

**SPRING LITERARY MOVEMENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME**

**AUGUST 2018 REPORT**

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# FEATURING

**THE BIOGRAPHIES & COMMENTARIES FROM THE MENTEES**

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## **ABOUT THE PROGRAMME**

The Spring Literary Movement Mentorship Programme is an intensive 3-weeks programme for developing Nigerian writers with great potential and willingness to learn. It is for Nigerian writers between the ages of 16-25 who reside in Nigeria, and who have not published a book. In January 2018, 9 writers were mentored in the programme and in August 2018, 20 writers participated in the programme.

This programme focuses on 4 genres: Poetry, Fiction, Essay, and Book Review. During the 3-weeks, the August 2018 mentees were in contact with their mentors, sending them work and receiving reviews, tips, and commentaries. Mentors and mentees aimed to work on at least 3 work (poems/short stories/essays/book reviews) per week.

## PROGRAM REPORT – AUGUST 2018

During the August 2018 Mentorship Programme, the SLM team implemented new strategies and expanded resources to serve the programme participants. The following were affected:

- Communication access beyond emails; to phone calls, text messages, WhatsApp
- An online portal with all the programme resources and assignments
- Check-in sessions with mentees and mentors to ensure their progress
- Extended programme ending date to accommodate the needs of mentees
- Use of online forms compared to our previous use of Word documents
- Reminders about deadlines to essential tasks

All the new strategies proved successful and beneficial to the programme participants. In the final feedback form, all the programme participants agreed that the programme was well planned. The SLM team were praised for their efforts. A mentor, Lanre Oranyeli who participated in both January and August 2018 mentorship programme wrote:

*I think that enough thought was put in the programme because of how it has changed from January. The new web portal, personal logins, group correspondence and so much more added a lot of professional touch and ease to the programme.*

A mentee, Emmanuel Thompson wrote:

*I feel that enough thought was put into the programme planning; from the programme itself, the management, the mentors, the swift dissemination of information, etc. SLM is unique and indescribable. Kudos to the team that brought this excellent idea into actualization.*

All the programme participants reported that they experienced positive change from their commitment to the programme. Emmanuel Thompson continued stating,

*I came into the programme so raw and undefined regarding creative writing(s). The way I structured most of my poems were appalling, but my Mentor guided me through. He ensured that every little detail was taken into consideration.*

Even the mentors were not spared from this positive impact. In the feedback form, a mentor, Toju Takure wrote:

*I enjoy teaching a lot. So, the program helped me get even better at teaching. For example, teaching from a distance (online) can be a different ball game. It takes dedication and discipline to pull through. SLM helped me in that regard.*

The SLM Mentorship Programme was a humbling experience for many mentors, even for some, who are best-selling authors. Some discovered their passion and others refined their creative writing skills through the programme. Christie Jay, the author of *At War With Love*, who participated as both a mentor and mentee in the programme wrote;

*The programme helped challenge and develop my writing skills. I was forced to read authors outside my comfort zone, to comment on the assignments given. I found the mentor portal highly educative. I wrote a lot more, and I even realized that I might have a calling in editing.*

Seun Lari-Williams, author of the award-winning book *Garri for Breakfast* in his feedback, wrote:

*Because of the programme, I had the opportunity to visit the poems that made me fall in love with poetry, some of which I shared with my mentee, Woli Kafilah. I also relearned my figures of speech and other literary devices which I find that I'm now using again. Thank you for this.*

Notably, Pamilerin Jacob who participated as a mentee in the January 2018 cohort of the programme was re-invited to serve as a mentor in August 2018. His profound excellence and successful release his debut anthology titled *Memoir of Crushed Petals* led to the decision for his return. Just like Pamilerin Jacob, Sanni Oluwatimileyin, a mentee in the August 2018 cohort will be returning in 2019 to serve as a mentor of the programme. His proactive and enthusiastic attitude accompanied by his unique writing skills and style has made him worthy of serving as a mentor in the programme, in 2019. After the programme, Sanni's mentor: Ifeoluwa Shoola described him as *a pretty established writer*. She highlighted his humility by mentioning that despite his wealth of knowledge *he made use of the feedback* provided to him and showed significant progress during the programme.

