



EMPOWER WOMEN MEDIA PRESENTS

LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF TRAINING

Nigeria E-Course Evaluation Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Religious-based violence (RBV) has increased with intensity in multiple countries around the world. Nigeria's rate of RBV has rendered the country unwelcoming for all religious communities. Once referred to as one of the "World's Scariest Country to be a Christian", a myriad of factors resulted in Nigeria's current religious and political landscape. While this persecution is not subject to just Christians, but Muslims, atheists, and members of other less popular religions, the disparity compared to other countries is mounting. The increase in RBV has led to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) in domestic, community, and regional levels. 1 in 3 women in Nigeria have reported experiencing some level of physical violence.

As the increase of interfaith dialogue continues to grow worldwide, it is important for state and civil society actors to prioritize educating the public on the importance of promoting and protecting religious freedoms. Not only does religious engagement benefit religious freedom, but research shows that it leads to greater levels of peace and stability, empowerment of women and economic prosperity. The freedom to express one's religion or belief, without restrictions or backlash, allows people to create, innovate, and 'show up' in ways they find fulfilling. Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) brings more entrepreneurial productivity to the work force, and this is especially true for women and minorities.

Research shows that short films are one of the fastest ways to mobilize social movements for human rights. Developed in partnership with Empower Women Media (EWM) and various human rights organizations, the certificate course, LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE (LWYB), was surveyed in Nigeria over the course of 4 months (January to April 2024). The course can be completed individually or in groups, and includes 4 short films, reflection questions, an evaluation quiz and a certificate of completion. This initiative aims to equip students and professionals to have critical conversations about religious conflict, highlighting the benefits of FoRB to build peaceful, multi-faith societies. The 4-part training series shares the FoRB insights of African lawyers, scholars, NGO and faith leaders, and is combined with the story of a displaced family overcoming religious prejudice in their society.

The following report seeks to analyze the more than 500 evaluations of the LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE eCourse conducted online and in "live" events. This report seeks to be valuable in showing that the majority of the LWYB course participants shared that they learned the importance of religious tolerance, and that Freedom of Religion or Belief is critical to the stability of an economy and a nation.

"The course has taught me something really important: tolerance. It's about understanding and accepting people's differences, especially when it comes to religion. It's about being kind and respectful to everyone, no matter what they believe. This course has made me really think about how I can be more tolerant and understanding in my own life. It's been a truly meaningful experience that has touched my heart and changed the way I see the world." - LWYB Nigeria Participant

Shirin Taber,
Executive Producer

Nancy Sawyer
Schraeder,
Writer/Producer of E-
Course films

FOR QUESTIONS, VISIT
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EVAULATION RESPONSES

Point H/Q1: What are some of the biggest lessons you learned from E-Course? How has the eCourse impacted you personally?

Participants noted these characteristics as their biggest lessons learned:

- Mutual understanding, importance of gender for economic prosperity, unity and peace, respect for women and religious tolerance.

Point I/Q2: What are issues or challenges you see in supporting religious freedom in your community?

Participants listed that **traditions** and **values**, **lack of** appropriate **resources** from **education** to **dialogue opportunities**, fear of **death** and varying degrees of **persecution**, **gender insensitivity**, **lack of tolerance** and **willingness** from **governmental** and **religious leadership**, and being **accused of tribalism** and fanaticism as the biggest challenges people will face in supporting religious freedom in their communities.

Regional specific challenges:

- In the North (Yolo Adamawa State), participants stated the lack of uniform and open-minded views on religion due to miscommunication and misunderstanding on beliefs and traditions. It was noted that men often have the final say on religious freedom, making the freedom to choose difficult.
- In the Jos North of Plateau State, participants noted the lack of awareness and education as a large challenge in their community.

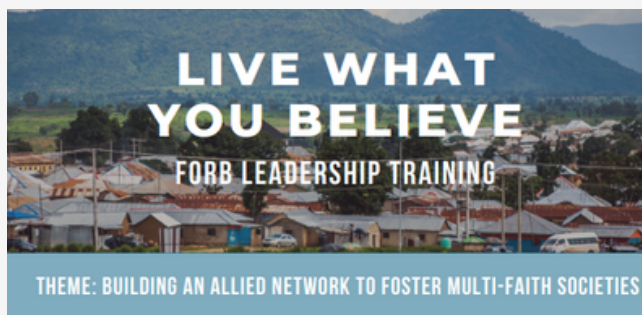
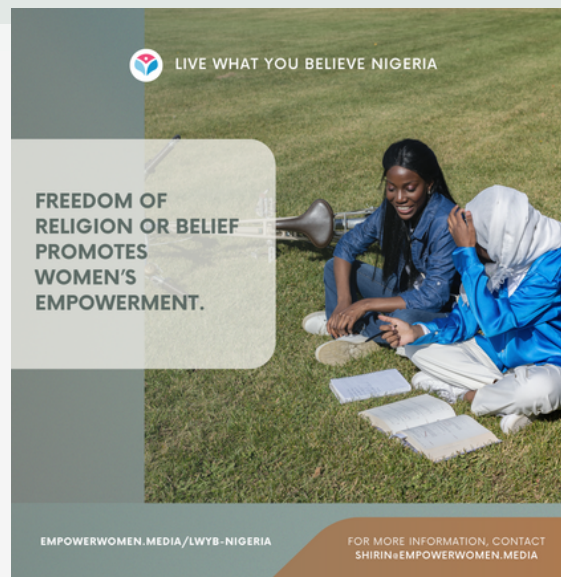
Point J/Q3: Based on your experience, how can religious freedom promote peace and security?

