



PROJECT REPORT

Thrive Naija: Empowering Pride, Building Prosperity

SUBMITTED BY:

**THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT WORKING GROUP
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

LGBTI+ (A/ Q): Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (Asexual/ Queer)

EEW: Economic Empowerment Working Group

BIC: Bank Information Center

LGBTIQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer

LBQ Women: Lesbian Bisexual and Queer Women

COA: Community of Action

F2BM: Free To Be Me

LILO: Looking In, Looking Out

WBA: World Bank Advocacy

WAG: Women Affinity Group

ABOUT FREE TO BE ME

Free to Be Me is a transformative program dedicated to empowering a confident and diverse movement of LGBTIQ+ organizations and activists. By strengthening their capacity to advocate for human and socio-economic rights, the program enables LGBTIQ+ people to drive meaningful change within their communities, countries, and beyond. Operating across twelve countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, Free to Be Me creates platforms for marginalized voices to be heard and respected.

LGBTIQ+ individuals often face systemic discrimination, violence, and social exclusion based solely on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC). These barriers limit access to education, employment, and civic participation, leaving many economically vulnerable. Free to Be Me addresses this gap by focusing on socio-economic rights, ensuring that LGBTIQ+ communities are included in development programs and advocacy agendas.

FREE TO BE ME



A core feature of the program is the creation of Communities of Action (CoA), safe, inspiring spaces where LGBTIQ+ people can organize, collaborate, and develop strategies to assert their rights. Through CoA, local organizations gain sustainable resources and the tools to influence public opinion, legal frameworks, and access to socio-economic opportunities.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT WORKING GROUP

The Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) is a coalition of organizations and activists committed to advancing the financial well-being and economic inclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals in Nigeria. Operating under the Free to Be Me program and fiscally hosted by the Initiative for Gender Equality and Sexual Reproductive Health (IGE-SRH), EEWG creates pathways for economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, and financial independence through advocacy, skill-building, and strategic funding initiatives. In a society where LGBTQI+ individuals frequently encounter systemic discrimination and limited access to economic opportunities, EEWG plays a critical role in fostering an inclusive environment. By providing support and resources, the group empowers marginalized communities to assert their rights and drive meaningful societal change.

Members include IGE-SRH, Community for Health Initiative for Youth in Nigeria (CHIYN), and Hope Alive and Health Awareness Initiative (HAHAI)



Together, these organizations envision a Nigeria where LGBTQI+ individuals can access economic opportunities without fear of discrimination. EEWG's work is vital in promoting socio-economic rights and building a more equitable society for all.

INTRODUCTION

The LGBTIQ community in Nigeria faces profound socio-economic challenges stemming from systemic discrimination, social exclusion and restrictive legal environments. These factors severely limit access to financial resources, employment opportunities and platforms for meaningful participation in economic activities. The marginalization not only hinders personal and community development but also silences voices that could advocate for change.

There is a critical need to navigate these obstacles and to advocate for inclusive policies that recognize and address their unique challenges.

It is to this end the Economic Empowerment Working group, a dedicated consortium comprises of notable organisations such as Initiative for Gender Equality and Sexual Reproductive Health (IGE-SRH), Community Health Initiative for Youths in Nigeria (CHIYN), and Hope Alive Health Awareness Initiative (HAHAI) to address this gap by promoting a sustainable queer economy in Nigeria

through harnessing potential of the private sector, government sector, and global opportunities for the economic upliftment of the LGBTIQ community in Nigeria.

The socio-economic challenges faced by the LGBTIQ community in Nigeria are deeply rooted in systemic discrimination and a restrictive legal framework, which perpetuate cycles of marginalization. These barriers severely hinder access to essential resources, meaningful employment, and platforms for economic participation, thus stifling both individual and collective growth within the community.