Regarding the programme time frame, many mentees and mentors reported that they wish the programme could be extended for a longer period. Most mentors went the extra mile to work with their mentees for about 2 weeks to review and catch up on all the necessary information, even after the programme officially ended.

The mentees in the programme reported improvement in their creative writing. The following points were common in most of the mentees report about their progress in the programme:

- Increase in confidence
- Knowledge about punctuation
- Improved grammar
- Exploration of themes
- Enhanced use of imagery in writing
- Improved organization of ideas
- Discovery of their "unique perspective" in writing
- Increased use of writing devices
- Exploration outside their comfort zone

While discussing how the programme helped boost her confidence, Mohammed Zaynab, a mentee, wrote:

*Previously, I did not believe in calling myself a writer because I felt that my writings were not creative enough, especially in poetry. However, with this programme, there is a new confidence in my writing, and I am even willing to send my poems for publication.*

When asked if they would love to participate in a similar opportunity again, all mentees responded: Yes!

The programme experience had some ups and downs, however, we commend the effort of mentors like Ayoola Goodness; who through thick and thin ensured that he provided excellent services to his mentee: Emmanuel Faith. In Ayoola's feedback, he wrote:

*At first, it was like I would not be able to continue with the mentorship programme because of other pressing engagements. I had some other technical constraints, but then, I refused to give up to the extent that I had to sacrifice my sleep to meet up with some reviews and lectures with my mentee. I have, however, learned from this experience, that a lot could be achieved through an enduring commitment. And what the outcome is, on the side of my mentee, is something I am very proud of.*

Through the feedback form, suggestions were provided for the next cohorts of the programme, such as:

- Having a separate communication platform for the mentees only

- Hosting weekly contests for the mentees in the programme
- Interchanging with mentors to gain additional perspective of their work
- Increasing the programme duration to a month or more
- Creating more specialized genres of mentorship
- Organizing events where mentees will meet their mentors in person
- Creating an anthology for the mentees works

To conclude their feedback of the programme, many participants shared their appreciation for the SLM team. Ayoola Goodness, an award-winning poet and the author of *Mediations, a collection of poems* wrote:

*I want to sincerely thank the team for the opportunity to mentor. This, I consider a rare privilege. I believe that this movement of impartation is evidence of a secured future — an establishment of a unique and great community of literary giants.*

Going forward the SLM team will evaluate the feedback provided by the mentors and mentees of the programme, then, plan towards the re-opening of the programme in 2019. Although the application and programme dates for 2019 are yet to be decided, we hope to host a larger number of mentor and mentees in the third cohort of the programme.

Written by Oyindamola Shoola  
**CEO of Spring Literary Movement**  
[www.spring.org](http://www.spring.org)

**MENTEE'S  
BIOGRAPHIES  
AND COMMENTARIES**



**Nesochi Alfred-Igbokwe** is a poet with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Diplomacy. She currently lives in Abuja. The focus of Nesochi's poetry includes love, pain and vulnerability. Her goal is to write poetry that connects to readers, especially young adults and their vulnerabilities; one may call it therapeutic poetry. She also aims to question societal issues in hopes of finding answers.

Besides poetry, Nesochi fills in as a rapporteur and transcriber. She continuously seeks ways to improve and publicise her works. Travelling is her foremost craving.

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My mentor, Kanyinsola Olorunnisola was very detail-oriented and showed good insight about poetry. I enjoyed his critique and explanation, they really helped me to step back and review my work; I put myself in the shoes of a reader. I really value the materials he gave and the amazing world of previously unknown poets he introduced me to.

The SLM Mentorship Programme was clearly articulated; from exploring different modes of virtual communication to the program outline included with assignments and feedback. Even the flexibility to extend the programme was commendable.

Through the programme, I worked with novel styles therefore, I stepped out of my comfort zone. I feel more confident as a writer because I was able to see some of my flaws and improve on them. I'm definitely better off than when I started the programme.





**Woli Bukola Kafilah**, Nigerian born scientist and writer currently resides in Kwara State, Nigeria. She is the first and only girl child of her parents. She is an alumnus of Achievers' University, Ondo State, Nigeria where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Medical laboratory science. For fun, when she is not reading, she plays tennis or volleyball.

