibilities). Tailoring training materials to dominant languages for better understanding and inclusion.
- **Orienting Men:** Orienting men as well as women. Mentorship programs and symposiums to teach qualities for gender equity in workplaces.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Global best practices offer valuable strategies for improving gender equity in Nigeria's legal sector, covering legal and constitutional reforms, increased representation through quotas and affirmative action, targeted professional development and mentorship, and support for work-life balance. Key recommendations include implementing quotas at various levels (parliament, government, judiciary, NBA, law firms), strengthening legal frameworks based on international and national examples (Rwanda, Senegal, Vietnam), prioritizing female leadership as a catalyst for change, and establishing structured mentorship programs with a focus on leadership skills, career navigation, and work-life integration. Practical support like paternal leave, workplace daycare, and flexible work arrangements are also emphasized. Addressing cultural mindsets through advocacy and engaging traditional/religious leaders is seen as crucial for long-term change. While adopting global practices, it is stressed that strategies must be tailored to the specific cultural and societal context of Nigeria, including addressing issues like financial constraints and the transactional nature of some sectors. Empowering women to take initiative, supporting each other, and actively engaging in litigation and politics are also highlighted as essential for driving change.

18. Mentorship Commitment: Are you willing to be a mentor in Women in Law Mentoring Program (WILMP)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** There is a strong willingness among key informants to serve as mentors:
 - Yes: 22 (95.7%)
 - No: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** An overwhelming majority of key informants are willing to contribute their experience and guidance as mentors in a women in law mentoring program. This indicates a substantial pool of experienced legal professionals who are ready to support the development and advancement of other women in the field, presenting a significant opportunity for a successful mentoring initiative.

19. What skills/knowledge would you prioritize (e.g., legislative drafting, negotiation, executive presence/positioning, campaign strategy)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants prioritized a range of skills and knowledge for mentoring. The most frequently mentioned topics are:
 - Negotiation: 7 (30.4%)
 - Leadership training (general, skills, development): 7 (30.4%)
 - Executive presence / Strategic Positioning: 5 (21.7%)
 - Campaign strategy and funding: 4 (17.4%)
 - Legislative drafting: 3 (13.0%)
 - Career guidance / navigation: 2 (8.7%)
 - Awareness of what they have / Self worth: 2 (8.7%)
 - Mediation: 2 (8.7%)
 - International practice: 1 (4.3%)
 - Human Rights practice: 1 (4.3%)
 - Navigating life: 1 (4.3%)
 - Being assertive: 1 (4.3%)
 - Demanding what is due to you: 1 (4.3%)
 - Salary negotiation: 1 (4.3%)
 - Emotional intelligence: 1 (4.3%)
 - Working on research: 1 (4.3%)
 - Advocacy skills: 1 (4.3%)
 - The child justice system need: 1 (4.3%)
 - Mindset change: 1 (4.3%)

- Corporate Practice with CAC: 1 (4.3%)
- Showcasing up / Visibility: 1 (4.3%)
- Financial empowerment: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The prioritized mentorship topics are diverse and cover both technical legal skills and crucial soft skills for leadership. Negotiation, leadership training, executive presence, and campaign strategy are frequently highlighted, reflecting the perceived needs for advancement in both legal practice and the political sphere. This suggests that a well-rounded mentorship program should address a variety of topics relevant to navigating the complexities of the legal profession and aspiring to leadership roles.

20. Probe: Availability to mentor: What would be your preferred Day of the week to mentor?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants indicated their preferred days for mentoring:
 - Saturday: 12 (52.2%)
 - Weekdays: 7 (30.4%)
 - Saturday, Sunday: 2 (8.7%)
 - (Blank/Unspecified): 2 (8.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Saturdays are the most preferred day for mentoring among the key informants, likely due to reduced work commitments. Weekdays are also an option for a significant number. This information is valuable for scheduling mentorship sessions to maximize mentor availability.

21. Probe: What would be your Preferred Time of day?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants indicated their preferred time of day for mentoring:
 - Afternoon: 11 (47.8%)
 - Evening: 6 (26.1%)
 - Morning (before 12): 3 (13.0%)
 - Afternoon, Evening: 2 (8.7%)
 - Morning (before 12), Afternoon: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Afternoons and evenings are the most preferred times for mentoring, suggesting that sessions scheduled later in the day would be more convenient for potential mentors.

22. Probe: What would be your Preferred format (virtual or in-person)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants indicated their preferred format for mentoring:
 - Combination (Both in-person and virtual): 10 (43.5%)
 - Virtual: 8 (34.8%)

- In Person: 3 (13.0%)
- (Blank/Unspecified): 2 (8.7%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** A blended approach combining both in-person and virtual formats is the most preferred for mentoring, followed closely by a purely virtual format. This suggests that offering flexibility in the delivery method would be beneficial for a mentorship program.

23. Mentorship Needs: Would you like to be mentored in WILMP?

- **Analysis of Responses:** A notable portion of key informants expressed interest in being mentored:
 - Yes: 13 (56.5%)
 - No: 10 (43.5%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** A majority of the key informants are also interested in being mentored. This highlights a desire for continued learning and support for their own career progression and leadership development, even among experienced professionals, and reinforces the value of mentorship at various career stages.

24. Mentorship Needs: If yes, what kind of support would you like to receive or topics to cover (e.g., career navigation, leadership training)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants interested in being mentored indicated their preferred support and topics. The most frequently mentioned are:
 - Leadership Training: 5 (38.5%)
 - Mentorship / Guidance (general): 3 (23.1%)
 - Career Navigation: 2 (15.4%)
 - Leverage experience to achieve leadership aspirations: 1 (7.7%)
 - Topic: Leadership, building a lasting firm or institution: 1 (7.7%)
 - Hearing from women who have succeeded in building a sustainable brand: 1 (7.7%)
 - Educating men on gender awareness and sexual harassment of women: 1 (7.7%)
 - Social Networking - Business: 1 (7.7%)
 - Mediation and Litigation: 1 (7.7%)
 - Legislative drafting: 1 (7.7%)
 - Human Rights: 1 (7.7%)
 - Investments: 1 (7.7%)
 - Dealing with Imposter syndrome. Leveraging Networking Opportunities. Responding to harassment incidents effectiveness: 1 (7.7%)

- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Key informants seeking mentorship prioritize leadership training, general guidance, and career navigation. They are also interested in learning from successful women and gaining support in specific areas like networking, investments, and addressing challenges like imposter syndrome and harassment. This provides valuable direction for the content and focus of mentorship programs.

