

## **Women in surveying networks around the world**

### **Women-In-Surveying Making Waves and Breaking Records in the shores of Nigeria**

**Angela Kesiena ETUONOVBE, Nigeria and Angela Omamuyovwi ETUONOVBE, Nigeria**

Key Terms: Women; Surveying; Profession; Institution; Nigeria

The profession of surveying in Nigeria is regarded as a man's profession because it was mainly dominated by them. Gradually some women dared to study the profession in higher institutions' were treated with disdain as back then, it is a no area and the men were not friendly at all. Even after graduation, there is no place for them to work, so all the years spent in higher institutions of learning in the pursuit of a degree in Surveying was regarded as wasted as there are no jobs for them. This made women veered into the teaching profession or found themselves as clerks in the bank because of their mathematical background. This problem gave birth to the formation of Women-In-Surveying in Nigeria, through the back up of some strong members of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) who have soft sport for women. About 20 women started this group which is a sub-group of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) and was sponsored by the Institution. The women immediately sprang to work. Since Nigeria is very large it was shared into 3 regions – North, East and West, for easy coordination. These women went into the nook and cranny of their regions visiting higher institutions and encouraging the female student surveyors to continue with the profession. Today we have over 400 Women –in Surveying members, so many in Private Practice, a few as Surveyor Generals, and many occupying key positions in various establishment. This is not all, we now partner with the Women Affairs Ministry in the country to solicit for the girl child education, promote the study of surveying in institutions by providing scholarships as well as having career talks in secondary school, telling them what surveying is all about, its benefits and often award of scholarship to the best student for answering relevant questions. We are very strong in Nigeria and are the advocate for the surveying profession. This paper will highlight the activities of Women-In Surveying Nigeria, the problems encountered and how it was surmounted to get to its prime of place today.

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Surveying has always been seen and perceived by many as an exclusive preserve for men from time. This may not be for long. There are indeed women in surveying who are accomplished and distinguished in every sense. The women in surveying in the present dispensation had decided to drop their background toga and become more visible and proactive in the affairs of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, in the profession and in the country at large. It is against this backdrop and to sustain the above tempo that the women in Nigeria had resorted to establishing an umbrella and complementing association that will champion their course. It is tagged “Women – In – Surveying”. The mission is that “women shall form at least 30% of the total membership” of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors and actively participate in all NIS Programmes. Before now, female surveyors constitute about 3% of the total membership of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, and they are hardly seen to participate in the affairs of the Institution. With the establishment of Women – In – Surveying, the percentage of women has increased from 3% to 10%. This figure though still poor, the Women – In – Surveying still have a lot of work to do to achieve their vision.

#### **1.1. WIS Aim and Objectives**

Women - In - Surveying (WIS) Nigeria is a sub group under the Nigerian Institution of Nigeria (NIS) and was created in 2004 for the welfare and interests of its members, to maintain high professional ethics among members, speak with one voice on issues affecting them and to advocate for the education of the Nigerian youths especially the ‘Girl Child’, with the view to encourage and support them to deliberately chose Surveying as a course to study in the tertiary Institution. It is a vibrant group, made up of brainy, adventurous and courageous ladies who have the ability to see into the future and sustenance of our unique profession. The aim of WIS is to propagate the ‘gospel’ of Surveying by ensuring that the Surveying profession becomes a choice career amongst the Nigerian Youths with the following objectives;

- To propagate the gospel of surveying through conferences/seminars, workshops, career talks, radio and television programmes etc.
- To encourage the Nigerian youth especially the ‘Girl Child’ to deliberately choose Surveying as a course to study in the tertiary institution.

- To educate and enlighten the younger women in Survey Profession (particularly students) on the need for them to progress in the profession and get to the peak of their career through SURCON registration.
- To encourage the students who have distinguished themselves in their academics through bursary awards and scholarships.
- To ensure that female surveyors demonstrate professionalism in all ramifications.

It has not always been rosy for Women-In-Surveying Nigeria, it went through various storms and challenges to get to the stage where we are today, which we can call a success story.

