



## 'Owning my Space' Leadership & Life skills programme for graduates – Report

June 25 – 27, 2024 – NYSC Surulere LGA

#MalesMatterToo



*integrity, leadership and equity...*

### Introduction

boys to MEN Foundation was founded in 2017 by Mrs. Ifeoma I. Idigbe to support men and young boys to become their best selves and own their spaces wherever they find themselves. Young boys and men today face particularly today, the challenge of 'absent' role models, poor value systems, toxic masculinity and emotional stuntedness. The impact of these issues is seen in how they treat the people around them, and in a patriarchal society such as exists in today's world, the impact of one man resonates through the community in which he lives. Since 2018, Owning My Space, a boys to MEN Leadership & Life Skills programme for graduates has utilized practical experiences, focused discussions and training in leadership and essential life skills to provide personal development opportunities. Our goal is to effect positive change by impacting the lives of men, one young man at a time. In that way we hope to develop a new generation of ethical, well-behaved gentlemen, who are constantly working on improving themselves, can provide impartial leadership and possess the confidence to accept that others may wish to do the same.

In June 2024, boys to MEN Foundation held three different cohorts of Owning My Space programmes for corps members in Surulere LGA office. These sessions started with a conversation session ‘The Real World’ which featured a video with monologues from the book *About Men: Random Poems, Monologues, and Reflections* written by *Ifeoma I. Idigbe*, and covered modules such as Emotional Intelligence, Successful Leadership, Personal Branding, and practical modules like Managing Finances and Public Speaking. Feedback from participants allowed the measurement of the impact of the programme.

The three programmes were run on the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of June, 2024 respectively and were attended by a total of 162 male corpsers from the Surulere Local Government Area.



## Objective of the Programme

Owning My Space aims to nurture Nigerian males beyond academic achievements, preparing them to lead positive lives and contribute to society in a meaningful, socially aware way. We focus on life skills and leadership training to build emotional resilience, critical thinking and purposefulness because we understand that to transform participants’ values, is to enhance their lives and benefit the society. This is in line with the mission of the Foundation which is: “To inspire, nurture and develop males to become confident leaders in society.”

## Programme Modules

Modules and facilitators:

1. ‘The Real World’ – discussions inspired by the video of monologues on challenges facing males in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, such as societal expectations of men and therefore their expectations of themselves and the consequences on them such as toxic masculinity, addictions, mental health challenges, the new gender reality, peer influence etc. These discussions are focused on changing their mind sets and attitudes.
2. Leadership: Emotional Intelligence, Successful Leadership, Positive Environments (DEIBS)
3. Managing Your Finances
4. Personal Branding
5. The Rudiments of Public Speaking

**Mrs. Ifeoma I. Idigbe**, is a business/financial analyst, teaches Critical Thinking and Public Speaking to graduate scholars at the Nigerian University of Technology and Management (NUTM), and is the Founder and Executive Vice Chairman of boys to MEN Foundation.

Christopher Oare Aneni, is project manager and business operations strategist.

## Feedback

Some feedback from participants was collated. Some are quoted below.



*Quite frankly, I might not be [able] to put in a few words the lessons I have garnered in this meeting. It was refreshing sharing across various subjects about the growth process of every boy-child and the struggles we face in becoming men. One of the major conversations which stood out for me is the need to speak up about our emotions and dump the archaic mentality that men have to be strong and bottle up their emotions and struggles. Thanks a lot for this opportunity. – Mafolasire Williams Oluwafemi.*

*Honestly speaking, this is probably the best program I've ever attended. It's very informative, helpful and beneficial. I was initially [apathetic] to the idea of attending because I felt I won't learn or hear what I already did not know...I appreciate the work they have done and I would recommend it to anyone.*

*This kind of discussion is long overdue, very educative, insightful and impactful. Kudos to the boys to MEN Foundation for the initiative. This is probably the best programme I attended in my service year...– Abu Salmaan.*



*I am delighted to be a part of this program and it has really impacted a lot of knowledge to me. The videos I watched was an eye opener to me. It indeed made me realize a lot about being a man. Thanks to boys to MEN Foundation. – Arinze Kingsley.*

*I found the talk enlightening and educating. I enjoyed listening to all speakers and I am quite grateful for this opportunity. Personally, I look forward to being able to join future spaces led by the Foundation. – Rabiú Tosin Taofeek.*

*The delivery of the whole program and its content was top notch, all thanks to the Founder and fellow companions. From the intro, to the video about men and their mental state – superb. I learned a lot and was exposed. Other sessions: personal branding, leadership, finances and public speaking were delivered perfectly. The knowledge and importance to serve refreshments also speaks of the intelligence of the organizers as that revived concentration. I loved this experience. – Ayotunde Awobiyi.*