In response to these pressing issues, the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG); a dedicated consortium of organizations including the Initiative for Gender Equality and Sexual Reproductive Health (IGE-SRH), Community Health Initiative for Youths in Nigeria (CHIYN), and Hope Alive Health Awareness Initiative (HAHAI) has emerged as a driving force to promote a sustainable queer economy

in Nigeria. Through a collaborative approach, the EEWG aims to:

- Advocate for inclusive policies that address the unique challenges faced by the LGBTIQ community, ensuring their economic rights are upheld.
- Leverage private sector partnerships, governmental support, and global opportunities to create platforms for financial growth and capacity development.
- Promote financial inclusion and entrepreneurship to empower community members to overcome socio-economic barriers and contribute meaningfully to the Nigerian economy.
- Foster resilience and visibility by creating an enabling society for the LGBTIQ community to amplify their voices and advocate for long-term systemic change.

The EEWG envisions a future where the LGBTIQ community thrives economically, gaining not just financial independence but also the power to advocate for their rights and contribute to societal progress.



To achieve economic empowerment and social inclusion for LGBTIQ individuals in Nigeria by enhancing leadership skills, advocating for inclusion in key economic programs, and engaging with multinational corporations to support LGBTIQ-focused economic initiatives by the end of 2025



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG)/Pathway has successfully undertaken several key activities to advance the project objectives:

1. Inception Meeting

The project kicked off with a dynamic Inception Meeting, which brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including LGBTQI leaders, advocates, partner organizations, and technical experts. This pivotal meeting set the tone for the initiative, creating an atmosphere of collaboration and shared purpose.

Held in a vibrant and inclusive setting, the session was a powerful blend of vision-setting and strategic alignment. Participants engaged in open discussions, brainstorming innovative ideas, and developing a shared understanding of the project's objectives and long-term goals.

The meeting highlighted the project's ambitious mission of achieving economic empowerment and social inclusion for LGBTQI individuals across Nigeria. Key topics included:

- **Clarifying Objectives:** Ensuring everyone was aligned on the project's goals and timelines.
- **Strategic Collaboration:** Identifying areas of synergy and potential partnerships to enhance the impact of the activities.
- **Setting Milestones:** Establishing clear deliverables to keep the project on track and ensure accountability.

Further discussions centered on financial accountability and the need for proper budget utilization. The meeting highlighted the need for inclusivity in planning as concerns about the lack of accommodations for individuals with disabilities were raised, alongside issues with team coordination and delays in communication and coordination with World Bank representatives.

A key concern about financial mismanagement within the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) was raised, leading to decisions to enhance transparency and communication.

Action items included the development of resources on multinational job opportunities for youth and scheduling interviews for project lead and grant and compliance officer positions.

The enthusiasm and energy in the room were palpable, as stakeholders recognized the unique opportunity to effect systemic change. The session concluded with actionable commitments, energizing everyone involved to contribute their expertise and resources to drive the project forward.

2. Personnel Recruitment

To ensure the seamless execution of the project, IGE-SRH undertook a meticulous recruitment process to onboard highly skilled and passionate individuals. Two critical roles were filled: Project Lead and Compliance Officer, both of which are pivotal to achieving the project's ambitious goals. The Project Lead brings extensive expertise in project management and a deep understanding of LGBTQI advocacy and economic empowerment. With a sharp focus on coordination and strategy, the Project Lead will oversee all activities, ensuring

ensuring that timelines, deliverables, and project milestones are met with precision and impact.

The Compliance Officer, on the other hand, serves as the backbone of integrity for the project. Tasked with upholding the highest standards of governance, accountability, and ethical practices, this role ensures that all processes align with donor requirements and organizational policies.

The recruitment process prioritized individuals with a demonstrated commitment to LGBTQI inclusion, innovative thinking, and strong leadership qualities. We utilized interview questions and assessments to test knowledge ensuring a guaranteed, dynamic and results-driven team that is well-equipped to navigate challenges and drive transformative outcomes.

IGE-SRH/EEWG has laid a strong foundation for effective project implementation, by assembling this powerhouse team, setting the stage for meaningful, lasting change for Nigeria's LGBTQI community.

