

# How helping to shape lives has shaped mine too!

The amazing experience of how helping girls attending programmes at the Lattice Club in Lagos helped the tutor as well.

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I am Oreoluwa Olomodosi and I have been volunteering with Lattice Club since 2017. I have a Bsc in Economics and Finance from the University of

York and I work as a Financial Auditor.

I had always wanted to be a teacher right from when I was a child. I remember during career days in primary school or when they told us to write essays on what we would like to be. I will always talk about how I wanted to be a teacher. It made me feel really special because my classmates would talk about prestigious occupations like Medicine, Engineering and Law, no one else wanted to be a teacher.

My first encounter with Lattice Club was when a friend who is a Lattice club coordinator told me of a club girl who was about to write WAEC but was not prepared for her Math exams. Lattice Club is an after-school club which is organized and held at the Lagoon Institute of Hospitality Studies, Lagos, weekly for Secondary School girls who are within the ages

of 10 and 18. Most of the girls go to public schools or low-standard private schools with poor quality teaching and facilities. I was in school and couldn't help much, so I asked a friend to tutor the SS3 girl. In April 2017 I finished my foundation program and while waiting to resume at the University, I started going to teach in the club myself.

My SS3 student wrote WAEC and passed Math, I was elated and my spark for teaching was ignited! Her mother was so grateful and soon after I started teaching her sisters as well and then more and more girls joined the class. Saturdays became the happiest days of my week, and I would go home feeling so fulfilled. I was a very shy person but for some reason when I was teaching the shyness disappeared, except when I tried to teach English. English wasn't my *forte*, I'm a *numbers* kind of girl.

Summer 2017 was amazing! We organised a holiday programme for the girls, I taught them Math, baked with them, played games with them and we went on excursions together. It was like having many little sisters and it made me realise I love working with young people. The year before (2016) I had volunteered at a similar programme but for girls from higher income backgrounds. In that programme the atmosphere was different, the girls had all they needed so I didn't feel like I was making much difference in their lives. Lattice club was different, the girls needed my help and I could make an impact.

I was motivated to keep helping the Lattice club girls and other students like them. In the following years I recruited more volunteers - students & young professionals to help out in the club. I continued managing the

group remotely while I was away schooling in York.

Some highlights for me include coordinating the girls to carry out our yearly community service project which lasts for 3 weeks. After the service project I coached them to present their project at the annual **Incontro Romano** National Competition (a conference for Hospitality schools & clubs) and to my fulfillment they won the first position both years I worked with them. Another highlight for me was leading a team to fundraise over a million Naira to purchase laptops to teach the girls coding under the Google computer science program. Most of the girls had never used laptops before so they came to the club each Saturday more excited to learn how to code. Lastly, during the pandemic we began online learning with our SS3 girls and also prepared them to take the Pan Atlantic

University Post UTME essay and interview. Thankfully, all three of them got scholarships into university.

My time volunteering at Lattice Club has definitely shaped me, not only have I helped the girls but it has helped me too. I learnt to love and to serve, it brought me out of my shell and made me a lot more confident. I have developed my leadership skills and built on all the virtues I learnt in Lagoon Secondary School. I know so much more about hospitality now as well and who knows it might come in useful someday. My time at Lattice club helped me build transferable skills and experiences which are now useful in my career.

*Oreoluwa Olomodosi.*

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