25. Success Stories : What successful strategies have you come across to overcome these barriers?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants shared various successful strategies for overcoming barriers, highlighting both individual actions and collective efforts:
 - **Acing Skills and Capacity:** Developing verifiable and appreciable core competencies makes it easier to negotiate and demand due recognition. Being acknowledged as excellent. Providing value to the institution.
 - **Competing on Capacity, Not Gender:** Focusing on skills and capability rather than gender helps overcome biases and leads to being acknowledged based on merit. Not labelling everything a gender issue to avoid alienating people.
 - **Identifying as Part of a Community of Women:** Harnessing the power of numbers and identifying with women's groups (e.g., NBA Women's Forum, FIDA, AWLA) provides committed support and makes it easier to rise.
 - **Boldness and Assertiveness:** Being bold, assertive, and determined, even if perceived negatively, can lead to seizing opportunities and making progress. Saying no to intimidation.
 - **Intentionality and Commitment:** Being intentional and committed in choosing a career pathway and pursuing it diligently (e.g., Academia).
 - **Hard work, Resilience, and Passion:** Success requires passion, hard work, resilience, and being good at one's profession. Determination and persistence despite discouragement.
 - **Presenting a Respectable Image:** Maintaining a respectable appearance and decorum.
 - **Deterrence Strategies for Harassment:** Directly confronting and telling harassers to their face.
 - **Determination and Persistence:** Persevering despite discouragement.
 - **Leadership Training and Educational Certificates:** Equipping oneself with leadership training and relevant educational qualifications.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Benefitting from mentorship programs and platforms for sharing experiences and accessing opportunities.
 - **Self-Confidence and Self-Worth:** Developing self-confidence and knowing one's worth as a female colleague.
 - **Becoming Self-Employed:** Quitting employment and becoming self-employed to succeed on one's own merits.

- **Collaboration and Solidarity:** Women's organizations coming together with one voice to advocate for women's issues and push for institutional change. Standing together even when men from one's own group are involved in perpetuating barriers. Women reinforcing equity within their midst and showing solidarity. Resolving internal conflicts.
- **Consistency and Value Addition:** Proving to be a force to be reckoned with through consistency and adding significant value, making institutions willing to accommodate needs to retain talent.
- **Asking for Support:** Learning to ask for support from partners, superiors, and sponsors. Asking people to take a risk on you.
- **Speaking Up:** Speaking up in meetings when possessing solutions. Not keeping quiet when discriminated against.
- **Focusing on Specific Areas:** Excelling in specific areas like litigation and seeking mentorship in those areas.
- **Financial Literacy and Empowerment:** Gaining financial literacy and empowerment. Being financially empowered to navigate the system..
- **Educating the Girl Child:** Sensitizing the girl child from birth about gender equality and reorienting her..
- **Leveraging Emotional Intelligence:** Using emotional intelligence and viewing setbacks as learning opportunities..
- **Being Tolerant, Consistent, and Focused:** Maintaining tolerance, consistency, and focus on goals..
- **Cohesion and Synergy:** Women working together with cohesion and synergy..
- **Saying No to Intimidation:** Refusing to be intimidated..
- **Creating Awareness and Enlightening Men:** Educating and enlightening men to support and treat women as equal partners..
- **Strategic Positioning:** Being intentional about positioning oneself for leadership..
- **Taking Initiative:** Women taking charge and initiative.. Deliberately pushing oneself to the table..
- **Utilizing Existing Policies/Laws:** Awareness of rights backed by laws like the Disability Act..
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Successful strategies for overcoming barriers involve a combination of individual resilience, capacity building, and collective action. Developing strong professional skills, demonstrating competence, and adding value are crucial for gaining recognition and negotiating for opportunities. Women empowering themselves with knowledge, self-belief, and assertiveness can challenge existing biases. Building strong networks and finding supportive communities within the profession (like FIDA and NBA Women's Forum) provide essential backing and facilitate collective advocacy and political mobilization. Learning to navigate workplace dynamics, including addressing

harassment directly and strategically, is also highlighted. Financial empowerment and seeking mentorship are also identified as important strategies. Ultimately, a multi-pronged approach that combines individual effort, collective solidarity, strategic advocacy, and leveraging existing support systems appears to be most effective in challenging systemic barriers and advancing women's leadership in the legal sector.

26. Existing Initiatives: What ongoing initiatives address gender disparities in Nigeria's legal sector and how effective are they?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants mentioned several existing initiatives. Their effectiveness was perceived as mixed, with limitations highlighted:
 - **Women's Groups and Associations:** FIDA, NBA Women's Forum, AWLA, OLA (possibly Older Ladies Association). These groups are seen as actively promoting women's rights, championing gender equality, providing platforms for women lawyers, and mobilizing them for leadership positions within the NBA and in politics.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Mentorship programs within FIDA and the NBA Women's Forum. These are viewed positively by those who are aware of and have benefitted from them, providing platforms for sharing experiences and accessing opportunities.
 - **Sensitization and Advocacy:** FIDA is recognized for its work in sensitizing people on gender issues, including SGBV. Advocacy efforts by women's organizations (like Womanifesto) to push for legislative changes and institutional reforms are also mentioned. Advocacy by FIDA and NBA Women Forum to promote gender-sensitive bills and review/repeal non-gender-friendly laws.
 - **Government Initiatives:** Government initiatives and non-government organizations championing gender equality are seen as existing. The National Gender Policy and Women Fund for economic empowerment were mentioned, though their effectiveness is limited by inadequate funding.
 - **State-Level Agencies:** State-level agencies like Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) are highlighted for their proactive enforcement of relevant laws.
 - **Anti-Harassment Policies:** Increase in the drafting of anti-sexual workplace harassment policies.
 - **NBA Gender Initiatives:** NBA has gender equality policies and initiatives aimed at levelling the playing ground and giving women access to high-profile cases. There's a call for reviewing the NBA constitution against sexual harassment. The NBA Women's Forum is specifically for women in legal practice and is seen as doing well.
 - **IBA 50-50 2030 Project:** Mentioned as an initiative related to gender initiatives in the legal sector.
 - **Legal Aid Council of Nigeria:** Mentioned as an organization providing legal aid.