#### 1.4. Past and Present WIS Coordinators

Below are great women that made WIS Nigeria tick over the years (Figure 1a-1g).



1a

Surv.(Mrs.) Felicia Kashienwanne Omatsola, fnis. Initiator and 1<sup>st</sup> Coordinator, 2004 – 2008  
2012



1b

Surv.(Mrs.) Angela Kesiena Etuonovbe, fnis  
2<sup>nd</sup> Coordinator, 2008-2010



1c

Surv.(Mrs.) Helen Fakorode, fnis  
3<sup>rd</sup> Coordinator, 2010-



1d

Surv. Augustina C.O.  
Anabili, fnis  
PhD.  
4<sup>th</sup> Coordinator,  
Coordinator,  
2012-2014



1e

Surv. (Mrs.) Charity  
Michael Olla fnis  
5<sup>th</sup> Coordinator,  
2014-2016



1f

Surv.(Mrs.) Elizabeth  
'Funke Adekunle fnis.  
6<sup>th</sup> Coordinator  
2016-2018



1g

Surv. Gertrude  
Nnanjar Njar fnis  
7<sup>th</sup>  
2018-2020

Figure 1a-1g; Past and present National Coordinators of Women-In-Surveying Nigeria.

## 2.0 WOMEN IN SURVEYING NIGERIA

As earlier mentioned, the aim and objectives of Women in Surveying Nigeria included; awarding scholarship to female students, creating awareness among students in post primary schools and sensitization of students on specialized fields in surveying, in addition to the welfare of members. The beauty of it all is that Women's multiple roles as career women, professionals, wives and home managers could not distract them from delivering optimum and satisfactory services at their various places of work as public servants or private practitioners and as advocates for the surveying as would be seen section five (5) below. It is a known fact that whatever a woman lays her hands to do she can do very well because most women have the patience that some men lack and so they take time to do things very well.

## 3.0 CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN SURVEYING NIGERIA

Women generally face a lot of obstacles by virtue of their gender and cultural background. They are made to believe that they are inferior to men and of a weaker sex who must be dependable on men especially in the African setting and in Nigeria in particular, where while growing up you are made to respect the male child as he could be the head of the family tomorrow even if he is younger to you the female. This notion has conditioned the thinking of the women in Africa and the female surveyor in Nigeria is not an exception.

WIS Nigeria was faced with numerous challenges at the teething stage. They includes but not limited to;

- Low Potentials Usage: Some were ignorant of their potentials and what they could achieve with it, they could not realize that when such feminine potentials are put to use, 'the sky is our starting point'. Some women use to chicken out, thinking that they cannot be employed or be on their own as female, well they cannot be blamed for having such thoughts because that was the way of thinking of most the Nigerian men then. This made many female surveying graduates to abandon the profession for jobs like teaching and the banking industry. This is gradually changing now.
- Family Barriers: it was difficult for some women to balance family responsibilities and their professional life and so it was difficult for them to participate in professional organizations. Due to the peculiar nature of women and their duty as wives, some female surveyors find it difficult to balance family responsibility with their professional life. Both tasks are very demanding, it takes only an enlightened and understanding husband who is not a chauvinist to help the woman to make this balance. The Nigerian woman is always seen to be at the beck and call of the man. An average Nigerian man thinks that the best profession for a woman is a teaching job where the woman returns early from work (2 p.m. Nigerian time (14:00 hrs), so as to take care of the children and household chores; anything outside this is readily not acceptable. Some men feel threatened when the woman becomes wealthier than they are, and so will not allow their wives to practice the profession of their field of study. Only the educated, enlightened and understanding husbands will allow this. Most of the female surveyors who are active in the affairs of the profession today have the support of their husbands and so are doing very well. Some husbands even go as far as attending the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Nigerian Institution Surveyors, and they are proposing to constitute a body called Surveyors Husbands Association of Nigeria (SHAN) just like we have the Surveyors Wives Association of Nigeria (SWAN) as well as the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Conferences.
- Low Patronage by Male Counterparts: Some male surveyors would not want to employ a female surveyor. The notion they had was that the woman is lazy and the work will be too stressful for her, the case is worst if she is married, as they would complain that pregnancy and child birth would eat into their time and this they were not ready to tolerate. But they could be right with the experience of some male Surveyors with some of the women. They complained that, some of the female surveyors when employed cannot just do any work (selective), in fact cannot do anything called work (i.e. they are good for nothing). They refused to go for field work, and are not prepared to learn. There was a particular case where a male surveyor complained to the author who was responsible for her been employed, that the lady in his firm refused to go for fieldwork, and that she cannot withstand the rigorous of the job. She was asked to do some manual

