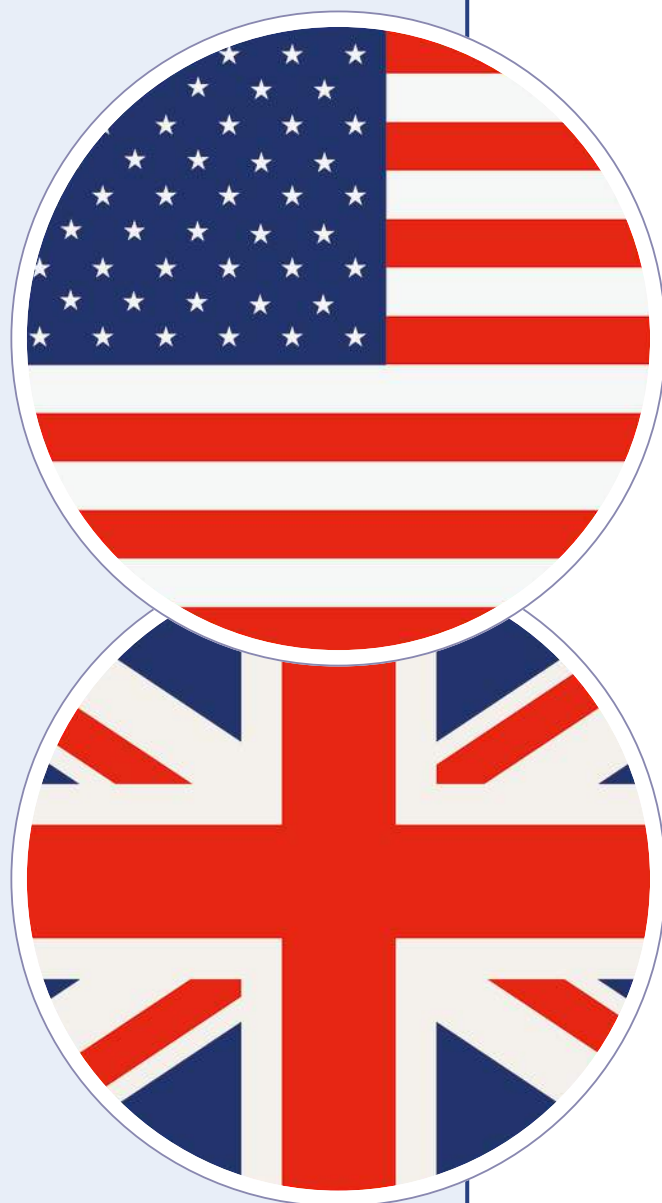


Englisch betrifft uns

EBU on the Web 2019/5

Topical texts in
English lessons

- *Comprehension*
- *Analysis*
- *Creative writing*
- *Background Information*



© Alvaro_cabrera – Freepik.com

The Topic: Women in Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with approximately 200 million citizens (2018). According to the the CIA World Fact Book Nigeria's population is projected to grow from more than 186 million people in 2016 to 5 392 million in 2050, thus becoming the world's fourth most populous country. These estimates take into account the effects of mortality due to AIDS, which can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and lower population growth rates.

- 10 Women form almost half of the entire population. Their role is primarily understood as that of wives and mothers, although this role differs according to religious and geographic factors, e.g. women in Northern Nigeria are more likely to be secluded in the home, whereas 15 women in Southern Nigeria participate more in public life. Despite various efforts by human rights groups, women still suffer from discrimination and face challenges such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. Today the social media give women a platform where 20 they can report about their experiences and express their fears.

Ties to obligatory topics

Voices from the African Continent: focus on Nigeria; gender roles, the role of women; the impact of social media

Background information – further links

<https://womenwatch.unwomen.org/country/nigeria>

In the Nigeria section of UN Women Watch, which informs about news and events on gender equality, various stories about Nigerian women and their fates are presented.

<https://guardian.ng/guardian-woman/leading-ladies-africa-nigerias-100-most-inspiring-women-in-2019-2/>

In March 2019 the section „Guardian Woman“ published a list of Nigeria's most inspiring women in 2019, drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds and sectors who are impacting their world and local communities through the power and strength of their ideas and achievements in the world of business, politics and governance.