3. In-Country LILO-UP Training

The In-Country Looking In, Looking Out (LILO) training was a transformative experience designed to empower LGBTQI leaders and activists from across Nigeria. Conducted over two impactful sessions in November 2024 and January 2025, the 4-day workshops brought together 30 dynamic individuals eager to strengthen their capacity for leadership and advocacy.

Facilitated by expert trainers in Nigeria, trained by Positive Vibes, the training adopted the renowned LILO methodology, which emphasizes personal reflection, resilience-building, and actionable leadership strategies. Participants represented diverse identities, including trans men, trans women, cisgender women, gender-nonconforming individuals, and queer persons. The participants were guided through interactive sessions, hands-on exercises, and open discussions that fostered self-awareness and inspired confidence to advocate for inclusion and economic empowerment effectively.

The program emphasized overcoming

barriers such as workplace stigma, navigating formal and informal job markets, and pursuing lifelong learning opportunities through education and apprenticeships. Participants explored income-generating ventures, microfinancing options, and practical entrepreneurial skills, such as building customer relationships, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Some of the key highlights of this training include; Personal Development: Participants explored their unique strengths, values, and leadership styles, enhancing their self-efficacy and ability to inspire change. Resilience Building: Practical tools and techniques were shared to help leaders navigate the challenges of advocacy in restrictive environments. And Leadership Skills Sessions focused on honing skills in strategic communication, mobilization, and stakeholder engagement to drive impactful advocacy efforts.

The training concluded with glowing feedback, with over 80% of participants reporting significant improvements in their confidence, resilience, and leadership abilities.

Many expressed newfound motivation to implement innovative advocacy strategies and become champions of LGBTQI economic empowerment in their communities.

This training not only equipped participants with essential skills but also created a network of connected, empowered leaders who are committed to driving systemic change across Nigeria. It marked a vital step toward achieving the project's overarching goals of social inclusion and economic empowerment for the LGBTQI community.

4. Sub-Grants for Capacity Strengthening

In line with its commitment to advancing economic empowerment and organizational development within the Nigerian Community of Action (COA), the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG), with support from IGE-SRH, implemented a sub-granting initiative targeting six LGBTQI-focused grassroots organizations who are members of the COA. This initiative, part of the Free To Be Me program, was designed to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance accountability, and support sustainable community-led action.





As part of the process, EEWG conducted organizational capacity assessments and delivered tailored technical assistance to each sub-grantee, enabling them to strengthen internal systems and improve operational effectiveness. Memoranda of Understanding were finalized and signed, clearly defining roles, compliance expectations, and reporting obligations, while all concept notes and budgets received approval prior to implementation. Funds were fully disbursed through a two-tranche system, including exchange gains, to ensure transparency and promote financial accountability. Narrative and financial reports from all sub-grantees

were carefully reviewed, and a consolidated progress and compliance report was compiled. Additionally, all documentation was systematically organized and archived to support internal learning and donor reporting.

The impact of this initiative has been significant.

Sub-grantees demonstrated increased confidence and capacity in managing donor funds, implementing projects, and maintaining transparent administrative procedures. Their timely submission of detailed interim reports and adherence to compliance standards highlighted a growing culture of accountability across the participating organizations. The consolidated interim report has

also served as a vital tool for tracking progress, identifying emerging challenges, and informing future capacity-strengthening efforts within the COA network. Technical assistance provided throughout the grant cycle empowered sub-grantees to critically assess their operations and implement improvements, particularly in the areas of financial management and reporting.

Overall, this sub-granting activity has made a notable contribution to the growth and resilience of six LGBTQI-led organizations in Nigeria. By combining financial support with targeted technical assistance, EEWG has laid a strong foundation for sustainable advocacy, effective program delivery, and strategic community engagement. The successes recorded through this initiative offer a model for scaling similar interventions to other grassroots organizations within and beyond the COA framework.