- **DEI Initiatives:** Promotion of DEI initiatives by the government and within the legal profession.
- **Addressing Specific Issues:** FIDA's effectiveness in handling rape cases. Advocacy for accessibility for women with disabilities.
- **Policy Effectiveness and Gaps:**
 - **Effectiveness is Mixed and Limited:** While some initiatives, particularly those by FIDA in areas like rape cases and mobilizing women for NBA leadership, are seen as effective, the overall effectiveness of initiatives addressing gender disparities is considered limited due to various challenges.
 - **Limited Awareness and Reach:** Many people, including women lawyers, are not aware of existing initiatives like FIDA. Awareness of policies is lacking. Information needs to be circulated.
 - **Inadequate Funding:** Lack of adequate funding limits the effectiveness of some government initiatives.
 - **Implementation Gaps:** Despite policies and initiatives, implementation remains a major challenge. Policies are often poorly enforced. Enforcement is inconsistent across regions.
 - **Focus on External Beneficiaries vs. Internal Needs:** Some organizations, like FIDA, are perceived as focusing more on assisting external beneficiaries with domestic issues rather than addressing the challenges faced by their own female lawyer members within the profession.
 - **Need for Internal Focus:** There's a suggestion for organizations like FIDA to focus internally on addressing harassment and encouraging members to speak out.
 - **Lack of Measurable Outcomes:** The existence of measurable outcomes (e.g., increased promotions, retention) from existing initiatives is questioned, with a feeling that there is no satisfactory improvement overall. While there are observations of increasing numbers of women in certain roles (e.g., judiciary at lower levels, NBA leadership), it's not always clear if these are direct results of specific initiatives.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Several ongoing initiatives, primarily led by women's groups and associations like FIDA and the NBA Women's Forum, are actively working to address gender disparities through advocacy, sensitization, and mentorship. While these efforts have yielded some successes, their overall effectiveness is significantly hindered by limited awareness, inadequate funding, and pervasive implementation gaps in policies, particularly in translating policy into tangible change and enforcement across different sectors and regions. There is a perceived need for initiatives to focus more inwardly on the challenges faced by women lawyers within the profession and to ensure better data collection on measurable outcomes to assess impact.

27. Probe: Are there measurable outcomes (e.g., increased promotions, retention)?

- **Analysis of Responses:** This question was interpreted as asking what would be considered measurable outcomes. Key informants provided insights into what indicators they would use to track progress in women's leadership and gender equity:
 - **Increased Representation in Leadership:** Measurable outcomes include the number and percentage of women in leadership roles across the NBA (national and branch), judiciary (judges at all levels, CJs, magistrates, customary courts), government (ministers, national assembly, state assembly, LG chairs/councillors), law firms (partners, heads of sections), and other organizations. Specific targets mentioned include 50% representation in NBA and political parties, and increasing the number of female SANs.
 - **Career Progression and Retention:** Increased promotion rates and improved retention of women in the legal profession, especially after career breaks, would be measurable outcomes.
 - **Reduced Gender Pay Gap:** Tracking and reporting on the gender pay gap and ensuring equal access to opportunities for additional income are measurable outcomes.
 - **Effectiveness of Initiatives and Policies:** The number of participants in mentorship programs and their reported benefits, the extent of implementation and adherence to gender equity policies in institutions, and the impact of legislative reforms are measurable outcomes.
 - **Increased Access and Opportunities:** Measuring increased access to high-profile cases, opportunities for professional development (training, boards, committees), and access to resources would indicate progress.
 - **Reduced Discrimination and Harassment:** A decrease in reported instances of discrimination and harassment, and the effectiveness of institutional responses to complaints, while challenging to quantify, are important indicators..
 - **Work-Life Balance Support:** Availability and utilization of work-life balance support structures (childcare, flexible work) and their impact on careers are measurable..
 - **Participation in Politics:** Increased participation of women in political activities and elections is a measurable outcome..
 - **Financial Empowerment:** Increased financial empowerment of women..
 - **Success in Litigation:** Increased success rates and representation of women in litigation and as SANs in this area..
 - **Inclusion of Diverse Groups:** Representation and inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds (ethnicity, religion, disability) in leadership..
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Key informants believe that measuring progress in women's leadership requires tracking tangible outcomes, particularly focusing on increased representation in leadership roles across all sectors and levels of the legal profession and government. Quantifiable metrics like promotion and retention rates, the gender pay gap,

and the number of women in senior positions (including SANs) are seen as crucial. Beyond representation, assessing the effectiveness of support initiatives, the actual implementation and enforcement of policies, and the impact of work-life balance support are considered important. While acknowledging the challenges, measuring the reduction of discrimination and harassment and the increased inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds are also highlighted as essential for a holistic understanding of progress towards gender equity.

28. Recommendations: If you had the power, what short-, medium-, and long-term actions would you make to improve women's leadership in law?

- **Analysis of Responses:** Key informants offered a wide range of recommendations across different timeframes:
 - **Short-Term:**
 - Launch a women in law mentorship program, pairing junior and senior lawyers.
 - Advocate for gender inclusive workplace policies.
 - Help women learn, relearn, and unlearn; ensure they inculcate reading habits.
 - Continue advocacy to encourage women interested in politics to participate in elections.
 - Advocate for gender sensitivity and sensitisation.
 - Identify lawyers passionate about litigation and support them to become Senior Advocates.
 - Make childcare facilities available for nursing mothers.
 - Look at available laws (beyond legal profession) like 35% affirmative action and understand why they are not implemented.
 - Train FIDA members to participate in lawmaking/politics and support them in seeking nominations.
 - Ensure every organization's board has gender equity (e.g., 60/40 target).
 - Create space for women in law firms, including those returning after breaks, and equip them.
 - Provide women with level playing ground and a sense of belonging; encourage participation.
 - Enforce existing gender policies, provide mentorship, legislative reforms, create inclusive workplaces, mandate gender quotas.
 - Advocate for women to prepare themselves for opportunity.
 - **Medium-Term:**
 - Focus group discussions.

