

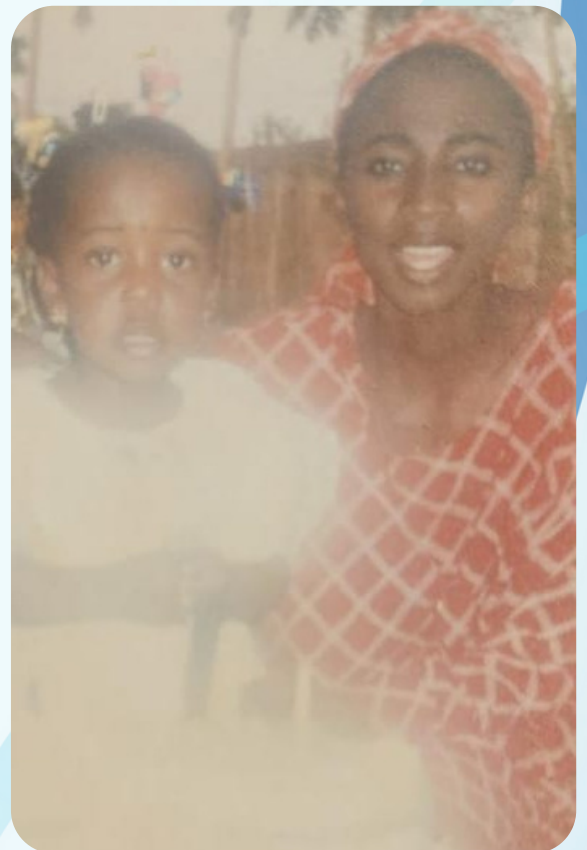
# MY STORY



## THE OUTCRY

In a world plagued by violence and oppression, where the echoes of pain reverberate through the desolate streets, a voice emerged from the ashes of darkness. Alhanislam, an internationally renowned poet from Biu Local Government, Borno State, the very epicenter of the notorious Boko Haram, would become a symbol of resilience, empowerment, and hope.

Her journey began at the tender age of thirteen when she penned an open letter, an outcry of anguish and protest against the cruelty that plagued her family. Alhanislam's beloved aunt, Safiya, had fallen victim to the hands of her uncle-in-law, enduring unimaginable physical abuse. The memory of her aunt's suffering haunted Alhanislam, her anger burning like a wildfire within.



**Alhanislam & Aunt Safiya**

But it didn't stop there. Alhanislam's other aunt, Halima, had also suffered at the hands of her husband, who callously hurled her into a glass showcase, her life hanging by a thread. Fueled by an inherited determination for justice, Alhanislam's mother, Hauwa Maina, an actress and filmmaker, took on the fight, challenging the abusers and demanding accountability.



**Alhanislam & Aunt Halima**

Inspired by her mother's unwavering courage, Alhanislam decided to lend her voice to the cause. As a young science student, poetry was uncharted territory for her. She was merely a girl with a gift for writing, crafting love letters for schoolboys in exchange for a few coins. Yet, beneath her innocent exterior lay a soul aflame with passion for stage performances and the beauty of art.



