

BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

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A JOURNEY OF INTEGRITY AND JUSTICE

An Interview with
Justice Mobolanle
Okikolu-Ighile (Rtd)



WORK/LIFE

Colleagues to co-founders:
6 workplace friendships
that built billion-dollar
businesses



CULINARY

6 international fast food
meals and what they
cost in Naira

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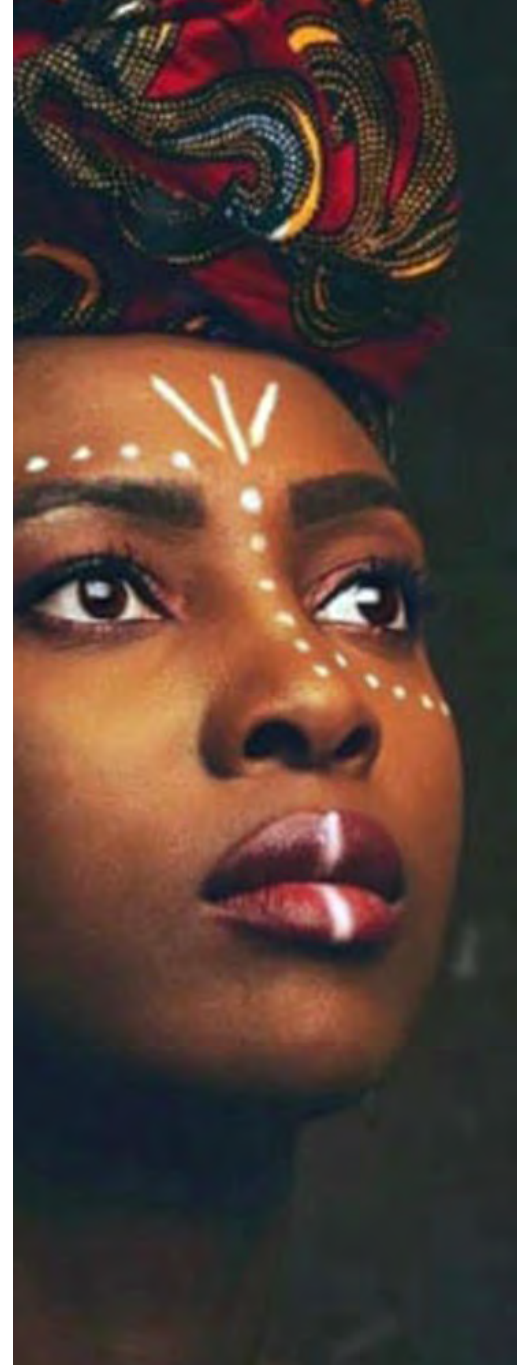
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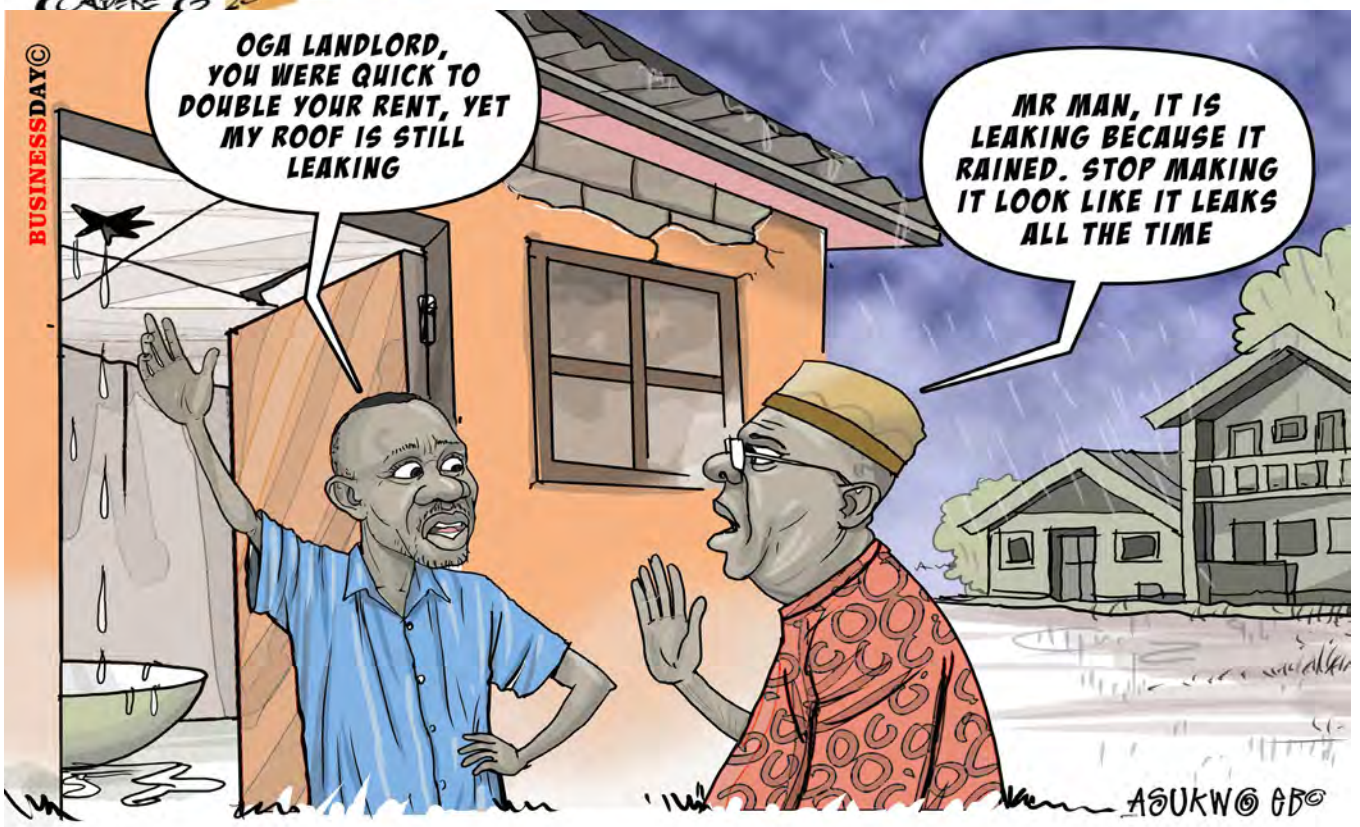
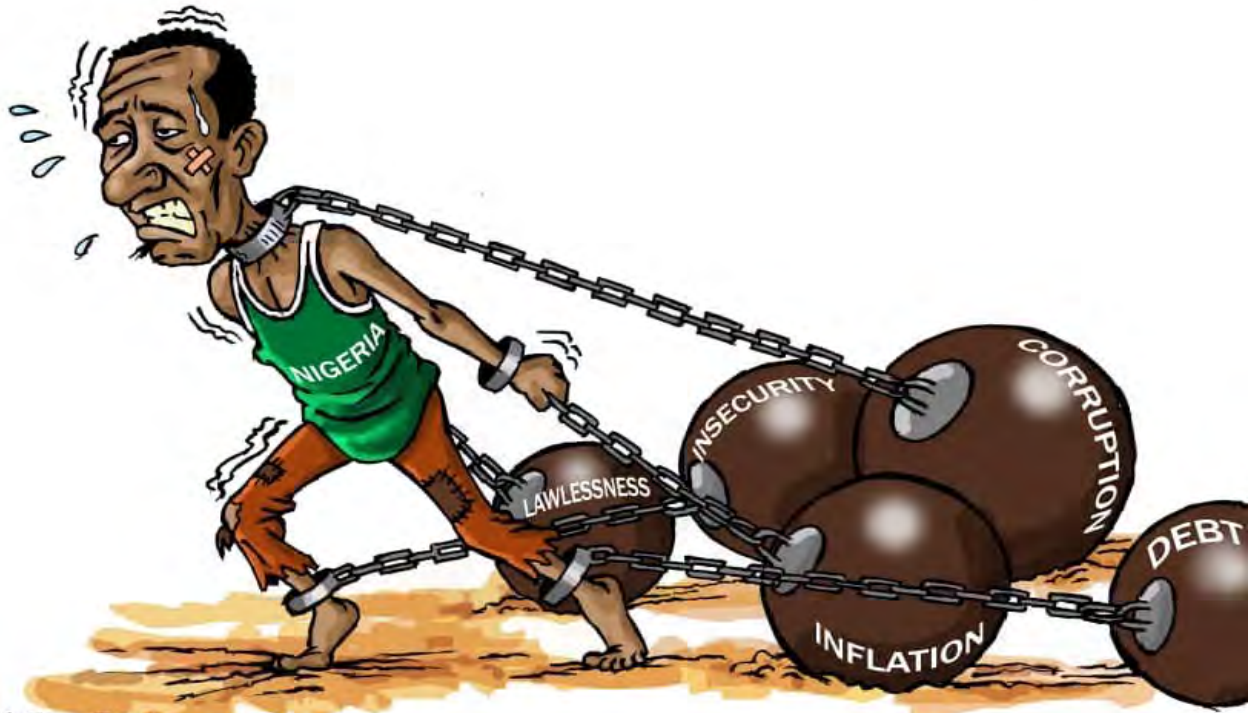
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**A JOURNEY OF INTEGRITY
AND JUSTICE: AN INTERVIEW
WITH JUSTICE MOBOLANLE
OKIKOLU - IGHILE (Rtd)**



