

AN ICON OF CHANGE

WOMEN OF CHANGE SERIES



“ Thanks to PERL, I know I am not alone. Through these trainings and the Women in Governance Community of Practice, I am now connected to 52 other female leaders in government. Among the community, I made a particularly strong connection with Henrietta Jacobs, the former Chairperson Board of Internal Revenue in Imo State and Dr. Nnenna Chikezi, the Executive Secretary, Planning Commission in Abia State, with whom I was able to draw parallels in experience and learn from her challenges, difficulties and solutions. I am indeed privileged to pull more experiences from these women who have excelled and recorded great achievements... Every time we interact, I discover new ideas and secrets of life. ”

Hajiya Yabawa Kolo assumed an Executive role in the leadership of the Borno State Emergency Management Agency (BOSEMA) in January 2018, and is believed to have brought in a more 'humanitarian focus' into the operations of the state relief agency. Popularly known as 'Uwar Marayu' (indispensable mother of the needy), Yabawa, as many would prefer to call her on the first-name basis, continues to marvel all as she courageously leads in taking relief supports to displaced persons even in the most dangerous locations of the state amidst the security challenge and the COVID-19 pandemic.

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AWARDS AND LAURELS



Best Relief Agency in Nigeria
At the
*Security and Emergency
Management Awards*



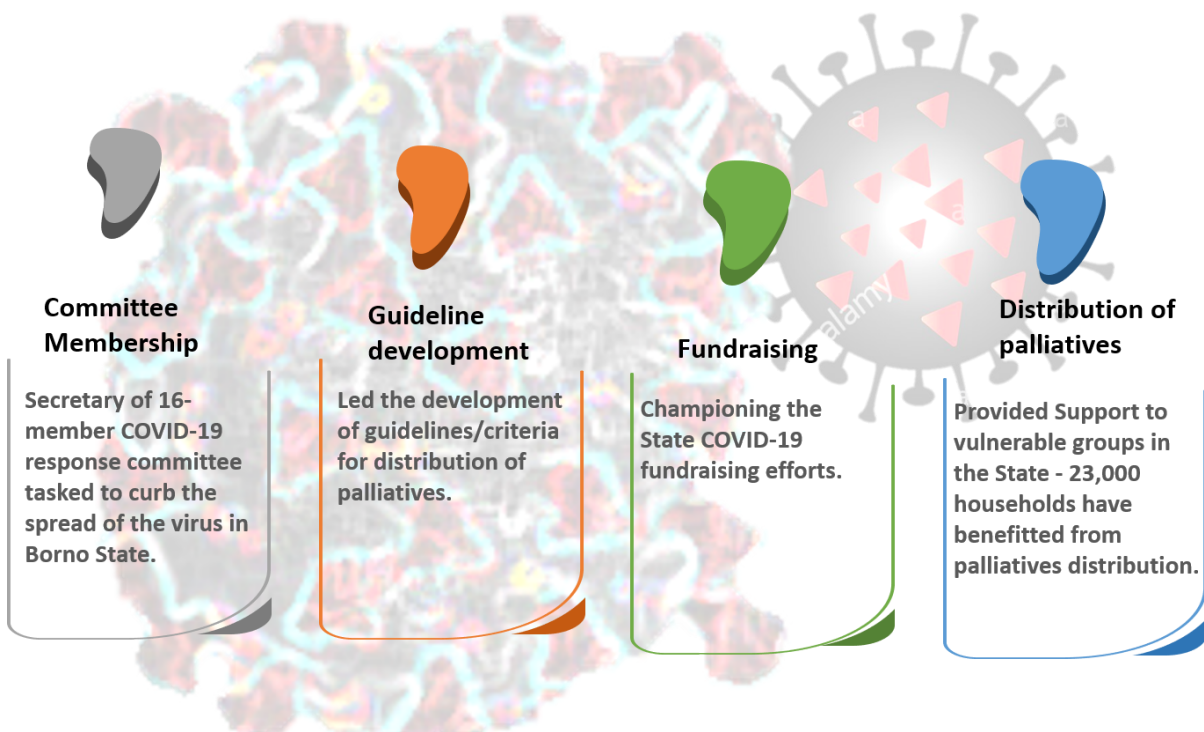
Icon of Change
By the
African Youth Consultative Forum

Though seasoned, taking the helm of SEMA in the conflict-ridden Borno State was a big step (the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin is said to be one of the worst in the world). Charged with supporting the 1.5 million internally displaced persons and managing the overall humanitarian crisis in Borno State, she walked into an institution riddled with organisational weaknesses and undermined by the lack of coordination among international, federal and state-level partners.

Hajiya Yabawa joined the public service in 1992, working in the Borno Radio Television (BRTV) News Department, where she later became the head of news in the corporation. Yabawa moved her public service career to the Ministry of Women Affairs as the Director Women Affairs, where she became the Executive Secretary of SEMA in 2018. Her role in Public Service afforded her the opportunity to participate in the PERL Women in Governance Programme, an initiative designed to support increased capacity among potential Change Agents currently occupying key roles in government. Obviously, this exchange mirrored in the excellence of her work, leading to a new obligation.