- Mentorship programs.
 - Monitoring and evaluation of programs and policies for stringent implementation.
 - Leadership training focusing on strategy, planning, and business development.
 - Creation of equal opportunities policies and opening offices for women's affairs (harassment, promotions).
 - Massively equip women in many sectors through mentorship to meet job standards.
 - Continuous programs to advance and mentor women for leadership challenges.
 - Look into policies and implement or amend them to align with Nigeria's cultural changes and address systemic/cultural barriers.
- **Long-Term:**
- Full implementation of policies and laws.
 - Invest in policies, consider quotas, understand what motivates women.
 - Institutionalize gender parity in leadership.
 - Enactment of gender-friendly laws and repeal/revoking of harmful laws.
 - Increase the number of women in leadership positions across all levels (judiciary, national assembly, LG chairs/councillors, SANs, NBA president/branch leaders).
 - Make a meritorious woman the president of the NBA who will support gender equality and other women.
 - Build structures for lasting impact for gender equity.
 - Women helping other women to get into positions and climb up.
 - Advocate and encourage the implementation of all laws that favour women.
 - Establish Mentorship programs and training focusing on leadership.
 - Provide structures and platforms for the vulnerable to have the same advantage; push for legislation for balancing structures.
 - Designing structures for Work life balance.
 - Fight against GBV and its root causes.
 - Education of law students in diversity and inclusion and including it in curriculum.
 - Strengthen networking and support system; reduce competition and facilitate collaboration among women.

- Improve awareness of the capabilities of women in Law.
- Achieve NBA national 50/50 leadership; incremental progress in judiciary/govt offices by increasing numbers from lowest cadres.
- Create structures to integrate more women, considering challenges of working outside office hours.
- Provide opportunities to understudy, gain experience, exposure, and acquire interest in leadership positions.
- Rotate leadership positions between women and men like geo-political zone rotation; set rules for equal gender representation in sections.
- Ensure gender spread in SAN appointment criteria.
- Have big law firms headed by women; prioritize women in firms.
- Encourage women to go to the bench; implement a quota system for elevation.
- Sponsor leadership academies to train women.
- Improve financial empowerment for women; make access to finance easier.
- Go for the laws - put gender into it, starting with the constitution - remove offensive provisions, put gender specific language.
- Ask for half the requirements for SAN for women.
- All orgs with more than 2 women must have a creche or caregiver.
- If orgs have women over 40, have wellness programs.
- Encourage the girl child has mentors and role models; institutionalise it.
- Level the playing field to criteria that does not disadvantage one gender.
- Incentives to support the next generation.
- Mandating gender quotas improvement in every sector.
- Codify gender equity measures within the NBA and legal practice (remuneration etc.).
- Mandatory structured mentorship.
- Financial empowerment.
- Push for slots in the political space.
- Make women understand this is not a profession where gender roles pull you down.
- Refresher clinic for women who took a break; encourage female lawyers not to give up.
- Organizations like FIDA need to put in more structures for returnee-ships.

- Women should not shy away from litigation; prioritize it and look for mentors.
- Constitutional amendment that place of origin or marriage are immaterial for political positions; specify in Section 42.
- Involve traditional rulers and religious leaders to change mindsets.
- Advocate for measurable outcomes.
- Mentorship programs need to prepare women for leadership.
- A woman's fight needs to be a fight for all; support women striving for leadership or speaking up against harassment.
- Men should give women the opportunity for short-term/adhoc needs.
- Let women know themselves, their worth, make their point in progressions, and stand their ground.
- Train young girls and boys to break out of stereotypes.
- Women need therapy and reorientation to be independent and break indoctrination.
- Orient men as well.
- Accelerate action; teach young girls and indoctrinate them to continue the journey.
- Ensure inclusion and accessibility in women's matters (mindset, physical abilities, neurodiversity, childcare, physical structures, caregiving responsibilities). Know what regional challenges women are facing. Be guided by empathy.
- Remind few women in leadership not to forget other women; enact laws/policies to favour women.
- Equal opportunity for women; more women in core areas, not just supporting roles.
- Implement and enforce diversity and inclusion policies in law firms, courts, legal organizations.
- Employers and Govt should be proactive; implement transformative solutions engaging the most impacted.
- Institutionalise gender equity policies (equal pay, fair recruitment etc.).
- Legal career support (re-entry programs for women who take breaks).
- Women should take up litigation.
- General community and cultural sensitisation challenging gender stereotypes.

- Change begins from within; change mentality that women cannot do it; cultural mindset shift.
 - Policies like harassment and discrimination in workplaces.
 - Implementation of targeted mentoring and capacity building interventions.
 - Promote DEI initiatives, wipe away stereotypes/barriers, implement supporting policies/programs.
 - Funds should be available for competent women who comes out for leadership roles.
 - Fida should double their work; not only limit efforts to the legal profession but all sectors. Mentorship has major benefits.
 - Address lack of female representation in organizations (e.g., EFCC); educate on biological/sociological differences.
 - Mentorship programs/symposiums on qualities for gender equity in workplaces; teaching capabilities beyond certificate/degree.
 - Have spaces where conversations can happen without prejudice.
 - Create space for language induction in training, tailor materials to dominant languages.
 - Study to become a policy-maker and politician; engage in politics at all levels (even church); discuss politics; be aware; register as party members; attend meetings/govt functions.
 - Mentoring topics: being intentional, planning, effective preparation for policymaking, mindset.
 - Night meetings - go with a husband or close person.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** The recommendations offer a comprehensive roadmap for improving women's leadership in law, covering individual, institutional, legal, and societal levels. Key themes include the critical need for structured mentorship and leadership training, significant reforms in policies and laws to ensure genuine gender equity and dismantle discriminatory practices, increased representation of women in leadership through potential quotas and affirmative action, and addressing deep-seated cultural and religious biases through targeted sensitization and reorientation for both men and women. Recommendations also emphasize the importance of providing robust support systems for work-life balance, empowering women financially, encouraging their active participation in litigation and politics, and fostering a culture of women supporting other women and challenging existing norms. The recommendations highlight that achieving meaningful change requires concerted effort and action across all facets of the legal profession and broader society.