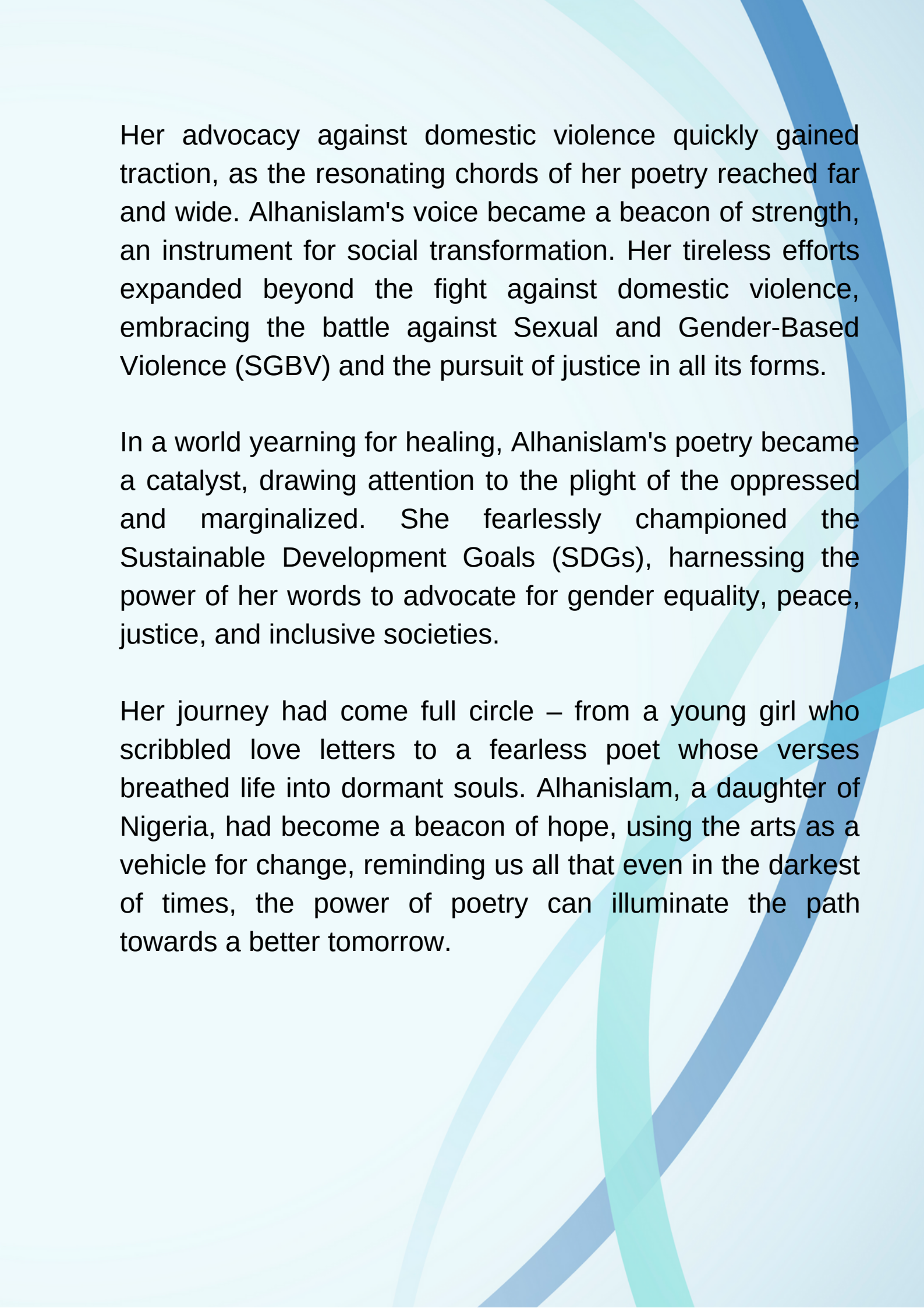


One fateful day, Hauwa Maina implored Alhanislam to create a video, a fusion of poetry and raw emotion, aimed at denouncing the cycle of violence. Reluctant at first, the young poet finally summoned the courage to step into the spotlight at the age of sixteen. The video, titled "Violence Has No Religion," pierced the hearts of those who watched, resonating with the masses who yearned for change.



### **Alhanislam & Hauwa Maina**

Soon, a message arrived in Alhanislam's inbox, a message that would alter the course of her life forever. It was from a stranger, someone from within the very heart of Borno State. He confessed that, because of her poem, he had chosen a different path, one that rejected the abuse of his wife. In that profound moment, Alhanislam's purpose crystallized – she had the power to make a difference, to ignite change through her words.



Her advocacy against domestic violence quickly gained traction, as the resonating chords of her poetry reached far and wide. Alhanislam's voice became a beacon of strength, an instrument for social transformation. Her tireless efforts expanded beyond the fight against domestic violence, embracing the battle against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and the pursuit of justice in all its forms.

In a world yearning for healing, Alhanislam's poetry became a catalyst, drawing attention to the plight of the oppressed and marginalized. She fearlessly championed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), harnessing the power of her words to advocate for gender equality, peace, justice, and inclusive societies.

Her journey had come full circle – from a young girl who scribbled love letters to a fearless poet whose verses breathed life into dormant souls. Alhanislam, a daughter of Nigeria, had become a beacon of hope, using the arts as a vehicle for change, reminding us all that even in the darkest of times, the power of poetry can illuminate the path towards a better tomorrow.

