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My Students, My Pride

A teacher of the Lagoon Institute of Hospitality Studies (LIHS), shares with joy the experiences of her students who, during the holidays, organized culinary sessions in their various communities. These sessions have turned to be impactful both to the students and their communities. LIHS is a hospitality and tourism school in Lagos targeted at equipping young women from low income homes with relevant skills that help them to be economically independent.

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My students in final year are required to carry out a full day restaurant project scheduled for their last semester in the school of catering. This way they can demonstrate their competence in the various hospitality skills they have learnt during their two years in the *Lagoon Institute of Hospitality Studies*. As you would imagine, they look up to this day with enthusiasm, and they want to showcase and impress.

However, it was evident that this project has its flaws! It included expenses which are sometimes beyond the financial means of the students and their low income earning families. In addition, assessing the students' abilities was not easy due to time constraint, the

availability of guests as well as cooking facilities, which were often above their own level of competence to resolve.

To remedy these challenges, the school introduced the *Individual Impact Community Service Projects*. The idea is to enable the students carry out their projects at their various communities during their long vacation, thereby offering them opportunities to teach people specific culinary skills like cake baking, cake icing, preparation of popular snacks such as Nigerian buns, cinnamon rolls, puff puffs and even some exotic dishes, juices and smoothies. This project has recorded 100% success. The students presented stories of the feedback from beneficiaries, of the different activities carried out, in a seminar also using video recordings.

Hear the students share their experiences:

Ruth said: “I carried out my project in a village in Kano State, the northern part of the country. I taught a group of eight people how to bake and ice a birthday cake from start to finish, and also how to prepare a vegetable salad making use of the available vegetables in that area. Some of the ladies in my audience were really amazed at the discovery that cabbages could be eaten by humans, because in that village cabbages are only fed to cows!”.

Monica summarized her experience: “I taught ten people at Ajamgbadi area of Lagos State how to prepare homemade pasta from dough to the finished product. Everyone that attended the pasta session was amazed to discover the magic behind various commercial pasta labels and were delighted to know they could have pasta for a meal at home, even when they may not have the money to buy the processed ones”.

Chilotam was telling us: “I taught a group of twelve people, mainly teenagers and a few mothers at Nnewi, how to carry out safer and healthier housekeeping without over-stressing themselves. I achieved this by teaching them organizational tips ranging from drawing up a housekeeping plan, to creating space for the storage of housekeeping tools for easy access to everyone in the family. In addition, I taught them basic safety and hygiene tips regarding hand washing, maintaining the right posture, hair and tooth care as well as how a lady should take care of her personal appearance even when she is at home”.

Esther had also a good time: “I gave classes to six ladies on how to manage better their weekly family laundry tasks. I shared with them the best methods to use in removing stains from fabrics, gentler ways to

wash fabrics, how to fold laundered clothes including socks and inner garments for easy keeping and reuse”.

Chizoba was able to surprise everybody with her determination: “To raise the money, I went money-hunting from my uncles and siblings telling them that they will be surprised to see their money transformed into *oyinbo* pizza (*oyinbo* is a Nigerian word for the white man). I found it difficult to convince them to help finance the training as it was festive period. Undaunted, I had to go to their houses several times to get the desired result. I also had to assist in the house chores of my beneficiaries so as to make it possible for them to attend the training. Some of the feedback I received afterwards were: ‘I am really proud of you! Thank you for teaching me all these’ from one participant. Another said ‘My child,

please tell me about your school because my daughter needs to enroll there!'. ”

In these creative ways sixteen students of the second year carried out their *Individual Impact Service Projects* in the communities most familiar to them, where they spent their holiday. They recorded the sessions on video and when they returned to school they presented them formally to the rest of the school in a seminar. At the end they were able to train and impact, at the very least, eighty people across the country, as well as helping to create a greater awareness of the school of hospitality in these communities. They did not spend beyond their means and their skills’ demonstration was an eloquent way of showing their parents what they have been learning for almost two years.

I am very proud of my students and the outcome of this project.

ByUche Asomba

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