Her Office was uplifted from the Office of the Executive Secretary, to the Chairperson of the same Agency after the board was dissolved by the Governor. In this new role, Hajiya Yabawa is making significant vicissitudes to the agency and the state in general, where the attention of the general public was drawn in light of her exemplary sense of dedication, love, and commitment to duty as well as her being an inspiration to the youth and women and vulnerable in the state. Yabawa Kolo recently received an 'Icon of Change' award from the African Youth Consultative Forum (AYCF). The award was given to Mrs. Kolo in recognition of her "courage, dedication to duty, and her relentless service to help humanity" while discharging her role as the executive chairman of SEMA. Mrs. Kolo received the AYCF award barely a week after she had received the "Security and Emergency Management Award" as the overall best relief agency in Nigeria, on behalf of BOSEMA. She has equally received other awards including a Honorary Doctor of Philosophy for Administrative Excellence from Corner Stone University Jerusalem, and a Pan Africa Exemplary Leadership Honour "An Icon of Nation Building in Nigeria" presented by the West African Students Parliament.



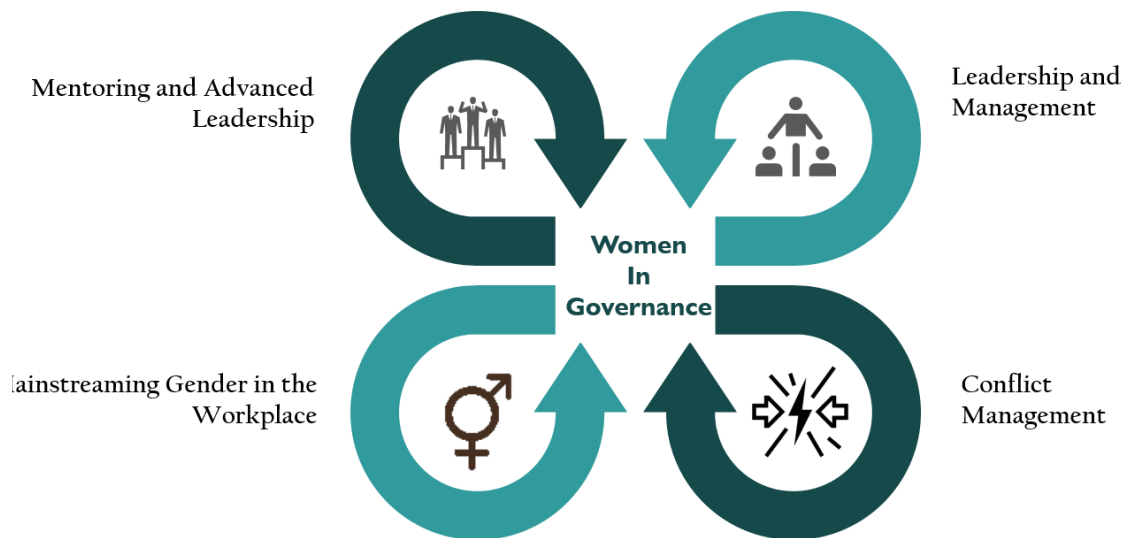
Driving Borno's COVID-19 Response

As Secretary of the 16-member Borno State High Powered Committee on COVID-19, Mrs Kolo is tasked with the responsibility of supporting the state's drive to curb the spread of the pandemic, while supporting vulnerable persons most affected by the virus. Taking equity considerations into account, the committee had since developed guidelines and criteria for the Distribution of the Palliatives, where 10% was meant for the physically challenged groups, 20% for widows, 20% for the vulnerable and the remaining 50% was for the poorest of the poor in the society. The Distribution is based on the geographical locations of the wards and vulnerability of the population in the target areas, where priority was given to those that had to go out daily to look for food or feed their families, not salary earners or business owners. She continues to champion the state's fundraising efforts which have seen wealthy individuals and corporate organizations contributing to the Government's efforts as they come to the aid of the vulnerable.

Since her appointment, the Borno State Government has distributed palliatives to 354,000 households.

“ I and my team strive daily to ensure that the core values of good governance which are the function of social democracy that promotes Justice, equity and fairness are always factored in every decision taken. ..I have a strong and willing team that is ever ready to see that we achieve our set goals to the entire society be it young ones, displaced, vulnerable, orphaned, widowed or physically challenged. ”

The Women In Governance Initiative



The Women in Governance Community of Practice (CoP) was officially launched on the 28th of February 2018, just ahead of International Women's Day with 15 members and the theme: “Stronger Together.” By March 2020, its membership had grown to 52. Since the launch of the Community of Practice, there have been three training programmes to improve the overall performance of these change agents to deliver better services. The first, held in February 2018, provided AWARD certified leadership and management skills building through well-defined modules and team building activities. In September 2018, there was a second Community of Practice gathering for a one-day conflict management training. In January 2019, the expanded Community of Practice met again for an AWARD certified four-day advanced leadership and mentoring training, following the identification of the women to understand and deploy mentoring skills within their organisations to optimise performance.

While her experience helped prepare her for dealing with the challenges of working within the government, it was the skills she learned through the Women in Governance (WinG) Community of Practice (CoP) that supported her to succeed in her new role. The CoP offered leadership trainings and connected her with other female leaders in government, which taught her communication skills, effective team building and how to manage conflict. These were foundational to the work she was about to undertake.

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