



## Women empowering women

**Chinenye Ezeakor, 27, Nigeria**

Chinenye's name is one to be remembered. Having studied electrical engineering in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and Leeds, in the UK, she is set to become a model for all Nigerian and African girls. During her studies, she soon came to realise that gender-based stereotypes still play a big role in girls' choices for a career: "Girls feel discouraged when they see that the biggest majority of students in science classes are men", she said. "I actually believe that the lack of female role models in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) is to blame for it".

In September 2015, she set her mind to fill the gender gap and founded African Sisters in STEM – A-SISTEM, a platform for African women engaged in science, with the goal of encouraging young girls to join the scientific community. With A-SISTEM, Chinenye created a system of mentorships to provide training to over 500 young female students in areas such as energy, computer programming and physics.

In 2017, she was selected to become one of the Young Leaders within the European Development Days (EDD); the reason for her selection lies in the exceptional contribution that Chinenye and A-SISTEM are giving to the cause, through the organisation of seminars, trainings and mentorship sessions. In particular, the new Science in a Box programme to train teachers has already reached more than 20 schools in Nigeria.

Chinenye took a lot away from her experience as a Young Leader at EDD 2017, especially in terms of exposure. The EDD represented for her an opportunity not only to have her voice heard on the global stage about the issues she cares about, but also to have people reaching out to her, asking to join her cause. She is now regularly invited by the EU Representation in Nigeria to join meetings and share her expertise on inspiring young girls to join the world of STEM.

“Women are a driving force to the economic recovery and stability of every nation, most especially with the right education, support and encouragement. The EDD Young Leaders Programme recognises this, and has supported me with a platform for sharing my stories, experience, and breakthrough for women empowerment through Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).”



Chinenye Ezeakor during EDD 2017

Chinenye Ezeakor during a seminar  
at a high school in Nigeria



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