Participants listed 3 ways religious freedom can promote peace and security:

1. Through the **promotion of dialogue between inter-faith communities** and **enhancing collaboration on communal issues**. Doing so would ensure more effective and safe solutions to issues arising in their community.
2. Acting from a place of **tolerance** and **understanding** will allow individuals to practice freely without fear of persecution, discrimination, or harm.
3. Religious organizations **standing against and challenging** all **injustices** will ensure peace and security among communities.

Point K/Q4: How do you feel religious freedom advances gender equality and women’s rights?

Participants listed that **empowerment and participation** and **challenging gender discrimination** advance gender equality and women’s rights through religious freedom. Faith can be practiced and interpreted in ways that support gender equality. At the same time, religious freedom can challenge discriminatory practices, patriarchal norms, and unfair beliefs rooted in religious traditions.



Religious persecution and violence are dramatically increasing in Nigeria, both of which have an impact on women and minorities. We need to train a new generation as powerful agents to promote peace & inter-religious harmony. Please join us for a strategic leadership and networking event to advance freedom of religion or belief. The event will highlight subject matter experts, short films, and practical tools to support thriving, multi-faith societies in Nigeria and beyond.

APRIL 20, 2024 • ABUJA, NIGERIA

REGISTER HERE

LOCATION
Hawthorne Suites, 1 Uke Street, Abuja

AGENDA
Film Festival
Panels
Workshops
Networking
Practical Tools & Resources

OBJECTIVES

- Respect human dignity
- Build trust and relationships
- Explore challenges and opportunities
- Share practical tools and resources
- Amplify women's approaches
- Encourage collaboration
- Identify multi-faith champions
- Foster thriving, multi-faith societies.

ARTICLE 18, UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SHIRIN@EMPOWERWOMEN.MEDIA



EVAULATION RESPONSES

Point L/Q5: How is religious freedom good for business and innovation?

Participants listed 6 reasons religious freedom supports business and innovation:

1. **Diversity and Inclusion** - allowing people of different faiths and beliefs to contribute their perspectives and ideas.
2. **Innovation and Creativity** - bringing together varied viewpoints and approaches fuel new ideas and solutions.
3. **Global Market Access** - enabling companies to navigate religious and cultural sensitivities in international partnerships.
4. **Collaboration and Teamwork** - fostering an environment of trust, respect, and open communication among employees.
5. **Stability and Economic Growth** - creating a peaceful and stable environment conducive to business operations and investments.
6. **Ethical Business Practices** - promoting values of respect, tolerance, and social responsibility.



Point M/Q6: Will you support religious freedom (the freedom to believe or not believe) in your community or workplace? Why or why not?

6 points have been concluded from the participants responses:

1. **Fostering Diversity and Inclusion** - supporting religious freedom is seen as cultivating an inclusive environment that welcomes and respects individuals with diverse beliefs or non-beliefs. It fosters a sense of belonging for all.
2. **Upholding Individual Rights** - religious freedom upholds the fundamental human right of individuals to freely choose and practice their beliefs without coercion or persecution.
3. **Enabling Understanding and Learning** - respecting religious diversity helps people understand and learn from each other's beliefs and perspectives, promoting mutual respect and cultural exchange.
4. **Contributing to Development** - religious freedom is viewed as important for community development, nation-building, and global integration by allowing people of all beliefs to contribute equally.
5. **Improving Workplace Dynamics** - the responses overwhelmingly support religious freedom as a means to promote peace, inclusion, individual rights, cross-cultural understanding, development, and positive workplace dynamics within communities and workplaces.

LIVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE
FREE ECOURSE AFRICA

FEATURES

- 4 Short Films
- Field Experts Reflections Questions
- Certificate of Completion
- FB Community Human Rights Advocacy

ENROLL TODAY

QR Code

@empowerwomenmedia

*"Cultivating freedom of belief unleashes creativity and innovation, which is needed more than ever in our increasingly global world."
Jacqueline Isaac, International Attorney*

OUTCOMES



Your Path to
Religious
Freedom Starts
Here.

Join the Movement
for Religious
Freedom in Nigeria.

Enroll Now in the
*Live What You
Believe* eCourse and
discover the power
that religious
freedom can bring.

ENROLL TODAY

January to April 2024 Update on Q1:

- ~1000 Nigerians enrolled in LYWB eCourse.
- 140 media producers applied for the LWYB Media Fellowship.
- 500 evaluations for the eCourse.
- The expansion of influencers networks in Nigeria proven to reach more people to participate in the course.

On the Ground: Live What You Believe! in Abuja Nigeria

- April 20: EWM/LWYB is hosted a Leadership Training in Abuja to train Nigerian influencers on how to teach the course to their communities.
- 40 media producers accepted into the 6- month Media Fellowship.
- 600 Nigerians attend “live” LWYB trainings.

Media:

- 4 radio interviews conducted about the LWYB course.
- 250,000 social media engagements through Instagram reels (LWYB films).

CHALLENGE!

- As many people as possible to sign up and finish the eCourse by June 1!



Socials:

<https://empowerwomen.media/>



<https://www.instagram.com/empowerwomenmedia/>

<https://www.facebook.com/empowerwomenmedia/>



<https://human-rights-and-religious-freedom-training.teachable.com/p/forb>

In collaboration with GORSTRA Research Group by
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