In this enlightening conversation, Lehlé Baldé sits down with Justice Mobolanle Okikolu-Ighile(Rtd), a trailblazer in Nigeria's legal landscape, whose career spans decades of dedication to justice, integrity, and public service. From her role as the Director of Public Prosecutions to her recent appointment as Chairman of Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission by Governor Sanwo-Olu, Justice Okikolu-Ighile's unwavering commitment to the legal profession has made a lasting impact. In this interview, she reflects on her experiences, challenges, and the lessons she's learned along the way. Join us as we explore her remarkable journey and hear her insights on leadership, resilience, and the future of the Nigerian judiciary.

Lehlé: Your career has been truly remarkable. Can you take us through your journey within the Nigerian judiciary system and highlight some pivotal moments that shaped your rise to prominence?

Justice Mobolanle Okikolu-Ighile(Rtd):

It's been a long, fulfilling journey, with its fair share of challenges and rewarding experiences. I began my career at the Lagos State Ministry of Justice in Ikeja during my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) year in 1981-1982. That was when I first began attending court proceedings independently. Interestingly, I didn't participate in the community development service (CDS) program because I was so engrossed in court activities that I was granted special permission to focus solely on that.

I had the privilege of working alongside several distinguished individuals, many of whom have passed. I started as a People's State Counsel and steadily rose. Eventually, I transitioned into legislative drafting, where I spent 13 years drafting laws for Lagos State. By the time I reached Level 15, I was fortunate enough to head the department, a rare accomplishment since department heads are typically appointed from Level 17.

In 1989, I moved to the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), starting as a State Counsel and eventually delving into law reform. This was during the onset of the democratic government in 1999, which brought a host of fresh opportunities. I was appointed Director of Citizens' Rights, the first department of its kind in Nigeria. Under my leadership, we established several groundbreaking units, including the Office of the Public Defender and the Citizens' Mediation Center.

One of the most defining moments of my career came when I worked on the case of Safiya, a widow sentenced to death under Sharia law for adultery, even though she had no living husband. We collaborated with an NGO, led by Biola Kiyode, to prevent her from being stoned to death. Through our advocacy, Safiya and her child were granted asylum by the Italian government, allowing them to leave Nigeria. As the Director of Public Prosecutions from 2002 to 2008, I was involved in several high-profile cases. One of the most notable was the case of Reverend King, who was convicted of the murder of several church members. He had sentenced them to death for alleged fornication, dousing them in petrol, resulting in one fatality. His death sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court, and justice prevailed.

Lehlé: Your work demonstrates a deep passion for human rights. Where does this drive stem from? Were you always someone who stood up for others growing up?

Justice Mobolanle Okikolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Human rights advocacy has always been close to my heart. I grew up in a university community, which exposed me to the realities beyond the protected environment of the campus. Although we lived in a relatively privileged environment with staff members like cooks and stewards, I soon became aware of the disparities around us.

My parents instilled in me the values of giving and empathy. They would often bring people into our home, especially during the holidays, and provide for those in need, even if they were not directly related to us. Sometimes, it would be 15 to 20 people staying with us at a time. We helped them with education, trade skills, and general support. These experiences shaped my worldview and solidified my belief in standing up for those less fortunate.

As a child, I was often the one urging my parents to give money to those in need when we went into town. I've always had a deep sense of justice and compassion for people who are suffering or disadvantaged. For me, standing up for others, especially when they don't even know they have a right to advocate for themselves, feels like the natural thing to do. It's who I am, it's in my DNA.

In my view, one can fight for their rights without resorting to violence. There are always peaceful ways to address injustice, and that's a principle I've carried throughout my career.

Lehlé: At what point in your life did you decide to study law?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Well, everything about me has a story, like every other person. I wanted to be a lawyer when I was in Form 2. It all started because of a lady who is like a mother to me now, Chief Mrs. Folake Solanke. She lives in Ibadan.