29. Other comments: Do you have any additional suggestions to improve gender equity in the legal profession? What needs to change to advance women's leadership?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The responses in this section reiterate and expand upon points made earlier, emphasizing the need for systemic change and individual/collective action:
 - **Systemic and Cultural Change:** Mindset reorientation, changing the mentality that women cannot succeed, cultural mindset shift, promoting DEI initiatives, wiping away stereotypes and barriers, cultural shift to promote DEI, involving custodians of cultural mindset to change it, training young girls and boys to break stereotypes, women need therapy and reorientation to be independent and break indoctrination, orienting men, accelerating action and indoctrinating young girls to continue the journey, implementing/enforcing DEI policies in all legal settings, employers and government being proactive with transformative solutions, community and cultural sensitisation.
 - **Institutional and Policy Actions:** Codifying gender equity measures within the NBA and legal practice (remuneration etc.), mandatory structured mentorship, pushing for slots in the political space, putting more structures for returnee-ships in organizations like FIDA, constitutional amendment regarding place of origin/marriage for political positions, tracking implementation and adherence to policy in public and private sectors, ensuring private institutions comply with gender equity policies, ensuring inclusion and accessibility in women's matters (mindset, physical, neurodiversity, childcare, structures, caregiving), reminding women in leadership not to forget other women, enacting laws/policies to favour women, ensuring equal opportunity and more women in core roles, implementing and enforcing DEI policies, institutionalizing gender equity policies (equal pay, fair recruitment), legal career support (re-entry programs), having policies on harassment and discrimination in workplaces, implementing targeted mentoring/capacity building, ensuring funds for competent women in leadership roles, addressing lack of female representation in organizations like EFCC and educating on biological/sociological differences, mentorship programs/symposiums on qualities for gender equity.
 - **Individual and Collective Action:** Women putting themselves out more and speaking up, realizing their numbers and not being pulled down by gender roles, encouraging female lawyers not to give up on the profession, women not shying away from litigation and prioritizing it, women knowing themselves and their worth and standing their ground, supporting women striving for leadership or speaking up against harassment ("a woman's fight needs to be a fight for all"), letting women know their point in progressions, women reinforcing equity within their midst, resolving internal conflicts and showing solidarity, women in leadership intentionally holding spaces for other women and handholding junior women, creating space for conversations without prejudice, women coming out and participating and showing capacity (not begging men to pity them or presenting as weaker sex), studying to become policymakers/politicians, engaging in politics at all levels, discussing politics and being aware, registering as party members, attending meetings/govt functions, being intentional in mentoring topics (planning, policymaking, mindset), going with a trusted person to night meetings.

- **Specific Recommendations:** Every six years, only women contest for NBA leadership; Ministry of Women Affairs and NGOs ensure organizations adhere to policies; FIDA should double their work and not limit efforts to the legal profession; FIDA should have programs for men; tailor training materials to dominant languages for inclusion.
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Advancing women's leadership in the legal profession requires fundamental shifts in both systemic structures and cultural mindsets. Recommendations emphasize the need for robust policy implementation and enforcement, particularly in the private sector, and holding institutions accountable. Challenging deep-seated patriarchal norms and stereotypes through education and reorientation for both men and women is considered vital. Strengthening mentorship and capacity-building programs, promoting DEI initiatives, and providing financial empowerment are seen as crucial support mechanisms. A strong call is made for women to take ownership of their careers, overcome internalized biases, actively participate in leadership roles (including litigation and politics), and support each other through solidarity and collective action. Specific suggestions like constitutional amendments for political representation and tailored training materials highlight the need for targeted interventions.

30. Do you have a disability or special need?

- **Analysis of Responses:** The responses indicate whether the key informants have a disability or special need.
 - No: 22 (95.7%)
 - Yes: 1 (4.3%)
- **Key Insights and Takeaways:** Among the 23 key informants, a large majority reported not having a disability or special need, while one individual identified as having one. This provides limited data on the experiences of legal professionals with disabilities within this specific sample of key informants.