drafting in the office; she was unable to do it and also refused to be corrected. And refuse to learn as well. She was later relieved of her job. This category of female surveyors is just about 2% of the totality of Women in Surveying. The few who had encountered with some of the Female Surveyors, will attest to the fact that they are very hard-working, energetic, innovative, and agile, in fact some do go to field work. The author is an example of such women, who go to field with pregnancy at the early, middle and late trimester stages. She has six children, and all were taken to the field while she was pregnant, including swamp jobs having done the statutory swimming test. Another area of complaint by the male surveyors is that women frequently go on maternity leave and as such are not always there when they are needed.

- Registration Exam fever: At the early stages some women were afraid of taking the Surveyors registration exam to enable them become registered Surveyors. The reason they proffered then was that it was not possible for them to be CEO's of Surveying firm so there was no need for registration, and this again was a hurdle we needed to cross. The few who eventually became registered were afraid to venture into private practice, as they were afraid they will not be able to compete with their male counterparts. Today the story is different.

#### **4.0 CHALLENGES TURNED TO STEPPING STONES FOR VICTORY**

In life, how one handles challenges matters, it will either mar you or make you. Thanks to the doggedness of the initiator and founding members of WIS who caught the Vision of the Initiator. {Surv. (Mrs.) Felicia Kashienwanne Omatsola, fnis}. And successive Coordinators have carried on with the Vision. The good thing is that there is continuity of purpose and each Coordinator improves on what the previous had done.

Firstly, there was massive mobilization of women graduating from higher institutions as surveyors to register as members of NIS and WIS. During the AGM and WIS Conferences, workshops and seminars were organized to kindle their interest in the profession. In the process we had to preach the Gospel to them to enlighten them on the potentials they have and what can be achieved with it. Hence we came up with the slogan in our AGM. “UP WIS! BRAINY, ADVENTUROUS AND COURAGEOUS”. It really had a positive impact on us and still do till date.

Secondly, some of the women whose husbands' refused them to participate fully in their professional bodies were always invited to Surveyors events, especially during end of year parties or Annual events dinner. At such occasions they chat with their male counterparts whose wives are excelling in the field of surveying. This has encouraged a lot of men to allow their wives to fly higher.

Thirdly, we had to plead with our male counterpart to employ female surveyors and allow them to be going for fieldwork and also take good care of them. Those who were afraid of field work,

during our seminars and workshops were encouraged to look inwards and discover their areas of interest, for example data processing and software development and do encourage them to excel in such fields and this has made a huge impact and enlarged the coast of WIS.

Fourthly, more women were encouraged to take the Surveyors Council of Nigeria (SURCON) Examinations and aspire to get registered, as well as to venture into private practice. Today the story is different. We have so many Registered female Surveyors, some as Surveyor Generals at the State levels, so many as Directors at the Federal levels, many as CEO's in private practice, many as lecturers, the list is endless and all are making waves and taking the profession to a higher level.

#### 4.0. ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN – IN –SURVEYING (WIS) IN NIGERIA

WIS Nigeria do hold annual conferences hosted by regions, this is to enable the gospel of surveying to be preached in that State of the region especially to the government. More recently WIS Nigeria does invite policy makers to their function to drive home the importance of surveying to nation building and especially to the 'girl child'. Figure and below shows an excerpt some previous conferences



2a



2b

Figure 2a and 2b. WIS National Conference 2018, in Port Harcourt, River State. Present were, His Excellency, Surv. Hassan Suleiman, Honourable Minister of Environment, Her Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Rivers State, The President of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, Alabo C.D. Charles fnis and other dignitaries and school Children.