At that time, she was the First Lady Commissioner in Nigeria, and she happened to be a lawyer. She came to my school, St. Anne's School in Ibadan, which is the first girls' school in Nigeria, to give a career talk. We were all gathered, even though I was in Form 2, and I didn't quite grasp what she was saying about careers. I'll be honest, I didn't fully understand. I was captivated by her presence. She was dressed so elegantly, and the way she carried herself left an indelible impression on me. I was so struck by how well put-together she was and the confidence with which she spoke. That image of her, dressed in her lawyer's wig and gown, stuck with me.

I still remember that day, and I would later say that God agreed with my decision, because I ended up pursuing law.

Lehlé: Your contributions to the Lagos State Law Reform Commission in 1990, particularly in drafting the laws of the state, were significant. How did that experience shape your understanding of legislative reform and governance?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Actually, I was drafted by the Legislative Drafting Department, which was responsible for drafting laws. At the time, we were under military rule, so we had to draft many edicts, which were eventually converted into laws. Lagos State provided me with proper training in legislative drafting. I was trained at the Advanced Institute of Legal Education at the University of Lagos and spent nearly six months at the University of London's Russell Square, studying advanced legislative drafting.



Law has always been my passion, whether in the criminal section, legislative drafting, or any other area. I've always embraced every opportunity and aimed to make a meaningful contribution. One of the values my parents instilled in me was that wherever you find yourself, you must leave your mark. Do your job well, so that when you look back, your efforts are remembered. At that time, the Law Reform Commission was part of the Ministry of Justice, and I had the honour of working under the late Honourable Justice William Kazeem, a retired Supreme Court Justice. He was a father figure to me, and his knowledge of the law was vast. His leadership shaped much of what we accomplished, and I'm proud to say that our work received commendation from the state government.

Lehlé: You pioneered several groundbreaking initiatives, such as the Office of the Public Defender, the Citizens Mediation Center, and the Directorate for Citizens' Rights. As a woman, I imagine this came with its unique challenges. How did you overcome these challenges, and what sacrifices were necessary to achieve these milestones?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd): Being appointed as a director was a unique opportunity. When I first started, there was no precedent to follow, which made the challenge even greater. There was skepticism, especially since people couldn't believe that the government would freely offer assistance to citizens in need.

The Directorate for Citizens' Rights, which eventually evolved into the Office of the Public Defender, started with little trust from the public. Many doubted the sincerity of the initiative because they had never seen anything like it before. Our target audience wasn't like you and me, they couldn't afford legal fees or even make it to a lawyer's office.

To reach them, I took the initiative to engage directly with the public. We branded the department and took our services to the markets, Tejuosho, Agege, Ikorodu, and many others. We even sang songs to attract attention. For example, I created a song that went: "Make una come see wetin Tinubu do for us, he put sugar for our tea, he put butter for our bread, this Tinubu na better o..."

We had to meet people where they were, speaking their language and using community leaders to spread the word. It was a tough fight, especially with resistance from lawyers who felt threatened. But, over time, we showed them that this initiative wasn't a threat to their work, it was about helping those who had been underserved by the system.

The state government was instrumental in funding these initiatives, and we had some sponsors, such as the Ford Foundation, though the majority of the funding came from the state.

Through hard work and collaboration, we managed to gain the trust of the public. Today, the Citizens Mediation Center has grown, and many of the services we introduced now have legal backing, making it easier for people to resolve issues without the need to go to court.

Lehlé: I'm so glad you're sharing these kinds of stories because I think most people don't realize just how much the government cares.

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd): The government cares deeply. Not just a little, it cares so much. There are instances when we go out on the streets and encounter women with children begging. We've learned that many of these children aren't even





related to them. Sometimes, these women will take their children to caricature daycares, paying to have the kids sit outside while they work. Their families have no idea what's going on.

Because of the government's efforts, you won't see these kinds of situations on the streets anymore. Lagos State has taken many steps to address this issue.

Lehlé: That's amazing to hear. Considering the immense pressures that come with defending justice, it's a full-time job. I'm sure it takes a lot of energy. Were there any moments when you faced threats or external pressure? How did you manage to maintain your integrity during those times?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

When I was in Citizens' Rights, I received more accolades than threats. People would often come to my office, and even if they had been fighting over small claims, they left smiling.

When I became the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), it was different. As a prosecutor, you're not defending, you're prosecuting. You might not know the families, but they know you. You might be in a bus or a car, and they could approach you, threaten you, or try to harm you.

I remember working on sensitive cases, like the Reverend King case, where I received numerous threats. People would say things like, "Don't worry, you'll still worship him." I would just smile and move on. Some people tried to bribe me to drop cases, but I always refused. It's important to stay true to yourself, not just for your own sake, but for the sake of the system that put you in that position.