Appendix B7: Detailed Results

Work-Life Balance Challenges and Impacts

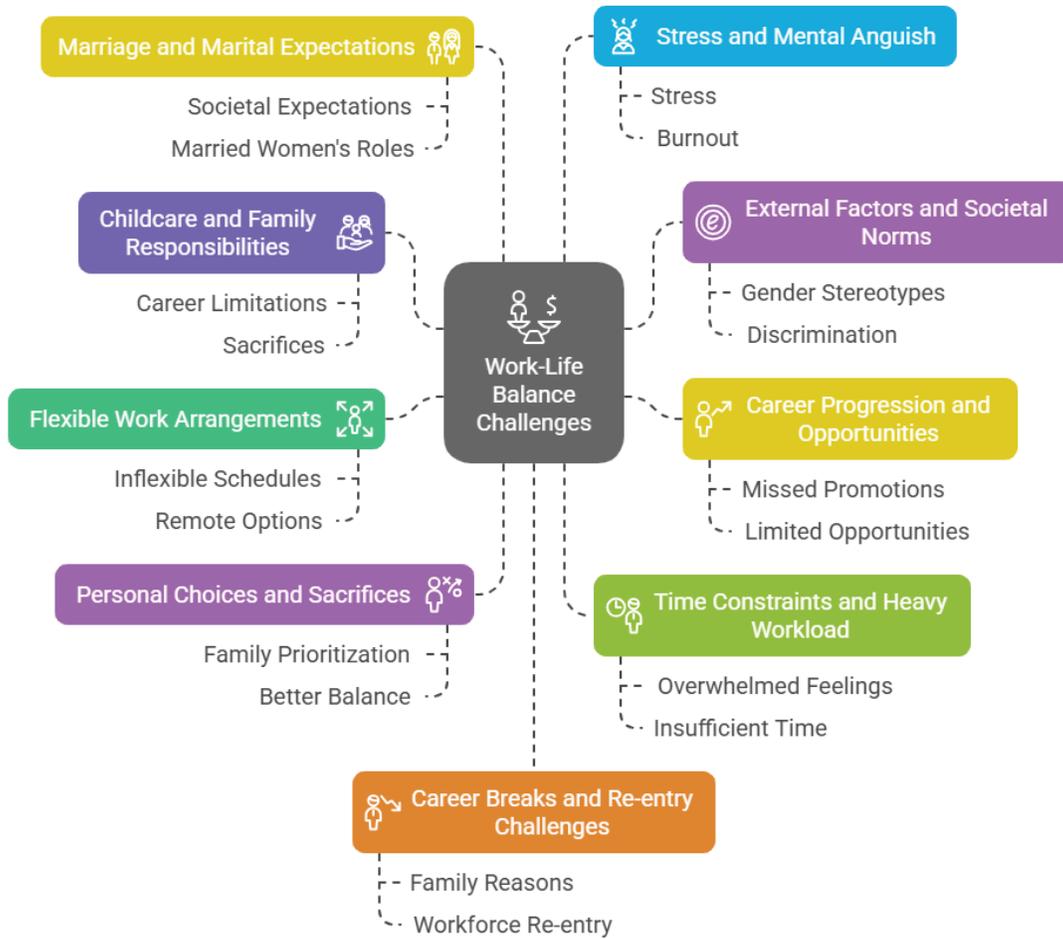


Figure 37: Work-Life Balance Challenges

Table 5: Age Range

AGE RANGE	#	%
20-24	11	2%
25-34	117	26%
35-44	181	41%
45-54	93	21%
55-64	37	8%
65 +	3	1%
Blank	2	0%
	444	

Table 6: Gender

GENDER	#	%
Female	437	98%
Male	7	2%
	444	

Table 7: GESI Advocate

GESI ADVOCATE	#	%
No	4	1%
Prefer not to say	11	2%

Yes (Ally/Advocate)	427	96%
Blank	2	0%
	444	

Table 8: Disability

DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEED	#	%
No		93%
Prefer not to say		3%
Yes		4%
	444	

Table 9: Marital Status

MARITAL STATUS	#	%
Married	267	60%
Prefer not to say	8	2%
Separated/Divorced	30	7%
Single	123	28%
Widowed	11	2%
(blank)	5	1%
	444	

Table 10: Caregiving Responsibilities

CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES (more than one response)	#	%
None	14%	78
Caregiver for elderly / special needs	14%	78
Parent/Caregiver to school-age children	37%	200
Parent/Caregiver to young children	22%	121
Prefer not to say	12%	62
		539

Table 11: Working in Different State

LIVING AND WORKING IN DIFFERENT STATES	#	%
No	406	91%
Yes	35	8%

Blank	3	1%
	444	

Table 12: Years of Work Experience

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE (from CALL or in ASSEMBLY)	#	%
1–5 years	51	11%
6–10 years	115	26%
11–20 years	206	46%
21+ years	66	15%
(blank)	6	1%
Grand Total	444	

Table 13: Sector of Employment

SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT	#	%
Private Legal Practice	227	51%
Ministry of Justice	52	12%
Judiciary (all courts)	37	8%
Corporation / Organisation	29	7%
Other Government Agencies (MDAs, JCI, Law Reform etc)	26	6%
Civil Society / Non-Profit / Human Rights	22	5%
Blank	19	4%
Legislative / Lawmaking	13	3%
Academia / Research	8	2%
Arbitration / Alternative Dispute Resolution	7	2%
Other	4	1%
	444	

Table 14: Specialisation

SPECIALISATION / CURRENT ROLE	#	%
General Practice	115	26%
Litigation & Dispute Resolution	111	25%
Corporate & Commercial Law	63	14%

SPECIALISATION / CURRENT ROLE	#	%
Human Rights & Public Interest Law	33	7%
Criminal Law	29	7%
Arbitration / Alternate Dispute Resolution	18	4%
Family & Inheritance Law	17	4%
Real Estate & Property Law	16	4%
Technology, Cybersecurity & Data Privacy Law	6	1%
Health & Life Sciences Law	5	1%
Environmental, Energy & Natural Resources Law	4	1%
Legislative Practice	4	1%
Lawmaking	4	1%
Other	3	1%
Constitutional & Administrative Law	2	0%
Intellectual Property & Media Law	2	0%
Tax Law	2	0%
Blank	2	0%
Immigration & Nationality Law	1	0%
International & Comparative Law	1	0%
Labour & Employment Law	1	0%

SPECIALISATION / CURRENT ROLE	#	%
Education	1	0%
Electoral law	1	0%
Judicial Research Officer	1	0%
Social Development	1	0%
Court Management	1	0%
	444	

Table 15: Political Party Membership

POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP	#	%
4–7 years	1	17%
8–12 years	1	17%
13+ years	3	50%
Not a member	1	17%
	6	

Table 16: Political Party Status

POLITICAL PARTY STATUS	#	%
Majority	2	33%
Minority	3	50%
Prefer not to say	1	17%
	6	

Appendix C: Stakeholder Map

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Stakeholders

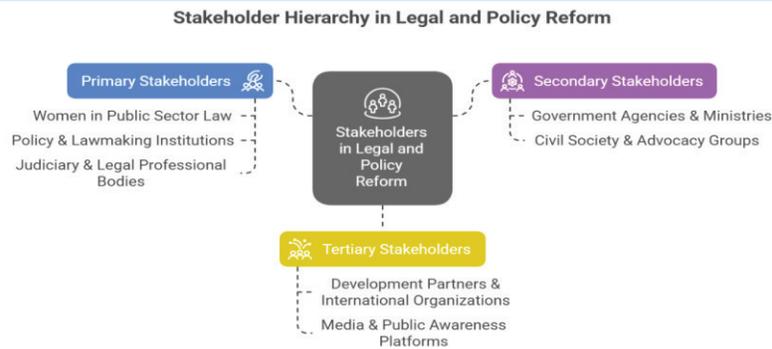


Figure 38: Stakeholder Hierarchy

1. Primary Stakeholders (Directly Affected & Involved in the Issue)

- **Women in Public Sector Law & Legal Practice**
 - Female judges, magistrates, lawyers, legislators, and legal scholars
 - Women in government agencies related to justice and policy
 - Female members of the Body of Benchers and law societies
 - Women in academia: Law school and University Law Faculties
- **Policy & Lawmaking Institutions**
 - Legislators (Local Councils, State Assemblies & National Assembly)
 - Ministries of Justice (Federal & State)
 - Legal Aid Council & National Human Rights Commission
- **Judiciary & Legal Professional Bodies**
 - Supreme Court, Federal & State High Courts
 - Magistrate courts & customary courts
 - Nigerian Bar Association and legal advocacy groups like FIDA