5. World Bank Advocacy Step Down Training

The Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) successfully hosted a three-day World Bank Advocacy Step-

Down Training designed to strengthen the capacity of LGBTQI civil society leaders to engage strategically with World Bank policies and economic programs in Nigeria. The training convened 28 participants from diverse LGBTQI-focused civil society organizations and advocacy groups, providing a rare platform for collective learning, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning.

The sessions aimed to equip participants with advanced advocacy skills, foster a deeper understanding of Nigeria's economic policies and frameworks as they relate to marginalized groups, and identify gaps that hinder the economic inclusion of LGBTQI persons. Participants explored the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework alongside other global mechanisms, positioning these tools as vital entry points for inclusive advocacy. Practical exercises guided them through key World Bank documents such as Project Appraisal Documents, Stakeholder Engagement Plans, and Environmental and Social Review Summaries, enabling participants to recognize World Bank-funded projects in Nigeria and identify

spaces where LGBTIQ perspectives could be meaningfully integrated.

The training emphasized the link between economic justice and social inclusion, highlighting systemic barriers faced by queer individuals and underscoring the importance of sustained advocacy. Sessions on crafting data-driven messages, role-plays, and real-life scenarios strengthened participants' ability to communicate effectively with policymakers and financial institutions. The participatory methodology—combining group discussions, brainstorming, digital platform navigation, and the “parking lot” approach for unresolved questions—ensured the sessions were dynamic, interactive, and responsive to participants' needs. Feedback mechanisms after each module created opportunities for adaptation and deeper engagement, while collaborative exercises fostered stronger networks among participants.

By the end of the program, participants had gained confidence in negotiation and strategic communication, demonstrated a stronger grasp of how

to advocate within World Bank frameworks, and laid the groundwork for future collaborations. The inclusion of real-life case studies and group presentations enriched the learning experience, helping participants internalize lessons and apply them to their own advocacy contexts. They also shared innovative strategies for economic empowerment, including initiatives in agriculture, technology, and vocational training, and stressed the importance of shifting from a purely rights-based approach toward development-focused dialogue with global financial institutions.

The training highlighted key lessons, including the necessity of clear, data-driven messaging, the effectiveness of role-play in preparing for interactions with non-allied stakeholders, and the value of brainstorming localized solutions to economic exclusion. Participants recognized the importance of networking and collaboration for sustaining long-term advocacy, as well as the need for flexibility in adapting to ever-evolving economic and institutional policies. Many also contributed personal experiences of economic discrimination and proposed

solutions such as inclusive financial services, mentorship initiatives, and funding diversification beyond traditional donor bases.

Ultimately, the World Bank Advocacy Step-Down Training created a transformative space for LGBTIQ leaders to exchange knowledge, build capacity, and sharpen their advocacy strategies. It represented a critical step toward more coordinated efforts to advance economic inclusion, ensuring that queer communities are not left behind in both national and global development agendas.

6. Mapping and Review of World Bank Projects in Nigeria

The Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) conducted a mapping and analysis of World Bank-supported economic empowerment initiatives in Nigeria, focusing on their inclusivity for Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer (LBQ) women and other LGBTIQ persons. The review assessed the Nigeria for Women Program Scale-Up (2023–2028), which emphasizes financial literacy, savings mobilization, microfinance partnerships, climate-resilient income generation, and policy advocacy. While





the program presents opportunities for engagement—such as leveraging Women Affinity Groups (WAGs), tailoring financial literacy modules, and utilizing Community Investment Funds (CIFs)—gaps in inclusion were identified. LBQ women are absent from key program documents, face exclusion from WAGs, lack access to CIFs, and encounter inaccessible grievance mechanisms that pose risks of retaliation.

EEWG recommended concrete measures to address these barriers, including explicit recognition of LBQ women in policy frameworks, creation of alternative financing models, safe and confidential consultation mechanisms, targeted vocational training, and stronger social norm change campaigns. Additionally, EEWG



urged the World Bank to strengthen grievance redress systems, integrate equity benchmarks, and partner with inclusive financial institutions and CSOs. Without these deliberate actions, LBQ women risk further exclusion from economic opportunities. This analysis highlights the urgent need for inclusive approaches to ensure equitable participation and protection in World Bank-funded programs.