Lehlé: That's incredibly inspiring, and it shows the power of integrity. It's clear that maintaining one's integrity is not easy, but it's certainly worth it.

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Exactly. It's not always easy, but you have to stay determined. There were times when I had to protect my integrity, because not only did I not want to fail God, but I didn't want to fail myself or the system I worked for. I could recall when I was just made a judge, and I was in my car with my driver. Someone approached me and mentioned the people I had prosecuted.

They knew me as the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and tried to intimidate me. But I didn't let that deter me.

You'll always have people who blame you, whether you're the judge or the prosecutor. But if you know you've done your job right, you can hold your head high.



Lehlé: Thank you for sharing that. It's a powerful reminder that we can all stand firm in our principles, even in the face of adversity. Moving on to your role in the Ministry of Justice, you were involved in fostering many initiatives, such as the Lagos Multi-Door Courthouse. Can you tell us more about that and where you see the future of the legal profession today?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

The legal profession is timeless. It's been around before us and will continue long after us. However, I do pray that the integrity of the profession will live on. When I first became a lawyer, I looked up to lawyers as if they were gods. Judges didn't attend public events; they were revered.

The legal profession, like every other, has suffered some setbacks. It's been affected by corruption, which has infiltrated many sectors. But we continue to pray for better days. If we remain steadfast in upholding the integrity of the profession, we'll overcome.

As for the Lagos Multi-Door Courthouse, it was an initiative that started while I was in the Ministry of Justice. It was introduced by Mr. Kehinde Aina, a mediator I deeply respect. He proposed the idea of a Multi-Door Courthouse to the Ministry of Justice, and I represented the ministry in bringing it to life. The idea was that mediation and arbitration should be explored as alternative forms of dispute resolution before resorting to litigation.

Now, the Multi-Door Courthouse is thriving, and it has inspired other states to adopt similar models. It's amazing to see how alternative dispute resolution methods are becoming more recognized.

Lehlé: Looking back on your career, is there anything you wish you had done differently?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Honestly, I wouldn't change a thing. I would still be a lawyer and a judge, and I would still go through the Ministry of Justice because it allows you to learn every aspect of the law.

I did try to pursue my Master's degree, but I couldn't manage it because of how busy I was.

But overall, I'm happy with my journey. God has been good to me, and I believe I've been on the path I was meant to follow. That's why you always see me smiling.

Lehlé: After such a distinguished career, many would have chosen to rest, but you returned to public service. What motivated you to do that, and how does this new phase of your career differ from your earlier years?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

I've never been one to be idle, even since my younger years. I read a lot, and I've come to realize that as you get older, your mind sharpens. At age 60, your brain starts to align properly, so it's important to keep working, whether it's public service or something else. When I retired in 2022, I joined a law firm where I worked alongside other retired judges. We offer consultations, especially in mediation and arbitration. I've always kept busy, and I'm passionate about continuing to serve the public.

Lehlé: Your recent appointment by Governor Sanwo-Olu is another major milestone. Congratulations! Could you tell us a bit about that role and what new ideas or innovations you're bringing to this position?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Thank you. Appointments like these aren't something you apply for, they come because your work speaks for itself. I was honoured and grateful when I was appointed in July 2024 as Chairman of the Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission (LASIEC), and I returned from my holiday to take up the role.

I see this appointment as a call to service, and I don't take it lightly. The previous election cycle ended in 2021, and the next one will be in 2025. During that period, there was a lack of leadership, and we're now working hard to get back on track. We've already started our work, and we're determined to make a difference.

Lagos State is a large, complex place with over 15,000 polling units. It's a huge responsibility, but we're doing everything we can to ensure a smooth process.

Lehlé: After retiring from a very illustrious career, many would have opted to rest. What motivated you to return to public service? And how does this new phase of your career differ from your earlier years?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

Well, sincerely, since when I've been young, I've never been idle. And secondly, I read a lot. And when you read, you find out that when you're over 60, at age 60, that's when your brain indeed starts aligning so well and so properly.

If when you were growing up and you were working, you work along with your body, when I mean your body, you exercise, you eat good food, you do this, you do that, then you have to work along with your brain.

Working with the brain is not just when you're a judge or when you're a doctor, you're working, you're working so hard. You can't work so hard at that tempo and just drop it. It's dangerous.

You must have something to do. It need not be public service. And I didn't just come into public service because I was, I am a partner. Immediately, after I finished, I retired in 2022, July. And I traveled, came back for holidays.

I love holidays. I like traveling with my children. So, I came back, I joined a law firm and we're four retired judges of the high court. One of us is a retired chief judge. So, I joined and we did a consultation.

