



European Union



A lawyer's leap

John Awojobi's journey from legal practice to policy leadership



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John Awojobi's story isn't just about ambition—it's about transformation. Growing up in Kwara State, Nigeria, John was captivated by the invisible threads that hold society together: laws, policies, and governance structures. He didn't just want to understand them; he wanted to weave them into something stronger, something better.

At the University of Ilorin, where he earned his law degree, John stood at a crossroads familiar to many fresh graduates. Most of his peers gravitated towards traditional paths—courtrooms, corporate law offices, and legal consultancies. But for John, the gavel and robe, though significant, felt like only part of a much larger picture. "The law is a powerful tool," he reflects. "But its true impact lies not just in representing individuals but in crafting policies that shape

society at scale."

It was during his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) stint at the Delta State Ministry of Justice that this conviction crystallised. Assigned to an environment brimming with legal intricacies and governance debates, John didn't expect to find himself at the heart of a transformative experience. He was the only corps member selected to work on the Administration of Criminal Justice Bill Committee. Sitting across tables from the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and seasoned policy experts, John absorbed the mechanics of policymaking. "I realised how a single clause in a bill could alter lives, for better or worse," he recalls. "It was eye-opening."

This experience ignited a hunger—a drive to not just practise law but to

shape it. So when John came across an opportunity to intern at the National Assembly through the EU-funded PLAC legislative internship programme, he seized it with both hands. For him, this wasn't just another internship; it was a doorway into the nucleus of Nigeria's lawmaking machinery. "This is where policies are born, where words become action," John says with a spark of excitement.

The EU-funded PLAC internship reflects the European Union's commitment to strengthening democratic governance and legislative processes in Nigeria. By investing in young, passionate professionals like John, the EU aims to build a new generation of informed and effective policymakers who can drive meaningful reforms. For the EU, supporting this internship isn't just about capacity building—it's about fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance for long-term stability and growth.

The internship is more than just shadowing legislators—it's immersion. John speaks passionately about the unique exposure it offers: witnessing the drafting of bills, observing parliamentary debates, and understanding the delicate negotiations that accompany every legislative decision. "I'm not here to be a passive observer," he insists. "I'm here to contribute, to ask questions, and to learn from the best."

But John's growth isn't confined to technical expertise. He's on a journey of personal transformation as well. For years, he struggled with being reserved—a quality he's come to realise can be a barrier in leadership. "Leadership demands visibility," he says. "Confidence

isn't optional when you want to drive change." Through workshops, mentoring sessions, and day-to-day interactions, John is sharpening his public speaking, leadership abilities, and social agility.

Networking, he believes, is not just about exchanging business cards—it's about building bridges. "Your network can open doors knowledge and talent alone cannot," he notes. Already, John has formed connections with equally driven peers—future policymakers, CEOs, and even potential presidents. With a wry smile, he adds, "One day, I might just be able to pick up the phone and call someone who can change the course of our nation."

Reflecting on his journey so far, John is clear-eyed about the road ahead. Policy leadership is not an easy path—it's filled with compromises, challenges, and moments of doubt. But he remains steadfast. "I'm not here for personal gain," he declares. "I'm here because I believe that good laws can build a just society, a thriving economy, and a better future for all Nigerians."

With every session attended, every conversation held, and every document reviewed, John Awojobi inches closer to his goal: to sit in the chambers of Nigeria's legislature, crafting laws that aren't just words on paper but blueprints for change.

The EU-funded PLAC internship represents more than just a professional opportunity—it's a bridge between vision and reality, ideals and action. For John, and for Nigeria, it's a step towards a future where laws aren't just written—they're lived, and they make life better for everyone.





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About the EU-SDGN Programme

The European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) is the EU's flagship democracy support programme in Nigeria. The programme is designed to complement the efforts of the Nigerian government to improve and strengthen democracy.