2. Secondary Stakeholders (Support, Influence, & Implement Policies)

- **Government Agencies & Ministries**
 - National and State Ministries of Women Affairs
 - Federal Ministry of Justice & Attorney General's Office
 - Law Reform Commissions
 - Public Service Commission & Civil Service bodies
- **Civil Society & Advocacy Groups**
 - Women's rights organizations (e.g., FIDA Nigeria, WARDC, WILAN, WIMBIZ)
 - NGOs working on gender equity in law & governance
 - Think tanks & academic institutions (e.g., Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies)

3. Tertiary Stakeholders (Indirectly Affected but Can Influence the Process)

- **Development Partners & International Organizations**
 - UN Women, UNDP, World Bank, African Union
 - International Bar Associations & human rights organizations
- **Media & Public Awareness Platforms**
 - Legal and policy-focused media outlets
 - Journalists covering legal and lawmaking affairs
 - Social media influencers

Appendix D: Desk Research References

Components of Desk Research



Figure 39: Components of Desk Research

1. National Policies and Legal Frameworks:

- **National Gender Policy (2006)**
 - Outlines Nigeria's commitment to gender mainstreaming across all sectors.
 - Source (<http://www.womenandchildren.gov.ng/national-gender-policy/>)
- **National Gender Policy (2021-2026)**
 - An updated strategic framework to promote gender equity in all spheres including legal practice and policymaking.
 - Source (<https://www.fmo.gov.ng/national-gender-policy-2021-2026>)
- **Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
 - Provisions in the constitution (e.g., Sections 15(2) and 42(1)) reinforce non-discrimination and equal protection under the law.
 - Source (https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nigeria_2019.pdf?lang=en)
- **National Policy on Women's Economic Empowerment and Action Plan (May 2023)**
 - Source (http://womenaffairs.gov.ng/images/NIGERIA_NATIONAL_WOMENS_ECONOMIC_POLICY_AND_ACTION_PLAN.pdf)
- **"Closing Gaps, Increasing Opportunities: A Diagnostic on Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria." World Bank (2022)**
 - Source (<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099000003032278094/pdf/P1740380dc16e506c093130997a7fb664f6.pdf>)

2. Research Studies and Reports:

- **50:50 by 2030: A Longitudinal Study into Gender Disparity in Law**
 - A study by the International Bar Association highlighting gender disparities in legal leadership roles.
 - Source (<https://www.ibanet.org/>)
- **"The Rights and Plights of Female Lawyers in the Legal Profession: A Paradigm Shift from Denial to Recognition" (2019)**
 - This academic paper examines the challenges women face entering the legal profession and the systemic gender inequalities within it.
 - Source ([file:///C:/Users/habib/Downloads/1617-2286-1-PB%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/habib/Downloads/1617-2286-1-PB%20(2).pdf))
- **Women in Law in Nigeria: Breaking Barriers and Shaping the Future**
 - An article discussing progress and persistent challenges for women in the legal field in Nigeria.
 - Source (<https://www.africanwomeninlaw.com/post/women-in-law-in-nigeria-breaking-barriers-and-shaping-the-future>)
- **The Emergence and History of the 'Gentlewomen of the Bar'**
 - A research paper examining the historical context and current challenges for female legal practitioners in Nigeria.
 - Source (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315327467_The_Emergence_and_History_of_the_Gentlewomen_of_the_Bar_into_the_Legal_Profession_in_the_South_West_Geopolitical_Zone_of_Nigeria)
- **Women in Law and Leadership Reports**
 - A comprehensive study of women's pathways, barriers and facilitators to leadership
 - Source: <https://www.africanwomeninlaw.com/womeninleadership>
- **Women in the Law**
 - The first historical and statistical study of the lives of women lawyers in Nigeria and the role of gender difference in the legal profession
 - Source: Paperback book. Women in the law, Hairat Aderinsola Balogun (2009)

3. International Assessments and Data:

- **Nigeria - Women, Business and the Law (World Bank Report)**
 - Evaluates legal and regulatory barriers affecting women's economic and professional advancement.
 - Source (https://wbl.worldbank.org/content/dam/sites/wbl/documents/2021/02/2021.1.22_WBL_Economy_Summary_Nigeria.pdf)
- **UN Women Nigeria Country Fact Sheet**
 - Provides data and analysis on gender equality indicators, including in legal and governance sectors.
 - Source (<https://data.unwomen.org/country/nigeria>)

4. Articles and Commentaries:

- **"The Fight for Equality in Nigeria for Female Lawyers" (2024)**

- Discusses the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within Nigeria's legal profession and suggests measures to achieve equal representation.
- Source (<https://thestudentlawyer.com/2024/05/21/the-fight-for-equality-in-nigeria-for-female-lawyers/>)
- **"Nigeria's Patriarchal Society Limiting Women's Rise in Law" (2021)**
 - Explores how societal norms and patriarchal structures hinder women's advancement in Nigeria's legal sector.
 - Source (<https://www.africa-legal.com/news/nigerias-patriarchal-society-limiting-womens-rise-in-law/104422>)

WILMP PARTNERS

Toki Mabogunje and Associates
FIDA Nigeria
DKK and Associates
SKoT Communications
Gates Foundation
Oyagbola Chambers
Habiba Balogun Consulting
AKMS Consulting

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Appendix E: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN THE LEGAL SECTOR

FEMALE SENIOR ADVOCATES OF NIGERIA (FROM 1981 TILL DATE)