So, we've been doing that, consultation. And most of the time, you know, the same mediation, we find out that they consult with us if they have matters. Some are in court, and some maybe they want to know whether they should go to court.

So, we do that. So, I've always been working. Yes.

Lehlé: Finally, what advice would you give to young women aspiring to make a difference in the Nigerian judiciary? And who were your role models?

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

The times are different now. Today's young people are more self-inspired, and they know what they want to do. It's important to be true to yourself. I always tell young people that if you're not happy in your job, ask yourself where you can be happy. That's where you'll make a difference.

It's not everyone who will find their calling in the judiciary, but whatever you choose to do, make sure you give it your best. If you want to sell sand, do it in a way that makes a difference. Everyone can contribute to society in their own way.

I have two daughters. One became a doctor, and the other pursued law, but with a different path in mind. She used law as a stepping stone for what she truly wanted to do. Be honest with yourself about your passions. And lastly, always remember the importance of integrity. Money is not everything. A good name and staying true to your values will take you further than anything else.

Lehlé: Justice Mobolanle Abidemi Okikolu-Ighile, thank you so much for your time.

Justice Mobolanle Okikiolu-Ighile(Rtd):

The pleasure is mine. Thank you for having me.

COLLEAGUES TO CO-FOUNDERS: 6 WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIPS THAT BUILT BILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESSES

CHISOM MICHAEL



Workplace connections can lead to major business ventures, a business expert has said. These partnerships show how professional bonds can drive innovation and create successful businesses.

The expert notes that collaboration and shared vision played key roles in these ventures. Encouraging professionals to explore opportunities with colleagues, the expert suggests that the next major business idea could come from workplace connections.

“People assume boardrooms and pitch decks are where the best ideas are born, but more often than not, it’s two friends brainstorming over pizza or troubleshooting a work problem together,” says Tim Brown, business expert and founder of Hook Agency.

Here are 6 workplace friendships that built billion-dollar businesses

Ben & Jerry’s: A business built on friendship

Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield were childhood friends who reconnected in adulthood. Searching for business opportunities, they took a \$5 ice cream-making course and launched Ben & Jerry’s in 1978 from a converted gas station. Their focus on creative flavours and social responsibility set them apart in the ice cream industry. Their brand remains a symbol of purpose-driven business growth.

Airbnb: From roommates to industry disruptors

Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia struggled to pay rent in San Francisco in 2007. To generate income, they rented out air mattresses in their apartment to conference attendees. This idea grew into Airbnb, a global platform operating in over 220 countries. Their ability to turn a temporary solution into a long-term business changed the travel accommodation industry.



Warby Parker: Affordable eyewear through collaboration

Four Wharton classmates—Neil Blumenthal, Andrew Hunt, David Gilboa, and Jeffrey Raider—were frustrated with the high cost of eyeglasses. In 2010, they launched Warby Parker, eliminating traditional retail markups by selling directly to consumers. Their business model provided affordable, stylish eyewear while implementing a buy-one-give-one initiative. Their partnership helped redefine how glasses are sold worldwide.



WhatsApp: Simplifying global communication

Jan Koum and Brian Acton spent years working together at Yahoo. Disillusioned with the advertising-driven tech industry, they created WhatsApp in 2009 as a simple, secure messaging platform. The app's growth led to its \$19 billion acquisition by Facebook

in 2014. Their experience as colleagues helped them build a service that prioritised user privacy and efficiency.



Twitter: A side project that became a social media giant

Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Evan Williams, and Noah Glass worked together at Odeo, a podcasting company struggling against competition from Apple's iTunes. During a brainstorming session, they developed the concept for Twitter (now X), a platform for real-time updates. What started as a side project became one of the most influential social media platforms in history.



Pixar: The intersection of art and technology

Ed Catmull, Steve Jobs, and John Lasseter had different backgrounds—technology, business, and storytelling. Their combined expertise led to the creation of Pixar. The company revolutionised animation with films like Toy Story and Finding Nemo. Their collaboration demonstrated how diverse skill sets can drive industry-wide transformation.



6 INTERNATIONAL FAST FOOD MEALS AND WHAT THEY COST IN NAIRA

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Fast food prices vary across countries, but have you ever wondered how much your favourite international fast food meal would cost in Naira?

Here's what six popular fast food meals cost in Naira.