Figure 2c. Surv. Mrs. Charity Olla fnis presenting the WIS Magazine to His Excellency, Rt. Honourable Aminu Bello Masari CFR, FNIM (Dallatun Katsina) the Executive Governor of Katsina State, during her tenure in office.



Figure 2d. WIS host in Katsina Surv. Mansur Kabir Mohammad, (Alias Papa WIS) and some WIS members.

As earlier mentioned, activities of Women-in-surveying Nigeria is run by regions. Currently there are three (3) regions, namely; the Northern, Western, and Eastern Region. As shown in figure 3a. Though these three regions metamorphosed into the present 36 States in Nigeria, Excluding the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), WIS still maintained the original boundaries of the regions and states that fell within the regions automatically became part of the region. This has helped in the management and daily running's of WIS. Figure 3b below



Figure 3a Map of Nigerian Regions, 1960-1963



Figure 3b: Map of showing the 36 States Nigeria (Wikipedia)

#### 4.1. Activities of WIS in the Northern Region

The Northern Region of the Women-In-Surveying comprises of the 19 Northern States. WIS in that region embarked on career talks across the Region. One of the group's activities worthy of mention is its recent career talk performance held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the Community Staff Secondary School, Asokoro in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. After enlightening the students on the benefits of becoming a Surveyor, the group flew a drone across the School to demonstrate one of the various aspects of Surveying. Thereafter, a map of the School was produced from the images captured by the drone and presented to the School authority.



4a



4b

Figure 4a and 4b: The students listening to the career talk being delivered by the Women-In-Surveying FCT Branch Coordinator, Surv. Mrs. Florence O. Samuel



Figure 4c: The students keenly watching as the use of the drone is being demonstrated



Figure 4d: Some WIS members in Northern region.

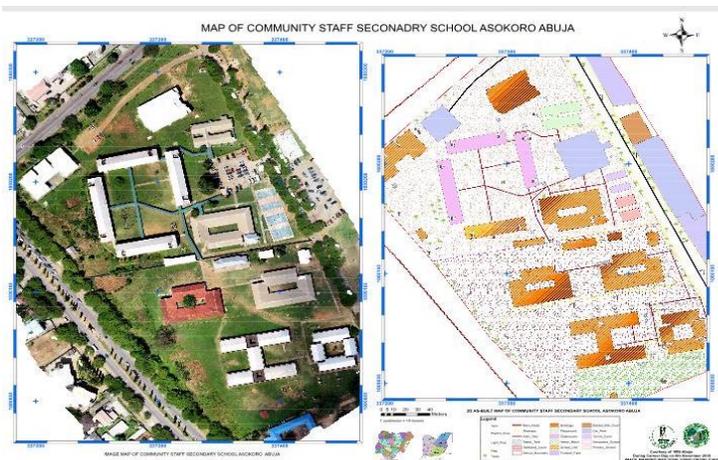


Figure 4e: The map produced from the images captured by the drone



Figure 4f Mr. Daniel Ejembi an undergraduate of Surveying.

A Secondary School student, Mr. Daniel Ejembi who heard about Surveying Profession for the first time during WIS career talk at his School, Government Secondary School,

The group is also in touch with undergraduate students offering Surveying & Geo-informatics in tertiary institutions within the Region via whatsapp in order to keep them motivated to practice the profession upon graduation.

#### 4.2. Activities of WIS in the Western Region

The Western Region of the Women-In-Surveying comprises of the six (6) States. Namely Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Osun.

##### Lagos State

In their quest to making Surveying well known, WIS in Lagos was at the University of Lagos (UNILAG) INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, LAGOS on 14th May, 2019 to enlighten the Junior Secondary School (JSS) 3 students of a population of 280 about Surveying. Also on 11th June, 2019, they went to Baptist Model High School, Ijegan to have another career talk with the students of the school on the topic “WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SURVEYOR”, the wonderful and brilliant questions asked by the students showed that they got the message well. Career talk was held in Bethel Schools, Alli Oluwafuyi Crescent, Asolo, Isawo, Ikorodu , Lagos on 14th November 2019 during the school 's Career Day. And the last Career Talk for year 2019 was held on 10th December, 2019, at Emerald High School, along Lagos / Ibadan Express, Lagos State.