The Text

“Northern Nigeria’s *MeToo* movement is blowing up, and it all started from a simple, tragic tweet” (*The Independent*)

7 April 2019

The Link (URL)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/metoo-arewa-nigeria-sokoto-gender-sexual-assault-social-media-a8858706.html>

Annotations

to attribute something to somebody/something – to believe or say that a situation or event is caused by something

backlash – a strong negative reaction by a number of people to recent events, especially to political or social developments

to blow up – if a situation, argument etc. blows up, it suddenly becomes important or dangerous

bravery – courage

consensual – involving the agreement of all or most people in a group

consistent – always behaving in the same way or having the same attitudes

to discount – to regard something as unlikely to be true or important

duly – in the proper or expected way

entrepreneur – someone who starts a new business or arranges business deals in order to make money, often in a way that involves financial risks

to forge – to develop something new, especially a strong relationship with other people

hub – the central and most important part of an area, system, activity etc

MeToo movement – a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault; the movement began to spread October 2017 as a hashtag on social media in an attempt to demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace

NGO – non-governmental organization, an organization which helps people, protects the environment etc. and which is not run by a government

perpetrator – someone who does something morally wrong or illegal

pro bono – used to describe work that someone, especially a lawyer, does without getting paid

to reprimand – to tell someone officially that something they have done is very wrong

roadblock – *here*: something that stops the progress of a plan

sensitive – able to understand other people’s feelings and problems

sensitisation – to sensitize: to give someone some experience or knowledge of a particular problem or situation so that they can notice it and understand it easily

shutdown – the closing of a factory, business, or piece of machinery, either permanently or for a short time

to spearhead – to lead an attack or organized action to tilt the scales – to change the balance of a situation, such that one side or element is favoured or gains advantage

to turn the tide – to change a situation, especially so that you begin to win instead of losing

undeniable – definitely true or certain

Assignments

1. Why does Abbianca Makoni think that “we live in an unfair world”?
(Comprehension)
2. What is, according to the writer, the situation of women in Northern Nigeria?
(Comprehension)
3. Why did Fakhriyyah Hashim create the hashtag #ArewaMetoo and what consequences did it have?
(Comprehension)
4. What do Abbianca Makoni and Fakhriyyah Hashim criticize about the Nigerian authorities’ attitude?
(Comprehension)
5. The newspaper article shows an example of how social media have given “the less powerful in society” a platform to share their experiences. Can you think of other examples of social platforms supporting people suffering from discrimination, persecution or suppression? You can do some research on the internet and then report about your findings in class.
6. Fakhriyyah Hashim criticizes the police for not being sensitive to victims of gender-related violence. Imagine she writes a letter to the head of the Northern Nigerian police, in which she strongly demands a radical reform in the police force, especially where sexually-related crimes are concerned. Write a formal letter.
(Creative writing)
7. Imagine an enraged German schoolgirl, who has just read this article in one of her English lessons, tells her mother about some of the problems of women in Nigeria and of the importance of social media for these women. Write down what they say in German.
(Mediation)

Suggested Solutions

1. **The „less powerful in society“** are often suppressed by authoritarian governments, e.g. by stringent laws, antiquated social traditions, religious authoritarianism; the people's complaints and sufferings are often ignored; the leaders refuse to change laws or to seek justice for incomprehensible crimes (> examples: Zimbabwean government, Saudi Arabia)
2. **Northern Nigeria has a mainly Muslim population and a conservative society**, i.e. issues surrounding sex and sexuality are hardly discussed in public; sexual violence is not condemned as a criminal offence; women are abused and (sexually) assaulted at a very young age; they are not able to speak about it because they feel ashamed
3. **Fakhriyyah Hashim** was impressed by the tweet of a 24-year-old Northern Nigerian woman, who told her followers about her experiences with the abuse of her ex-boyfriend. Hashim then created the hashtag #ArewoMetoo; immediately after that a large number of women told their stories about how they had to experience sexual violence; they considered the platform a safe space and were sure they would get support by the social media community; there were not only consequences online but action was also taken in the „real world“, e.g. Hashim has managed to get victims legal aid and therapy from NGOs. Social media have given women with the same experiences a safe place; they can share their stories and build a strong community.
4. **They argue that Nigerian women** cannot rely on individual campaigns in social media solely but that their sufferings should be taken seriously by the authorities, which are meant to protect the girls and women. They particularly criticize the Northern Nigerian police which are "not sensitive to victims of gender-based violence"; they do not show empathy, e.g. when questioning women who have been raped. Another problem is the justice system, many perpetrators are not arrested or punished so that victims often remain silent. In conclusion the writer emphasizes the fact that social platforms have given women a place where they can share their experiences, but that the authorities are still not able to properly support them.