As a child, Kafilah was a little bit obsessed with thinking up rhymes and poems. However, she only began putting them down after her first visit to the sea, an experience she describes as "captivating". Since then, she has written several poems and was the first prize winner of the Nigerian Platinum poetry contest. Kafilah insists she does not have a particular writing style, but instead, enjoys using different ways to

express herself. "If each line I write strikes a chord in people's heart, then it would be worth it", she says.

Kafilah's works are inspired by the everyday life of the people and circumstances around her. She also loves to write the fantasies in her head. She believes the world is her canvas, and so she must travel through the eyes of others so as to get a glimpse of their view, understand it and relay it in her words.

Also, Kafilah's goal as a writer is to bring to life some of the things humanity might have given up on; and help understand the beauty in the things that hurt us; and reach someone so they know they are not alone.

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My mentor Seun Lari-Williams was very understanding. He engaged and studied my work. Through his guidance, I learned more about literature, became conscious about my use of punctuation, redefined my long-term goals, built up confidence in my work and became true to myself.

The review Seun gave on my works made me understand that with more effort, my writing skills will improve.





**Emmanuel Thompson Ekere** is a graduate from the Department of Performing Arts, Akwa Ibom State University, who majored in History, Theory and Criticism. He is a budding writer, and his poems are focused on providing perspective about the society, God, pain, love, and hope.

Emmanuel finds his generation unwilling to tell the truth. Thus, he sees the need to blare it and address these issues through critical writing(s). He has hope and sees the endless light, even in a world as dark as this.

Emmanuel finds companionship in words and breathes it daily. He is currently writing and

compiling his poems.

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It may seem like I am singing praise songs yet it is the truth. My Mentor, Mr. Badiru Kehinde is another “best, picked out from the best”. He sure knows how to encourage and he is quite knowledgeable. He also possesses a unique intellectual command that does not only draw your attention but fine tunes anyone who is willing to learn.

With the help of the programme and my mentor, I developed my sentence construction and became conscious of my use of punctuations. I improved in my writing(s).





**Ugochukwu Damian Okpara** is a poet and a medical student based in Nigeria. He began writing poetry in 2017, and his themes explore depression, loneliness, and feminism.

His goal is to inspire those who have been hurt, making them realize that the light at the end of the tunnel is not an illusion.

When he is not writing or reading, he spends time listening to songs by Simi, James Blunt or Ed Sheeran.

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My mentor, Lucas Ogundeyi made this programme worthwhile for me. When the programme was about to commence, I hoped for a mentor who would understand and tolerate my works. When I was paired with him, I was tensed initially because I felt he wouldn't tolerate my works, but it was totally the opposite. He was always ready to give answers to my questions, constructive feedback and ways that I could improve. He also introduced me to great books like *Salt*, and *Milk and honey*. He was dedicated to my learning.

The SLM Mentorship Programme was well-planned; from the programme outline to the task designated for each week, the downloadable PDFs that mentees could access, and means of communication with mentors and SLM staff. I commend the organizers for creating this platform for unpublished writers.





**Sanni F. Oluwatimileyin** is a contemporary and speculative writer. He has been writing for over eight years. His educational background in science and journalism has given him a wide range of approaches to writing.

He has written many short stories, poems and essays which can be found on literary platforms like Wattpad, Allpoetry and African Writer. He is a member of Writers' Group and ANSA, Association of Nigerian Student Authors. Apart from writing, Timileyin likes to draw and paint, using his skills to change stereotypes and educate the public. Most of the time, he's usually seen in a corner with a book in his hands.

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There's no better mentor I could have wished for than Shoola Ifeoluwa. She continually put in her best into helping me realize my dreams. She squeezed in mentorship sessions between tight schedules and fought through the obstacle of time difference. She was a mother, and what better teacher is there than a mother? There's no better way to say it! In this little time I spent as Ifeoluwa's mentee, my writing has taken a new turn. I very much enjoyed writing the assignments and what I enjoyed most were the conversations my mentor and I had. Listening to my mentor, spurred the learner in me. Meeting Shoola Ifeoluwa, along with the other members of SLM team is one of the best things that has happened to me.





**Zaynab Mohammed** is a writer, journalist, and a photography hobbyist. She studied Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin and is currently working towards her Master's Degree program at the same institution.

She is a development blogger that enjoys writing on various facets that border around healing, growth, and development. Her goals continue to grow from writing about issues that resonate with personal and communal growth, to areas that cut across varying aspects of life. She hopes that through her

writings, her readers can colour their souls positively, and connect with others alike.