WIS Lagos does hold a bi-monthly meeting, and in July, 2019 a Committee known as WIS Development Committee was formed to see to the development of WIS members. Also an Advocacy Team was formed in September, 2019 which sole aim is to propagate ‘our dear noble profession’ by going from churches, mosques, street or any association that WIS members belong to so that the society will be well enlightened on who a Surveyor is and what a Surveyor does.

On 3rd October, 2019, WIS Lagos was invited by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation to attend WAPA CONNECT 2019 with the theme “Women’s Empowerment and Its Ability to Sustainable Development”. WIS was ably represented at the event by the Lagos State WIS Coordinator Surv. (Mrs.) Folasade Kasim and Past National Coordinator, Surv. Augustina C.O. Anabili, fnis. Figure 5a and 5b below.



Figure 5a: Surv. (Mrs) Folasade Kasim



Figure 5b. Surv. Augustina C.O. Anabili, fnis

Also, on Wednesday 11th December, 2019, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) invited WIS Lagos to a Seminar for Entrepreneur/ Professional Women and Medical Screening.

An in-house training on Proposal Writing and Contract Laws was organized for WIS members. This was an Eye Opener to Surveyors. The lecture was given by Surv. Kuroloja Aderibigbe on 13th November 2019 at NIS Secretariat in Lagos, Lagos State.

## Ogun State.

Ogun State WIS was not left out. They produced a customized Exercise book, Pen, Mathematical sets and bags as souvenir for students in schools that they visited. Career talk and sensitization were carried out at Rev. Kuti Memorial Grammar School, Nawar-ru-deen Grammar School, Ansar-ud-deen International College and St. Peters College, all within the State in October and November, 2019.

A Courtesy visit was made to the Deputy Governor of Ogun State who is a woman in the person of Engr. (Mrs.) Noimot Salako–Oyedele in November 2019; she was delighted to receive the members of Ogun State WIS as well as other Western WIS members who were in attendance. She consented to be the Special guest of honour at the upcoming National Women – In – Surveying Conference coming up in March 2020 at Abeokuta in Ogun State. See figures 6a – 6e below.



6a



6b



6c



6d



6e

Figures 6a – 6e: WIS Ogun, visit to Her Excellency Engr. (Mrs.) Noimot Salako–Oyedele, the Deputy Governor of Ogun State on 12/11/2019

## Ondo/ Osun / Oyo States.

On January 23, 2020, Ondo Women in Surveying held our 2nd annual seminar at the NIS secretariat of Ondo State with the theme ‘Professionals and Diversification in an Ailing Economy’. As part of the program, students from two secondary schools were invited for career talk Also, six

hundred (600) copies of Ondo WIS customized exercise book was launched and distributed freely.

WIS in Osun State visited some secondary schools for career talk tag ‘Catch Them Young’ and it is continuous activity. Oyo State WIS visited some schools in their State as well for career talk.

In October 2019, a joint regional career talk for the Western Region was held in Ibadan, Oyo State, tagged ‘Catch Them Young’. Six Secondary Schools were in Attendance. Surv. (Mrs.) Fowotade Toyin Rebecca delivered the talk titled ‘Surveying as a Career’. Also a lecture on The use of drones were thought in one of the secondary schools.

The women in the region do not only carry out career talk but do some charitable work as well. Figure showed a visit to made to the home of the physical challenged in Lagos.



Figure 7a: Public lecture in the Classroom



Figure 7b: Training on the use of drone.



7c



7d

Figures 7c and 7d: Some Schools visited by the region.



7e



7f

Figure 7e and 7f: The South West Regional Coordinator Surv. Mrs. Rebecca Akinde Showing appreciation to some schools visited by the region.