McDonald's Big Mac (US)

Price: \$5.79

Approximate Cost: 9,000

Local Alternative: Burger Nation – 5,700

KFC Chicken Bucket (UK)

Price: £10 - £39.99

Approximate Cost: 19,000 - 75,981

Local Alternative: KFC Nigeria Chicken Bucket - 5,400 - 62,500

Starbucks Tall Latte (US)

Price: \$4

Approximate Cost: 6,000

Local Alternative: Top Beans Coffee and More – 6,000 - 6,500

Domino's Pizza (UK)

Price: £10.99

Approximate Cost: 20,881

Local Alternative: Domino's Nigeria Pizza – 9,000 - 20,000

Subway Footlong Chicken Sandwich (US)

Price: \$13.19

Approximate Cost: 19,785

Local Alternative: 01 Shawarma (Chicken Premium Double Hotdog King Size Shawarma) – 7,150

Krispy Kreme Original Glazed Dozen (Australia)

Price: \$26.95

Approximate Cost: 40,425

Local Alternative: Krispy Kreme Nigeria Original Glazed Dozen – 14,400

These price comparisons show how much more (or less) Nigerians would pay for the same meals abroad. If you are travelling, knowing these prices can help you manage your expenses and stretch your Naira further.

THE SPECIAL FOUNDATION RELEASES ITS ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024 SHOWCASING EXCELLENCE THROUGH IMPACT

LAGOS, NIGERIA - FEBRUARY 2025 - The Special Foundation released its 2024 Annual Impact report, showcasing excellent milestone achievements in its continued mission to transform Africa's next generation of leaders through education.

After nearly eight years of impactful initiatives, The Special Foundation has emerged as a pivotal force in educational development, directly affecting over 35,000 lives across the continent.

The report spotlights the foundation's growth and tells the ever-improving story of an institution not afraid to push for excellence, taking impactful strides toward providing educational support for children from underprivileged communities.

From inspiring stories of hope documented in its "Tales of Hope" stories to transformative school build projects in the slums of Makoko, The Special Foundation's 2024 impact report is replete with incredible stories.

The Special Summer School program, an annual event that brings children from underprivileged communities across states to learn entrepreneurial skills, have fun and stay engaged during the holidays, in 2024 alone, attracted over 5000+ children, some of whom have been attending the event for a few years already.

Continuous support is the staple of what the foundation provides for its scholars. With over 560+ scholars across 15+ states, the foundation boasts 98% continuous support for its scholarship beneficiaries

like Shindara, the little girl whose mother was on the verge of suicide until the foundation stepped in.

Nevertheless, stories aren't the only features found in this report.

A few key statistical achievements highlighted, include:

- 560+ Inspire Scholarships awarded beneficiaries
- 15,000+ children engaged yearly through innovative Special Summer School programs
- 9,000+ mentorship recipient young learners
- 11+ school building projects, expanding educational access

"This year has showcased the power of partnerships," says Founder, Seyi Akinwale in speaking about the foundation's partners and sponsors. "Every child we reach, every school we transform, and every life we touch is a testament to our partners' commitment to creating lasting change," he adds.

An abridged list of the Foundation's partners includes First E&P, Credit Direct, Sterling One Foundation, RIF Trust, GardaWorld, and Elsie Jinadu Foundation. These partners continue to play a key role in supporting the foundation's continued growth in providing access to education.

With its annual Thought Leadership summit in the works, the foundation is keen on encouraging more corporate and individual partners to join its mission to transform the lives of underprivileged children across Africa.

ABOUT THE SPECIAL FOUNDATION

The Special Foundation is a privately funded Non-Governmental Organization that proudly serves as a symbol of commitment to nurturing Africa's future leaders and catalysing transformative change through education. Our legacy touches the lives of over 15,000 children, each benefiting from our comprehensive intervention initiatives and programs. These programs include Inspire scholarships, Special Summer School, Mentorship, and the revitalization of dilapidated school infrastructure through the School Build.

WOMEN REMAIN GROSSLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN GOVERNMENT

- AREOLA

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA





Oluwakemi Ann-Melody is the CEO and Managing Director of Vivacity and has worked with a number of notable brands as PR consultant. She also founded the Kemi Ann-Melody Areola Foundation (KAMAF) in 2019 aimed at increasing access to education, family welfare and protecting human rights of children. She also co-founded the Youth in Charity, a movement created to stamp out poverty through the economic empowerment of young people. In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she speaks on gains and challenges of the push for gender equality in Nigeria and women's participation in politics under this administration, amongst other issues.

What will you say about President Tinubu's pledge to support the Fintech Sector?

President Bola Tinubu's commitment to supporting Nigeria's fintech sector is a crucial development that could significantly impact the country's digital economy. The fintech industry is largely driven by young Nigerians who are leveraging technology to enhance financial inclusion, reduce banking barriers,

and promote economic participation across all demographics. With a rapidly expanding digital payments ecosystem and innovative financial products, the fintech space has become one of Nigeria's most promising industries.