Zaynab is a firm believer that learning never stops, which is one of the main reasons she continues to utilize opportunities to broaden her knowledge.

When she isn't writing, you can find her surfing the web looking for exciting new ways to bolster her writing or her head buried deep in the pages of a book. You can visit her blog; [soulitude.com.ng](http://soulitude.com.ng) to check out some of her articles.

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My mentor, Olanrewaju Oranyeli, is a very diligent one. He was more than a mentor, who gave his best and walked me through new insights, knowledge and skills of creative writing. He is one to greatly commend you when you meet up with expectations and one to also pull you back when you are diving below expectations. His approach made it easy for me to be able to speak to him on any challenge I faced and I always looked forward to every session and every feedback. When I told him I would like to write like him, he said "No, I want you to be able to write better than me." This endeared me more to him, I must admit. He was willing to share knowledge, resources, and tips that would aid my writing career. Every second with him was a value I knew I wouldn't get anywhere else. It was indeed difficult coming to terms with the fact that the programme was at its end. I couldn't have had it in any other way.



The mentorship programme was indeed a very beautiful and enlightening experience. Thank you SLM!



**Maryam Saeed Otuh** was born in Kogi State, Nigeria in 1995. She is a graduate of Biochemistry from Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Maryam is passionate about poetry and fiction, she wrote her first poem at the age of 12. In 2018, she was selected among 21 other writers to participate in the second cohort of the Spring Literary Movement Mentorship Program. Maryam is currently working towards publishing her first poetry collection.

My mentor, Sarah Aluko is a genius and very patient. We connected immediately. She praised and corrected my work in the kindest and most professional way. On the first day she said to me "I can see from your poem that you love Warsan Shire, but I want to hear your own voice" and I realized that I wanted to hear my own voice too. I couldn't ask for a better mentor.

The organizers of this program did a wonderful job. It was well coordinated and I was pleasantly surprised. It's no joke how difficult organizing programmes like this is in Nigeria, especially virtually. So kudos to the SLM team.





**Elizabeth Oluwaferanmi Olojede** is a fourth-year law undergraduate student of Bowen University Nigeria. She grew up in Ibadan, Nigeria where she also currently resides.

She is a poet and short story writer. Her works revolve around the themes of love, life, society, and its unrealistic expectations, feminism, and rape. She writes as a therapeutic act, to serve as a problem solver and as a form of recreation. Most of her works are empathetic which helps her readers relate more to her ideas. She loves reading, writing, traveling, listening to music and watching movies amongst others.

A few of Elizabeth's works have been published on the writing community named Mirakee, under the pen name Iammagic. Her poem titled "Let me take you to a place" was published on Mywovenwords blog which she's currently a member of. Her work titled "Whispers" was published on the Instagram page named @bowenmag.

Elizabeth Oluwaferanmi Olojede also writes for her school's chapel and the Faculty of Law.

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My mentor, Abdulsalam Abdul Dante remains a blessing to me. He taught me with love and enthusiasm. I always thought this programme was going to be so official that it would be hard for me to express myself, but my mentor, Dante, taught me under a cool and funny environment and I learnt a lot from it. He was always willing to listen to my questions and answer in a detailed manner no matter how foolish I thought they sounded. He always had positive remarks for all my works and this boosted my confidence in my write ups. He was patient with me, especially with my punctuation and he would tell me to go back and write a work if it wasn't good enough. There were times when I didn't submit my tasks in time, he would wait and disturb me until I did.

He helped me explore myself. I tried rhymes which I had never done before the programme. He's a passionate person. From him, I've learnt patience and how to give positive remarks. I'm more than glad he was my mentor.





**Folakemi Adufe Jolaoso** is a fiction writer and a passionate nutritionist who graduated from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her works explore various themes and notably, topics centered on combating social injustices, gender, social stratification, and racism. Her writing style is descriptive and filled with imageries that allow her readers to partake in the narrative of her works. Folakemi draws inspiration to write from observing the daily lives of people in whichever environment she finds herself.

Folakemi currently resides in Abuja, Nigeria and in her spare time, she enjoys traveling and reading African Literature.