8a



8b

Figure 8a and 8b: Exercise books shared during a public lecture



9a



9b



9c

Figures 9a, - 9c: South Western Region WIS distributing gifts to the Physical Challenged in South West.

#### 4.3. Activities of WIS in the Eastern Region

Young female school leavers have been encouraged to choose Surveying as a course of study in the institutions of higher learning to increase the number of women in the profession in Nigeria. This was as contained in an address presented by the Abia State Coordinator of Women in Surveying, Surv. Mrs. Baywood C. Nkechi, during her first State seminar organized to promote the continuing education and intellectual growth of her members.

WIS Rivers and Cross Rivers States, do hold public lectures from time to time and continue with the campaign of ‘Catch them Young’. WIS Eastern Region do hold regular meeting to discuss about the well being of their members and a follow on the vision and Mission of WIS. A meeting was held recently 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 in Calabar, Cross Rivers State.



Figure 10a: WIS National Coordinator, Surv. Gertrude Nnanjar Njar fnis PhD With some member of WIS Eastern Region



Figure 10b: WIS Eastern Coordinator Surv. (Mrs.) Amina S. Dienye and Daughter

#### 4.4. WIS Day Out

After the busy year, Women - In- surveying Nigeria, Knows how to unwind. They do have get together/ End of the year parties. ‘All work and no play make Caroline a dull girl’, Women-In-Surveying Nigeria doing their thing as shown in Figures 11a -11j below.



11a



11b



11c



11d



11e



11f



11g



11h



11i



11j

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The Nigerian Institution of Surveyors has created an enabling environment for the participation of Women – in – Surveying. WIS Nigeria is now seen as the Image maker of the NIS promoting the Surveying Profession to all nook and cranny of the Country, and is sure to move to greater heights in terms of career development and social responsibility. We look forward to ways which WIS Nigeria could be sustained financially other than the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS). One thing is for sure ‘WIS Nigeria are here to stay’ and will not rest her oars until the survey profession is well known in our schools and the young can say ‘ I want to be a Surveyor’ like they will want to be a Doctor, Engineer or Lawyer. We will continue to move to greater heights. Charity they say begins at home. Here is a product of the authors’ own daughter who just graduated from the university as a female surveyor.



Figure 12a:  
Angela Omamuyovwi Etuonovbe  
Young Graduate with parents



Figure 12b  
During a tour after a rigorous FIG ARN / YSN  
meeting in Botswana October, 2018

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Mrs. Angela Kesiena Etuonovbe has a B.Sc.(Hons) degree in Surveying, Geodesy & Photogrammetry, MSc. Geoinformatics and Surveying (Remote Sensing and GIS) and pursuing her PhD in Geoinformatics and Surveying, all from the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus. She has an MBA and a Diploma in Dredging Engineering from the A&M University, Texas. She is a Registered Surveyor and the first female Surveyor in Private Practice in Delta State.

She is a consultant of no mean repute, a prolific writer, and has served in various capacity both in the NIS and the Society at large. The Immediate Past Chair – Comm 4 – Hydrography FIG, Assistant Secretary General, NIS, National Coordinator WIS, Publicity Secretary and Treasurer, NIS Delta, Secretary, APPSN Delta, and currently the President, Ladies of Saint Mulumba Nigeria, GRA Effurun Sub- Council, Effurun, Delta State.

She is a Member of Surveyors Council of Nigeria (SURCON), The Hydrographic Society of America, Nigerian Hydrographic Society (NHS), and Western Dredging Association of America (WEDA). As well as the Principal Consultant of AnGene Surveys & Consultants and the Managing Director of GFSH Consult Ltd. She is an author, an Examiner, and presenter at various International and National conferences.

She has various awards such as **Pillar of Excellence and Fellow**, (FHNR), **“Outstanding Surveyor”** High Target magazine, **“Excellence in the Field Of Surveying”**. Development in Nigeria Merit Award, **“Outstanding Contributor”** De Frenz Organisation (DFO), Award for **“Contribution and Upliftment of the Society”** Pontifical Mission Society,

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FIG Working Week 2020  
Smart surveyors for land and water management  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 10-14 May 2020