7. Virtual Sessions with Outright/BIC on World Bank Advocacy (WBA)

Through technical support from the Bank Information Center (BIC) and Outright International, the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) has strengthened its advocacy for LGBTQI economic inclusion within

World Bank-funded programs in Nigeria. Support included three strategic virtual sessions with BIC and Outright to align advocacy priorities and identify entry points in World Bank projects. With their guidance, EEWG mapped and analyzed three major programs—the Primary Health Care Provision Strengthening Program, Nigeria for Women Program Scale-Up, and National Social Safety Net Program Scale-Up—identifying the Nigeria for Women Program as most promising for targeted advocacy.

Following the Kenya regional convening, EEWG refined its advocacy goals with feedback from BIC and Outright to better align with World Bank frameworks. Technical partners also provided input for EEWG's February 2025 decision-making meeting to select a priority program, supported document reviews, and guided monitoring of Nigeria's Country Partnership Framework for further inclusion opportunities.

This collaboration has enhanced EEWG's capacity to engage World Bank stakeholders, shape advocacy strategies, and build a roadmap for

integrating LGBTQI inclusion into economic development initiatives. Ultimately, it lays the foundation for systemic change and sustainable empowerment of LGBTQI individuals in Nigeria.

8. Advocacy Engagement/Meeting with the World Bank

As part of efforts to advance economic inclusion for sexual and gender minorities in Nigeria, the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) held a strategic engagement with the Task Team Leader (TTL) of the Nigeria for Women Scale-Up Project (NFWP). The meeting focused on advocating for the meaningful integration of lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women in the project's design and delivery.

EEWG presented a policy brief outlining barriers faced by LBQ women, including stigma, fear of exposure, and limited access to financial services. They recommended the adoption of a tailored Women Affinity Group (WAG) model to provide safe, trust-based spaces for financial literacy, savings, and solidarity. The discussion emphasized the importance of

inclusive language, LBQ visibility, psychological safety, and discreet participation mechanisms such as peer-led outreach and backchannel referrals.

Key achievements included recognition of LBQ women as a priority population, consensus on scaling the Affinity Group Model, and agreement on improving data collection to capture hidden identities. This engagement shifted perceptions at the World Bank level, laying the foundation for collaboration on inclusive programming. By embedding community-led, safe, and adaptive models, EEWG is shaping more equitable economic development outcomes for LBQ women in Nigeria.

9. CSOs Convening on Economic Inclusion of LBQ Women in World Bank Programs

Following a strategic advocacy meeting with the Task Team Leader (TTL) of the Nigeria for Women Scale-Up Project, the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) convened LBQ-led and LBQ-serving civil society organizations across Nigeria to explore practical strategies for establishing

Women Affinity Groups (WAGs)—a critical eligibility requirement for participation in the program. This initiative was designed to ensure that LBQ women could meet inclusion criteria while safeguarding confidentiality and safety in environments where stigma and hostility remain prevalent. The convening marked a pivotal step toward advancing collective economic inclusion and strengthening the representation of LBQ women within this major national program.

During the meeting, participants reviewed and refined shared priorities, including the scaling of the Affinity Group model, the promotion of community-based training, the creation of safe and inclusive spaces, and the engagement of male partners to foster broader community acceptance. They also emphasized the importance of program flexibility, discreet referral systems, improved data collection, mental health integration, and the use of inclusive language. Tailoring the WAG model to address the realities of LBQ women experiencing economic, social, and cultural exclusion was a central theme,

alongside the need for clear information on current and future project sites to guide targeted WAG formation.

The group further underscored the necessity of continued collaboration with BIC and Outright International for technical guidance, particularly in relation to facilitator selection and the integration of WAGs into the program. This partnership was reaffirmed through commitments to strengthen alignment with the broader Nigeria for Women Scale-Up framework, secure clarity on facilitator processes, and establish formal connections with existing WAG coordinators to embed LBQ inclusion in community-level activities.