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My mentor, Oyindamola Shoola really took her time to work with me. She didn't mentor me because she needed to or was obligated to. I saw in her the passion and dedication to see me learn, grow and excel. She took time to teach me and I can't forget the simple example she gave on the use of comma and semi-colon. She studied what I cared about in writing and even recommended books that I should read. The confidence she instilled in me tops the chart of things I gained. She motivated me to start a blog, submit my write-ups to websites and to apply for competitions. I really appreciate the organisers of this programme.





**Olubola Alamu** is a Nigerian writer and book editor who is also committed to helping other writers to produce good content in their writing. This commitment stems from her belief that people become what they read, and readers deserve nothing less than edification.

She is the editor-in-chief at Editfy Publishing. Her poems have been featured on The Kalahari Review, and her other works can be seen on [Thamarshaven.wordpress.com](http://Thamarshaven.wordpress.com) and @olubolaalamu on Instagram. She lives in Osogbo, Nigeria.

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I am grateful for the opportunity to have Mr. Tola Ijalusi's guidance during the SLM Mentorship Programme. The time spent learning from him proved to be a profitable investment and a boost in my writing career. Mr. Tola Ijalusi is a writer who knows his craft well and is excited to teach it to others. He is very respectful and patient, and he offers encouragement all the time. He also knows how to make one to perform better without one feeling pushed to do so. In my previous attempts at reviewing books, I wasn't very sure what to do. But now, I know what to do when reviewing a book. I learnt how to write book reviews to meet literary standards and gained knowledge on the importance of reading vastly as a book reviewer. Tola Ijalusi informed me about the need to network with other people in the writing field by attending literary events, and how to establish one's presence through literary magazines and journals.





**Jegede Onozasi Glory** is a creative writer, and freelance content developer.

She has a degree in Mass Communication and has a burning passion for writing, for which she has invested a big deal. From a rather tender age, her work got published on a local newspaper - The Graphics. She was a voluntary PR personnel for Ladies of Value, an NGO body in Nigeria. She is currently working part time with a Digital Marketing Agency as the Content Manager.

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The SLM Mentorship Programme is a welcome change. I strongly feel that if more writers in Nigeria, Africa were exposed to opportunities like this, they would love writing better. Enough thought was put into this programme. This shows in how well-organized the SLM staff were and how professional our mentors were too.

My mentor Mosobalaje M. Abimbola is a great teacher who is patient, kind, and gives words of encouragement, praise and reprimand when needed. I really value and appreciate all that I have learnt so far. I believe that the programme provided the next level for me because among many improvements, I became better in the content organization of my ideas, use of imageries, and figures of speech.





**Olakitan Aladesuyi** is a writer of short stories, poetry, and drama. The themes of her work include sexuality, death, and pain. She has been described as a melancholic writer.

In 2016, she participated in Poets in Nigeria's ten days of poetry challenge with the poem: *How do you live with yourself?* In 2017, she came third place in flash fiction in the maiden edition of Communicators League's creative writing contest, with her short story: Inside the head of an ex-lover. Her works have been published through Communicators League and African Writers.

Olakitan writes with the intention to create conversations that inform and educate her target audience. She hopes to influence their perceptions and thoughts.

When the programme started, I was at a place where I wasn't writing poetry. I was rusty and I sent my mentor, Christtie Jay, two cheesy poems that I couldn't even accept from myself but she took the time to read and make corrections. Looking back, my mentor's work and feedback on those cheesy poems is one of the things that encouraged me to go deeper and write from a place that is true. I really appreciate Christtie Jay's mentorship and enjoyed her style. She made the programme interesting and challenging, but in a friendly and relaxed manner. The SLM Mentorship Programme helped me to rediscover my love for poetry. Particularly, the biography writing exercise was very helpful because I never put much thought into writing my biography. Looking at my previous biography and what I have now, I see improvements.





**Emmanuel Faith** is an award-winning Nigerian poet and a graduate of Economics from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria.