## THE EXPLORATION

In addition to her extraordinary journey, Alhanislam's path to empowerment was paved with remarkable milestones and accomplishments. At the age of fifteen, she stood at the helm of the Drama and Culture Club as its president during her final year of Senior Secondary School (SS3). This pivotal role allowed her to nurture her love for theater, cultivating her expressive abilities and expanding her artistic horizons.



**Alhanislam at the age of 16**

At the age of sixteen, as Alhanislam embarked on her educational journey at Radford University College in Ghana, her thirst for knowledge and passion for making a difference continued to flourish. In addition to pursuing a degree in Information Technology, she fearlessly immersed herself in student politics, technology, and advocacy, leaving an indelible mark on the campus community. Her leadership abilities shone brightly as she assumed the role of Vice President of the Foreign Students Association, embodying the spirit of inclusivity and fostering a sense of belonging among students from diverse backgrounds.

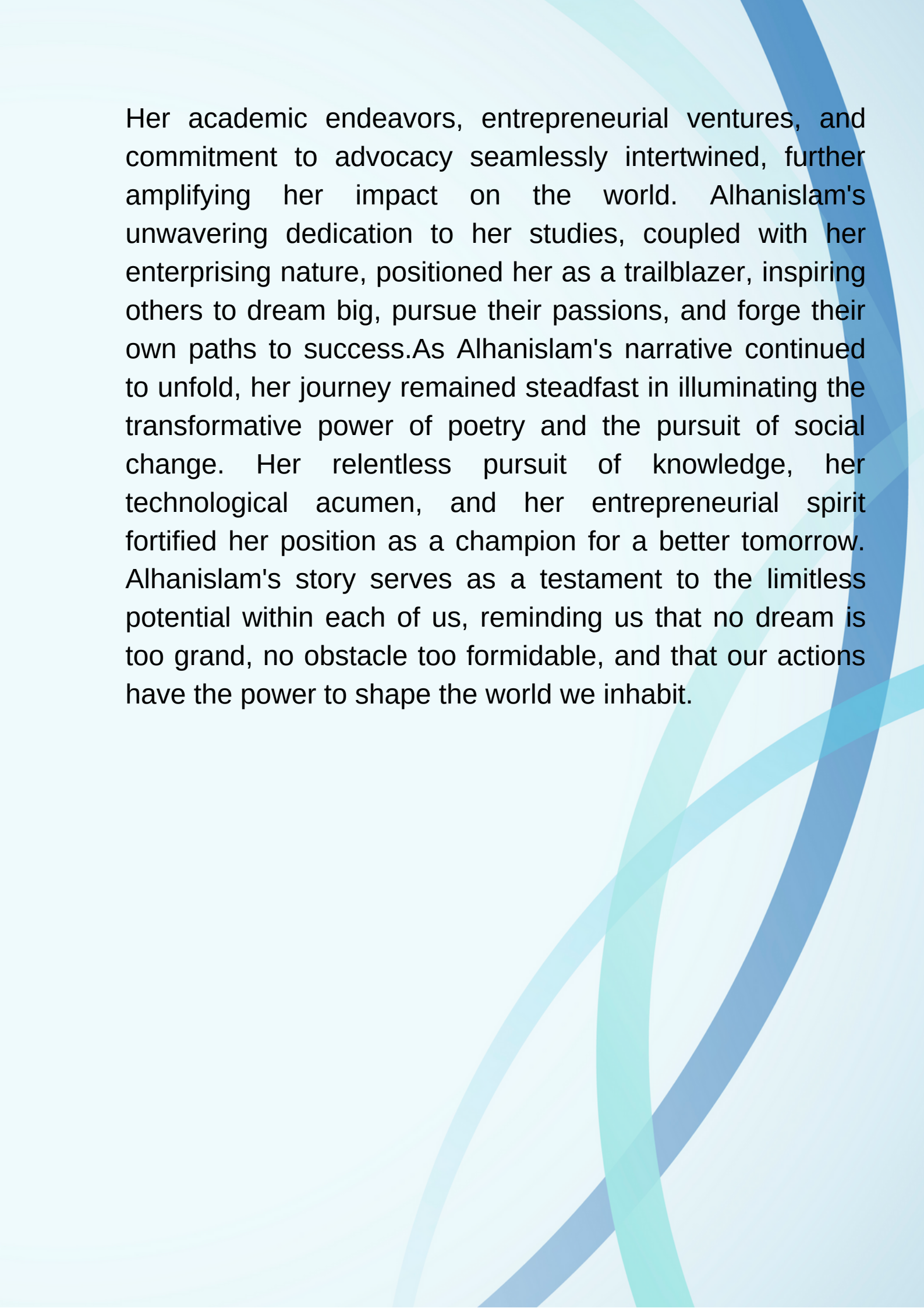


Alhanislam's dedication to uniting and empowering her fellow students created a platform for cross-cultural understanding and collaboration. She also co-founded Deen at heart with her mother, a platform for promoting interreligious dialogues with the aim of promoting peace. In a testament to her entrepreneurial spirit, Alhanislam co-founded Loro Inc., a tech company based in Ghana.

With her keen insight and innovative mindset, she played a pivotal role in driving the company's vision and leveraging technology as a force for positive change. Additionally, she honed her skills through internships, including one at Meltwater in Accra, Ghana, where she immersed herself in the world of technology, gaining invaluable experience and expanding her horizons.

Alhanislam's creative prowess extended beyond the realm of technology. Blessed with artistic talent, she collaborated with a fashion department student, translating her sketches into tangible garments and would cater for student events and make pots of soups. By turning her designs and catering talent into reality, she not only pursued her creative passions but also generated income to support herself and alleviate her mother's financial burdens.

Her enterprising spirit was a testament to her determination to excel academically while embracing her artistic gifts. Through her multifaceted pursuits, Alhanislam embodied the essence of a modern Renaissance woman.



Her academic endeavors, entrepreneurial ventures, and commitment to advocacy seamlessly intertwined, further amplifying her impact on the world. Alhanislam's unwavering dedication to her studies, coupled with her enterprising nature, positioned her as a trailblazer, inspiring others to dream big, pursue their passions, and forge their own paths to success. As Alhanislam's narrative continued to unfold, her journey remained steadfast in illuminating the transformative power of poetry and the pursuit of social change. Her relentless pursuit of knowledge, her technological acumen, and her entrepreneurial spirit fortified her position as a champion for a better tomorrow. Alhanislam's story serves as a testament to the limitless potential within each of us, reminding us that no dream is too grand, no obstacle too formidable, and that our actions have the power to shape the world we inhabit.