Overall, the convening significantly enhanced the collective capacity of LBQ organizations to engage meaningfully with national economic empowerment programs. By strategizing on safe, culturally sensitive WAG formations and pushing for inclusive program design, participants laid the foundation for greater visibility and participation of LBQ women in development initiatives. The

collaborative decisions, supported by technical partners, will help ensure that future efforts are more targeted, inclusive, and responsive to the lived realities of marginalized LBQ communities across Nigeria.

10. Research of Existing DEI Policies of the Multinational/National Companies In Nigeria

The Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) conducted a study titled “Hidden Inclusion: The Reality of Sexual and Gender Diverse Communities in the Corporate World” to evaluate the implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies in multinational and national corporations in Nigeria. The research examined how these policies address the needs of LGBTIQ employees, assessed existing gaps, and offered recommendations for strengthening DEI frameworks to support the economic empowerment of sexual and gender minorities.

Findings reveal that corporate DEI efforts largely exclude explicit LGBTIQ inclusion due to restrictive laws like the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act and prevailing cultural norms.

Most DEI policies prioritize gender, ethnicity, and disability, while LGBTIQ-specific protections remain minimal or symbolic. Trust in grievance and reporting systems is low, discouraging employees from reporting discrimination or harassment. Additionally, while many multinational corporations commit to global DEI standards, these commitments are inconsistently implemented in Nigeria. However, opportunities are emerging among progressive organizations, younger professionals, and civil society collaborations promoting more inclusive practices.

The research successfully documented the lived experiences of LGBTIQ employees, highlighting systemic barriers while identifying best practices to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Key recommendations include integrating SOGIESC awareness into DEI training, establishing confidential reporting mechanisms, and developing mentorship programs for marginalized employees.

By positioning LGBTIQ inclusion as both a human rights imperative and a business advantage, this study lays the

groundwork for fostering safer, equitable workplaces in Nigeria's corporate sector, advancing innovation, social equity, and economic growth.



KEY OUTCOMES/ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established strong foundations for collaboration through the Inception Meeting, which clarified objectives, built partnerships, and set milestones, while also addressing concerns around accountability and inclusivity.
- Recruited a dedicated Project Lead and Compliance Officer, strengthening project governance, coordination, and integrity.

- Delivered two LILO-UP Trainings, equipping over 30 LGBTQI leaders with resilience, advocacy, and entrepreneurial skills, resulting in increased confidence, leadership capacity, and community networks.
- Successfully implemented a sub-granting initiative that strengthened the institutional capacity of six LGBTQI-led grassroots organizations, improving financial management, accountability, and sustainability.
- Built advocacy capacity through World Bank Step-Down Training, empowering 28 CSO leaders to strategically engage with World Bank policies and programs and fostering peer networks for collaborative advocacy.
- Conducted a mapping and review of World Bank projects, identifying gaps in inclusion and recommending practical pathways for LBQ and LGBTIQ participation in the Nigeria for Women Scale-Up Project.
- Secured technical support from BIC and Outright International, enhancing advocacy strategy, program mapping, and decision making for systemic engagement with the World Bank.
- Achieved breakthrough advocacy with the World Bank TTL, securing recognition of LBQ women as a priority group and influencing the adoption of safe, inclusive Women Affinity Group models.
- Convened LBQ-led CSOs to design practical, community-driven strategies for WAG participation and integration into national programs.
- Produced pioneering research on DEI policies in Nigerian corporations, documenting LGBTIQ employees' experiences, identifying systemic barriers, and offering actionable recommendations for workplace inclusion.

LESSONS LEARNED



The EEWG's interventions underscore the importance of context, adaptability, and collaboration in advancing LGBTQI economic empowerment in Nigeria. Tailored and context-specific support proved essential in addressing the unique realities of sexual and gender minorities, while personal empowerment training such as LILO-UP demonstrated the value of resilience-building for leaders navigating hostile environments.

