



European Union

## From Aspiration to Action

# A journey of growth, empowerment, and transformation.



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Mariam Ibrahim's journey from Kano State to the National Assembly is a story of passion, personal growth, and a desire to influence change in her country. From an early age, Mariam had always been driven by a deep curiosity about governance and how laws shape the world around her. As a young woman passionate about development, she knew that understanding the lawmaking process would be key to making a meaningful impact on society. This desire led her to apply for the prestigious PLAC (Policy and Legislative Advocacy Centre) Internship Programme, a decision that has already begun to transform her career.

"I was motivated to apply for the PLAC internship because I wanted to learn about the processes of lawmaking," Mariam said, reflecting on what drove her to seek this opportunity. For her,

this was not just an academic pursuit—it was a chance to experience firsthand how laws are made in Nigeria and understand the complexities of crafting policies that affect millions of lives.

Mariam had also been inspired by former alumni of the internship, people whose professional growth she had witnessed firsthand. Seeing how the programme had helped them develop their skills and expand their careers, Mariam was eager to follow in their footsteps. "I wanted to have the opportunity to experience the capacity-building aspect of this programme, meet new people, network, and grow in my own career in the development sector," she explained.

For Mariam, one of the biggest attractions of the internship was the chance to work alongside young

people from all over the country. “Honestly, the idea of learning and working with young people from across Nigeria was a big win for me,” she admits with a smile. Having worked in the civil service and the development sector, Mariam had often found herself surrounded by older professionals. Being in a space filled with young, passionate individuals gave her a renewed sense of hope for the future. “It’s rare to be surrounded by a sea of young people, and I know the energy that brings. It reignites your passion, hope, and aspirations for Nigeria.”

However, Mariam’s ambitions are not only limited to the present. She sees the internship as a stepping stone towards a larger goal: leading an organisation that empowers people to participate in governance and demand accountability from their representatives. “One of my driving forces in this programme is understanding what our representatives do in the National Assembly, and how we can challenge them and demand accountability,” Mariam explains. She is determined to use what she learns from the PLAC internship to advocate for good governance and voter empowerment in Nigeria.

The internship is already shaping her career in ways she hadn’t anticipated. Before this opportunity, Mariam was primarily focused on programme management, but now her vision is expanding. “This internship has given me the confidence to think about upscaling my role—possibly driving an organisation in the future,” she says. The experience has surrounded her with ambitious, audacious young people who have influenced her path and pushed her to think bigger. “One way or another, this experience is already shaping the path for my future.”

In addition to gaining professional confidence, Mariam is developing crucial skills that will help her in her leadership journey. “The first skill I hope to learn is audacity,” she admitted candidly. Over the years, she has struggled with nerves and anxiety, but the supportive and bold atmosphere of the PLAC internship is already helping her overcome that.

Surrounded by equally driven young people from across Nigeria’s 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mariam is learning to be more confident and assertive in her interactions.

Mariam is also working on strengthening her interpersonal skills, essential for collaborating with people from diverse backgrounds. “Given that we’re all from different states, learning to relate to others is critical for building national unity,” she explained. She is also excited to enhance her skills in legislative drafting, team building, and leadership—essential tools for her future as a leader in the development sector.

Beyond the technical skills she is acquiring, the PLAC internship is helping Mariam grow personally, especially when it comes to networking and engaging with others. “The internship is already making me talk more,” Mariam laughed. “Not that I’m not a talker, but being here forces you to engage with people, pick their minds, and have them pick yours.” This kind of interaction, she said, is invaluable in helping her connect with individuals, build networks, and further develop her confidence.

One of the most surprising benefits of the programme has been the level of support she has received from her fellow interns. “The energy here is amazing,” Mariam said, recalling a recent experience where she was working on a research paper. “People were checking in on me during the tea break, encouraging me to write and present the paper. That’s the kind of empowering environment I didn’t even expect to find here.”

For Mariam Ibrahim, the PLAC internship is more than just a professional opportunity—it’s a personal journey of growth, empowerment, and transformation. With each day, she is gaining the skills, confidence, and networks that will help her realise her ambition of driving change in Nigeria. Surrounded by audacious young leaders and supported by a programme that fosters both learning and collaboration, Mariam is well on her way to becoming the leader she aspires to be.





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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.