## THE CROWNING POINT

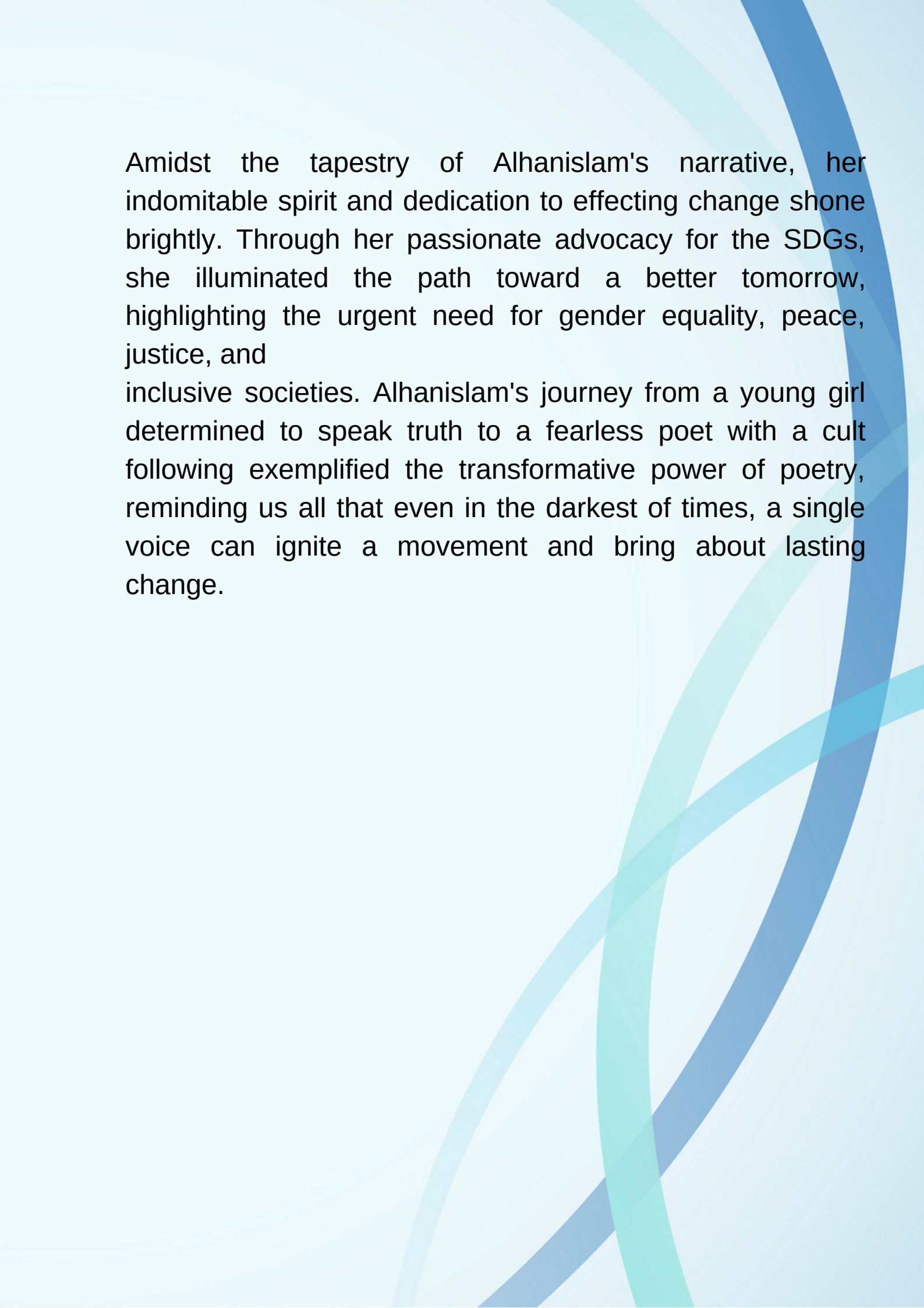
As AlhanIslam's influence grew, right after university, she ventured beyond individual efforts, collaborating with various organizations to actualize the vision of the last Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) – Partnership for the Goals. Recognizing the power of collective action, she worked tirelessly to build alliances and forge partnerships that could bring about real change in her community and beyond.

AlhanIslam's impact extended far beyond the confines of her own experiences. Her voice, like a resounding echo, inspired a flood of young girls from the northern regions of Nigeria to speak their truths through poetry. She became a guiding light for those who had been silenced, empowering them to share their stories, challenge societal norms, and demand justice. Through her workshops and mentorship programs, AlhanIslam fostered a supportive community of over 500 thousand followers and over 600 young poets trained and supported across Nigeria through both initiatives of hers (True My Voice and AlhanIslam tutoring center), creating a safe space for artistic expression and personal growth.



Notably, Alhanislam's journey was uniquely shaped by her upbringing in a region where single mothers often face immense challenges. Her mother, **Hauwa Maina, played a pivotal role in nurturing Alhanislam's talents and supporting her pursuit of purpose.** Sadly Alhanislam's mother, Hauwa Maina passed away when Alhanislam was 21 years old and 9 months pregnant with her first child. Hauwa's resilience and unwavering belief in her daughter's abilities defied societal expectations, emphasizing the importance of individual agency and determination. Their bond served as a testament to the strength and resilience of women in Northern Nigeria, challenging stereotypes and inspiring others to overcome adversity.





Amidst the tapestry of Alhanislam's narrative, her indomitable spirit and dedication to effecting change shone brightly. Through her passionate advocacy for the SDGs, she illuminated the path toward a better tomorrow, highlighting the urgent need for gender equality, peace, justice, and inclusive societies. Alhanislam's journey from a young girl determined to speak truth to a fearless poet with a cult following exemplified the transformative power of poetry, reminding us all that even in the darkest of times, a single voice can ignite a movement and bring about lasting change.







# MY STORY