Continuous engagement with multiple stakeholders—including the World Bank, BIC, Outright International, and grassroots CSOs—proved vital in sustaining momentum, securing buy-

in, and identifying actionable entry points for advocacy. Flexibility was equally critical, as adjustments to sub-granting processes and prioritization of promising programs ensured sustained progress despite challenges.

The project further highlighted the importance of inclusive representation, ensuring that diverse LGBTQI identities, regions, and socioeconomic backgrounds were reflected in advocacy efforts. Data-driven approaches, combined with transparency, accountability, and skilled project personnel, enhanced effectiveness, strengthened credibility, and improved sustainability. Ultimately, framing LGBTQI inclusion not only as a human rights imperative but also as a driver of economic development resonated strongly with both development and corporate stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECT



1. Invest in Leadership Development: Expand ongoing leadership training, mentorship, and peer learning to cultivate a new generation of resilient and visible LGBTQI leaders.
2. Deepen Advocacy with Key Institutions: Strengthen structured engagement with the World Bank, government agencies, and policy forums to institutionalize inclusive practices.
3. Support Queer Entrepreneurship: Provide direct support through small grants, seed funding, market access, and tailored mentorship, particularly targeting low-literacy and economically marginalized groups.
4. Leverage DEI Research Findings: Use evidence from DEI policy research to build employer networks, convene corporate roundtables, and develop model guidelines for systemic workplace inclusion.
5. Sustain and Expand Networks: Facilitate regional convenings, joint campaigns, and cross-CSO collaborations to reinforce solidarity and amplify collective impact.
6. Preserve Lived Realities: Create safe spaces and platforms to document and share the lived experiences of LGBTQI persons, both as an advocacy tool and as a means of preserving queer history in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION



The Economic Empowerment Working Group has demonstrated that deliberate, evidence-based, and collaborative efforts can transform systemic exclusion into pathways of opportunity. By combining capacity building, strategic advocacy, and strong partnerships, EEWG has not only strengthened LGBTQI organizations but also carved out new spaces for engagement within national and international development frameworks.

These achievements prove that economic empowerment for LGBTQI communities is both possible and necessary for Nigeria's inclusive growth. The lessons learned provide a roadmap for scaling impact, while the recommendations outline concrete steps to deepen systemic change. Going forward, EEWG is committed to sustaining this momentum, amplifying LGBTQI voices, and driving equitable participation in Nigeria's economic development.