S/N	NAME	YEAR
1.	Chief (Mrs.) Folake Solanke, CON, SAN	1981
2.	Chief (Mrs.) Phoebe Chiadi Ajayi-Obe, SAN (deceased)	1989
3.	Mrs. C. O. Ajayi-Okunuga, SAN (deceased)	1995
4.	Chief (Mrs.) Abimbola Williams, SAN	1998
5.	Mrs. Olufunke Adekoya, SAN	2001
6.	Chief (Mrs.) Anayo Justina Offiah, SAN	2003
7.	Mrs. Miannaya Essien, SAN	2007
8.	Mrs. Olabisi Oluyemi Soyebó, SAN	2008
9.	Mrs. Nella Rabana, SAN	2009
10.	Mrs. Sylvia E. Shinaba, SAN (deceased)	2009
11.	Mrs. Dorothy Udemé-Ufot, SAN	2009
12.	Mrs. Agatha Obiozo Mbamali, SAN	2010
13.	Mrs. Titilola Akinlawon, SAN	2010
14.	Chief (Mrs.) Connie - jean Aremu, SAN	2012
15.	Mrs. Joy Okungbowa Adesina, SAN	2012
16.	Ms. Olufunke Aboyade, SAN	2013
17.	Chief (Mrs.) Victoria Oluwafunmilayo Awomolo, SAN	2013
18.	Mrs. Abimbola Akeredolu, SAN	2015
19.	Dr. Valerie-Janette Ogonna Azinge, SAN	2016
20.	Mrs. Olufunke Agbor, SAN	2016
21.	Professor Oluyemisi Bamgbose, SAN	2018
22.	Mrs. Adedoyin Oyinkan Rhodes- Vivour, SAN	2019
23.	Mrs. Safiya Umar Badamasi, SAN	2019
24.	Mrs. Funmilayo Quadri, SAN	2020
25.	Mrs. Jean Chiazor Anishere, SAN	2020
26.	Mrs. Oluwatoyin Bashorun, SAN	2020
27.	Mrs. Boma Florence Alabi, SAN	2020
28.	Professor Oluyinka Omorogbe, SAN	2021
29.	Professor Josephine Agbomika, SAN	2021
30.	Professor Kathleen Ebelechukwu Okafor, SAN	2022
31.	Professor joy Ngozi Ezeilo, OON, SAN	2022
32.	Mrs. Folashade Alli SAN	2023
33.	Mrs. Funmi Falana SAN	2023
34.	Mrs. Paulyn Osobhase Abhulimen, SAN	2023
35.	Mrs. Prisca Ozoilesike, SAN	2023
36.	Mrs. Olayemi Badewole, SAN	2023
37.	Mrs. Udochi Nunny Iheanacho, SAN	2024
38.	Mrs. Oluronke Adeyemi, SAN	2024
39.	Mrs. Chinasa Thelma Unaegbunam, SAN	2024
40.	Mrs. Wendy Nwenenda Kuku, SAN	2024

FEMALE JUDGES AT THE COURT OF APPEAL

S/N	NAMES
1.	Hon. Justice Monica Bolna'an Dongban-Mensem, CFR,
2.	Hon. Justice Oyebisi Folayemi Omoleye,
3.	Hon. Justice Uchechukwu Onyemenam,
4.	Hon. Justice Onyekachi Aja Otisi,
5.	Hon. Justice Misitura O. Bolaji-Yusuf,
6.	Hon. Justice Amina Audi Wambai,
7.	Hon. Justice Yargata Nimpar,
8.	Hon. Justice Oluwayemisi E. Williams-Dawodu,
9.	Hon. Justice Abimbola Osarugue Obaseki-Adejumo,
10.	Hon. Justice Patricia Ajuma Mahmoud,
11.	Hon. Justice Balkisu Bello Aliyu,
12.	Hon. Justice Folasade Ayodeji Ojo,
13.	Hon. Justice Olasumbo Goodluck,
14.	Hon. Justice Adebukunola I. Banjoko,
15.	Hon. Justice Sybil Onyeji Nwaka Gbagi,
16.	Hon. Justice Hannatu Azumi Laja-Balogun,
17.	Hon. Justice Binta Fatima Zubairu,
18.	Hon. Justice Asma'u Musa Mainoma,
19.	Hon. Justice Jane Esienanwan Inyang,
20.	Hon. Justice Hadiza Rabi'u Shagari,
21.	Hon. Justice Zainab Bage Abubakar,
22.	Hon. Justice Ngozika Uwazurunonye Okaisabor,
23.	Hon. Justice Ruqayat Oremei Ayoola,
24.	Hon. Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom-Wike,
25.	Hon. Justice Oyejoju Oyebiola Oyewumi,
26.	Hon. Justice Nehizena Idemudia Afolabi,
27.	Hon. Justice Asma'u Akanbi-Yusuf,
28.	Hon. Justice Victoria Too-chukwu Nwoye.

FEMALE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

S/N	NAMES
1.	Hon. Kudirat Kekere-Ekun
2.	Hon. Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju
3.	Hon. Uwani Musa Abba-Aji
4.	Hon. Chidi Nwaoma Uwa
5.	Hon. Chioma Nwosu-Iheme

2025 NBA FEMALE LEADERSHIP

S/N	NAMES
1.	Mrs. Bolatumi Olasunbo Animashaun - 2nd Vice President
2.	Mrs. Zainab Aminu Garba - 3rd Vice-President
3.	Mrs. Blessing Imo Udofa-Poromon - Treasurer
4.	Mrs. Bridget Ijeoma Edokwe - Publicity Secretary
5.	Miss. Ebiere Emmanuella Ekpese - Assistant Publicity Secretary



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2025 WISCAR WILMP NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Advancing Women's Leadership in Law, Lawmaking and Legal Practice: A Path Forward

This Needs Assessment Report lays bare the critical barriers hindering women's advancement in Nigeria's public sector law, lawmaking, and legal practice. It is a testament to the voices of the legal professionals who shared their experiences and aspirations.

The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to dismantle systemic obstacles and foster a truly equitable legal landscape. This report serves as the foundational blueprint for the WISCAR Women in Law Mentoring (WILM) Program, a strategic initiative poised to empower women, build resilience, and cultivate the next generation of female leaders in law.

Join us in championing gender equity and driving transformative change in Nigeria's legal sector.

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