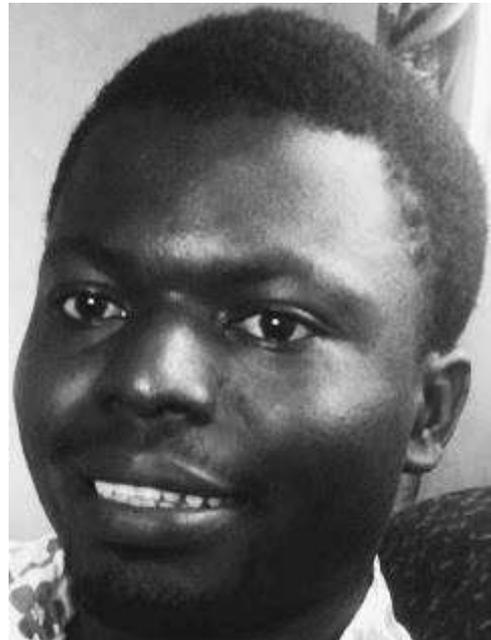
He loves literature and has an unreserved penchant for poetry. His writing explores the themes of hope, humanity, love, life, nature and politics. His poetry has garnered awards, one of which is the Prestigious Brigitte Poirson Poetry Competition. Some of his works have also been published on Words, Rhymes and Rhythms, Parousia Magazine and many other literary platforms.

Faith believes in the therapeutic ability of words and since the world was made with words, it could be made better with it. He writes fiction and non-fiction when he is not writing poetry.

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The first seven months of the year were quite bland for me as far as literature was concerned, thus getting shortlisted for this programme was the spice my literary life needed.

I am sincerely grateful to the organizers of this program and to my mentor, Ayoola Goodness. I was quite elated when I saw my mentor's name as I had glanced through his debut poetry collection. I appreciate my mentor's patience and perseverance. I thank him for working with my busy schedule and dishing out so much knowledge in so little time. With my mentor's support, I learnt more about punctuation and its effect. My understanding of figures of speech increased amazingly and I also explored the variety of spatial poetry. He shared enough materials that I haven't finished reading yet. I wish there was a bigger word than thank you.





**Gabrielina Gabriel-Abhie** is a writer, editor, and broadcast journalist. She is also a columnist with Writers Space Africa online magazine. She writes fiction, scripts for movies, TV and radio dramas.

Gabriel is the CEO of The Roaring Writer which renders book editing, ghostwriting and editing tutorial services. Some of the books she has edited are: *Why Only a Few Succeed* by Lufadeju Olusegun, *The Challenge* by Ogbonna Ukaorji, and *Is God Making You Lazy?* by Sandra Etubiebi. She has also ghostwritten personal statements, reference letters, fiction and nonfiction.

Gabriel was shortlisted among the finalists for Homevida 2017 scriptwriting competition, and selected as the winner of Writers Space Africa season two flash fiction contest. She uses her writing, to address nature or preach her propaganda. She believes that writers have the responsibility to effect change in their world through

writing. Her columns can be accessed in the monthly publications of Writers Space Africa at [www.writersspace.net](http://www.writersspace.net).

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I'm grateful for the efforts put in to make the SLM Mentorship programme successful and for the fact that it was done voluntarily by each mentor.

My mentor, Oyindamola, was very generous with the information about opportunities and she shared a wealth of knowledge. She understood me clearly and explained much of what I asked to my understanding. I would love to stick with her beyond this mentorship programme. I would recommend the SLM mentorship programme to anyone who is interested.





**Esieboma Oghenerobo Joy** is a trained Pharmacist at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Joy has always had a passion for literary art and she finds inspiration in activities and individuals she encounters daily. She turns these experiences into tools to inspire short stories and poems.

Joy spends her free time reading, writing poems, short stories or blogging. She hopes that in the coming years, her literary work will be a strong voice to channel change

in the society.

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I believe that enough thought was put into the SLM Mentorship programme because the aspects of writing covered are vital and important especially to young writers; why we write, what to write, and how best to write it. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this great experience and I hope the programme continues so other writers can benefit from it.

Additionally, it is hard to believe that my mentor, Patience Lawal and I started communicating just about one month ago. She welcomed me and took me under her wings so warmly that expressing my thoughts and concerns to her was never an issue.

I won't forget her patience and candor. She always made time to teach and guide me. She taught me the importance of candidness as a writer; owning my thoughts. I was able to work on improving my narrative techniques to a great extent. I really appreciate Patience for being my guide through the SLM mentorship program.

Every time I read some of our mails again, I pick up something new that helps me. Our conversations and chats will always provide continuous learning for improvement. The memories with my mentor, Patience and lessons will last a lifetime.