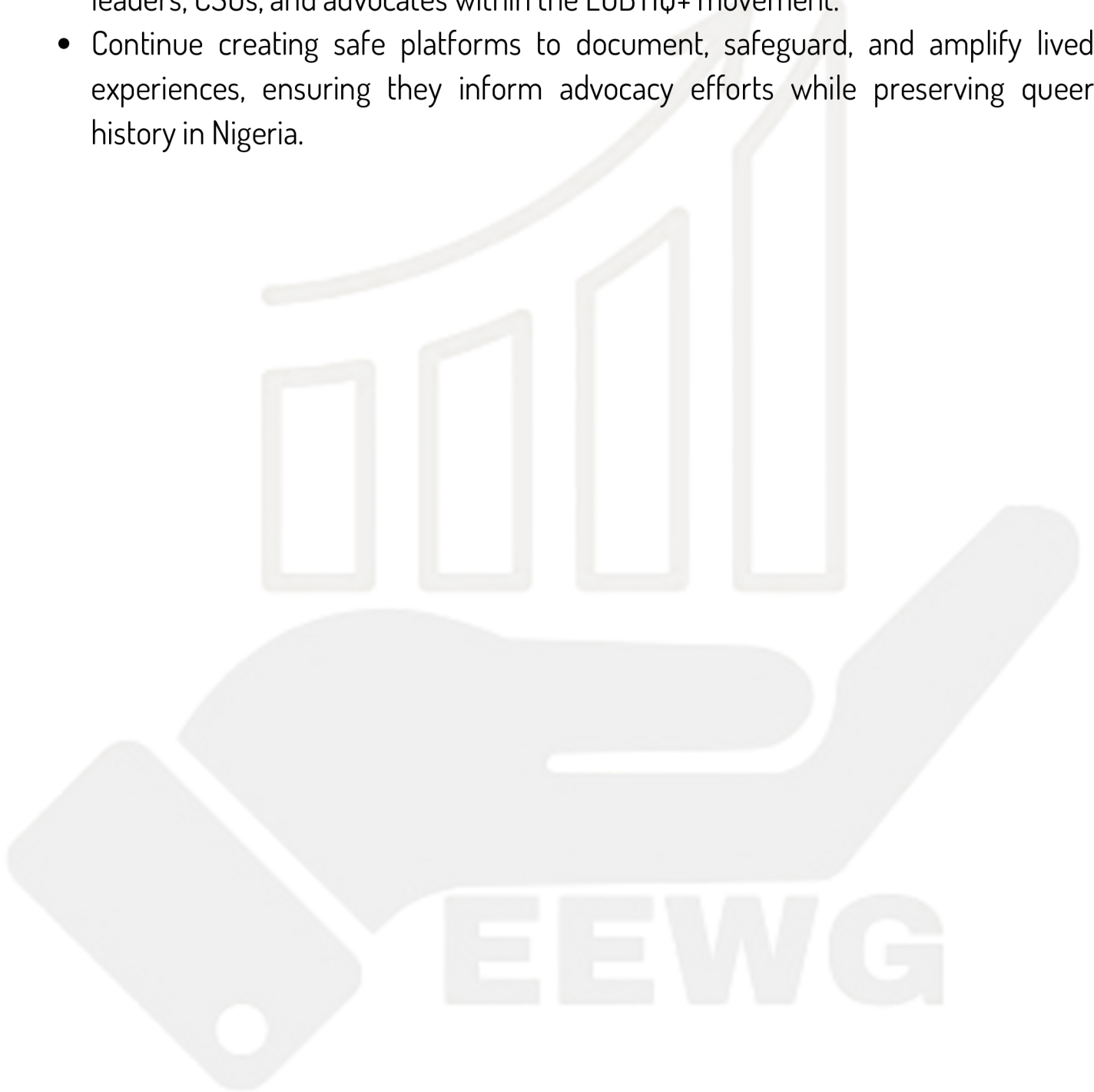
NEXT STEPS



Beyond the project and building on the progress achieved so far, the Economic Empowerment Working Group (EEWG) the following steps are recommended to be taken to ensure the successful continuation and expansion of project successes and sustainability.

- Expand on the success of F2BM by offering continuous leadership training, mentorship, and peer learning to nurture a new generation of resilient, strategic, and visible LGBTIQ+ leaders.
- Deepen engagement with key institutions such as the World Bank through structured follow-ups, active participation in economic policy dialogues, and consistent collaboration with government and development stakeholders.
- Complement skills training with targeted support for queer entrepreneurs, including access to small grants, seed funding, markets, and tailored mentorship, with a focus on low-literacy and economically marginalized groups.
- Leverage findings from the DEI policy research to promote workplace inclusion by building networks of progressive employers, convening corporate roundtables, and developing model DEI guidelines for systemic change in Nigeria's corporate sector.

- Sustain and expand the F2BM platform through regional convenings, joint advocacy campaigns, and collaborative projects that strengthen alliances among leaders, CSOs, and advocates within the LGBTIQ+ movement.
- Continue creating safe platforms to document, safeguard, and amplify lived experiences, ensuring they inform advocacy efforts while preserving queer history in Nigeria.



ANNEXES

[Report of the World Bank Advocacy Step Down Training](#)

[Training Agenda](#)

[Video from the World Bank Advocacy Step Down Training](#)

[Mapping Report of the World Bank Funded Projects](#)

[Engagement Brief on the Identified and Reviewed World Bank Project](#)

[Research Overview and Tools](#)

[Hidden Inclusion: The Reality of Sexual and Gender Diverse Communities in the Corporate World \(DEI RESEARCH\)](#)