**Unah Rosemary Gabriel** hails from Cross-river state and is a graduate of international relations and strategic studies. She found her passion in writing at a very young age and since has written a lot of poems, some of which have been featured on numerous content sharing platforms across social media.

She fondly writes about love, loss, pain, abuse, life and hope. She uses her poems to shed light on emotional issues that the society neglects, also, to help her readers see the stories they cannot tell so that they may find their voices, hope and peace.

She is currently undertaking her National Youth Service in Jos, Plateau State.

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The SLM Mentorship programme has been a great deal for me and I am very pleased to have been a part of it. I am more grateful to my mentor, Damilola Popoola for giving all his attention and time to teach me despite his hectic schedule. If I would be fortunate to be part of this programme again, I would love to still be his mentee.

Damilola helped me realize the basic things about writing that I wasn't aware of. He made corrections where necessary and listened to my questions which he was always prepared to answer.

My writing has improved drastically and there's more life in it now. I used to have a problem with my writing structure but with support from the programme and my mentor, I have seen a lot of improvement.





**Uduak-Estelle Akpan** is a book reviewer with a heart for prose and creative writing. Her writings border on choices, belief, equality and liberty. When she is not appreciating literary works, she is working on her first draft and researching on her review blog project.

She writes with the goal of encouraging openness, provoking thoughts and escaping the bondage of being safe; her works aim at helping her readers stand for what they believe in.

Uduak is a member of the International Women's Writing Guild, a digital village for women writers; she has attended a number of literary seminars including the 2017 African Writers meet held in Lagos. As far back as 2001, Uduak won the first prize in creative writing for the International Women's day celebration hosted by the wife of the Vice

President of Nigeria with the theme "The Role of the Government in Eradicating Women Trafficking and Child Labour".

If "reading and writing" was not a thing, Uduak would be peer coaching teenagers or playing the violin in an orchestra.

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The SLM Mentorship programme gave me a sense of accountability and motivated me to place high importance on my writing(s).

My mentor, Kizito Okorowu provided detailed feedback and didn't hold back any knowledge he thought would be beneficial to me. His lessons were simple and I was comfortable enough with Kizito to share my fears as writer.

With my mentor's support, my writing is now concise and clear. I learned to readily embrace the perspectives of other writers and I am more open minded to receive criticisms. I am also more confident to put out more of my work and share my opinions.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. It has helped me in a tremendous way and I look forward to sharing my successes with the SLM team. Thank you.





**Olakunbi Olatunde** is a young Nigerian writer who lives in Abuja. She writes realistic fictions and is passionate about mental health which is why she studied Psychology. She has written a couple of flash fictions and when she isn't writing, she is teaching children with learning difficulties and sometimes preschoolers. She is currently learning French as a result of her immense love for languages and cultures. She enjoys yoga.

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I think that the SLM Mentorship programme was well thought out, considering that the management achieved their goals while carrying the participants along at every inch of the way without glitches. There were no lapses or delays on the path of the organisers and management.

My mentor, Kanyinsola Olorunnisola did a great job and I experienced a positive change from my commitment to the programme. I can safely say that I have learnt a few things to make my writing better. Sharing a few articles with my mentor has helped me to improve my punctuation. I got tips on writing better dialogues and creating a biography. I also received general advice on constructing flash fiction.





**Christie Jay** is a lawyer, freelance writer, poet and a spoken word artist who lives in Abuja, Nigeria. In 2017, she self-published her debut book of poetry "At war with love". Few months after she put out her free e-book "All the things you'll never know". Christie's writings focuses on pain, love, violence and abuse. As she likes to put it "I like to write about things people pretend not to exist".

My mentor Jacob Pamilerin is a genius. His diligence, patience and eagerness to teach/mentor made the experience a highly enjoyable one for me. He took his time to teach me the different techniques/skills to writing. Even on the days when I was unavoidably absent and busy, he was patient and understanding. I can tell you how good a mentor Jacob was, but if you want to see it, just check my Instagram page for the poems I wrote before the program and the ones I wrote after. You will see for yourself.

The programme boosted my confidence as a writer and I am now continuously on a writing spree. I have started sending my poems to local journals and signing up for competitions. I can now write lengthier poems and I understand the importance of narratives; how to use certain words to conjure imagery, evoke emotions and a host of many others.