This commitment from the government could unlock increased investment, regulatory reforms, and access to funding, enabling startups to scale and expand their services. With the right policies, fintech companies can accelerate Nigeria's transition into a cashless economy while enhancing financial literacy and economic empowerment. Additionally, improving access to venture capital and funding mechanisms will enable more entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses that contribute to job creation.

However, challenges such as cybersecurity risks, regulatory bottlenecks, and inadequate digital infrastructure must be addressed to ensure sustained growth. Cybersecurity threats remain a pressing concern as financial technology solutions become more widespread. Ensuring that adequate security frameworks are in place will protect users from fraud and cybercrime, fostering trust in digital transactions. Furthermore, regulatory clarity and streamlined licensing processes will enable fintech companies to operate without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

If managed effectively, Nigeria has the potential to become a fintech hub in Africa, attracting global investors and driving innovation. By fostering an enabling environment, the government can ensure that fintech continues to thrive as a critical component of Nigeria's broader economic development strategy.

What will you say are the gains and challenges for pushing gender equality in Nigeria ?

Nigeria has made notable progress in the push for gender equity, particularly in areas such as education, entrepreneurship, and political awareness. More women are breaking barriers in business, leadership, and innovation, proving that they are indispensable to Nigeria's socioeconomic growth. Increased participation of women in business has led to the emergence of female entrepreneurs and executives who are reshaping industries, contributing to job creation, and driving inclusive development.

Despite these gains, significant challenges persist. Cultural biases and deeply ingrained societal norms continue to limit women's

access to leadership opportunities, especially in politics and executive roles. Women remain grossly underrepresented in government, which affects policy decisions that could otherwise advance gender equality. Additionally, gender-based violence, unequal pay, and limited access to finance remain key obstacles to women's empowerment.

To achieve real gender equity, deliberate policies promoting equal opportunities in employment, business, and politics must be strengthened.

Encouraging female political participation through electoral reforms and ensuring access to funding for female entrepreneurs will create a more inclusive economy. Gender-sensitive policies, mentorship programs, and community-based initiatives will also be essential in driving long-term change.

In your opinion, what is Nigeria's readiness for the future of work ?

As global labor markets evolve, Nigeria must adapt to the changing nature of work to remain competitive. The country has taken some steps toward aligning with global trends, particularly in digital skills development and entrepreneurship. Tech hubs, innovation centers, and government-backed digital skills training programs have helped many young Nigerians transition into the digital economy.

However, several structural issues still hinder progress. Unemployment remains high, with many graduates struggling to find jobs that match their skills. The outdated educational curriculum does not fully equip students with the competencies required in the digital age, and inadequate infrastructure limits access to online learning and remote work opportunities.

To prepare adequately for the future of work, Nigeria must prioritize education reform, investing in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs and vocational training that align with emerging industries. Digital infrastructure, including broadband expansion and power supply, must also be improved to support tech-driven careers. Public-private partnerships will play a crucial role in bridging the skills gap and creating opportunities for Nigerian youth in the global job market.

Can you X-ray the goals of 'Nigeria Works 2030' initiative ?

The 'Nigeria Works 2030' initiative is designed to create a future-ready workforce by equipping young Nigerians with the skills required for emerging industries. The program aims to reduce unemployment, address



skills mismatches, and build capacity in high-growth sectors such as technology, renewable energy, and manufacturing.

Key objectives include investments in vocational training, expanding digital education, and supporting policies that encourage job creation. Collaboration with the private sector will be critical in developing training programs tailored to industry needs. Additionally, partnerships with international development organizations can provide funding and technical support to enhance the initiative's impact.

By fostering innovation and equipping young Nigerians with globally competitive skills, *Nigeria Works 2030* seeks to position the country as a leader in Africa's future workforce.

What is Nigeria's role in the critical minerals value chain ?

Africa is rich in mineral resources, yet its participation in the global critical minerals value chain remains minimal. Nigeria, with its vast reserves of lithium, gold, and other valuable minerals, has the potential to become a major player in this industry. However, the country must overcome challenges such as limited processing capacity, a lack of infrastructure, and regulatory inefficiencies.

Investing in local beneficiation and establishing industrial zones for mineral processing will be crucial in capturing more value from Nigeria's resources. By moving beyond raw material exports and investing in refining technologies, Nigeria can create jobs, attract foreign investment, and increase its global competitiveness.

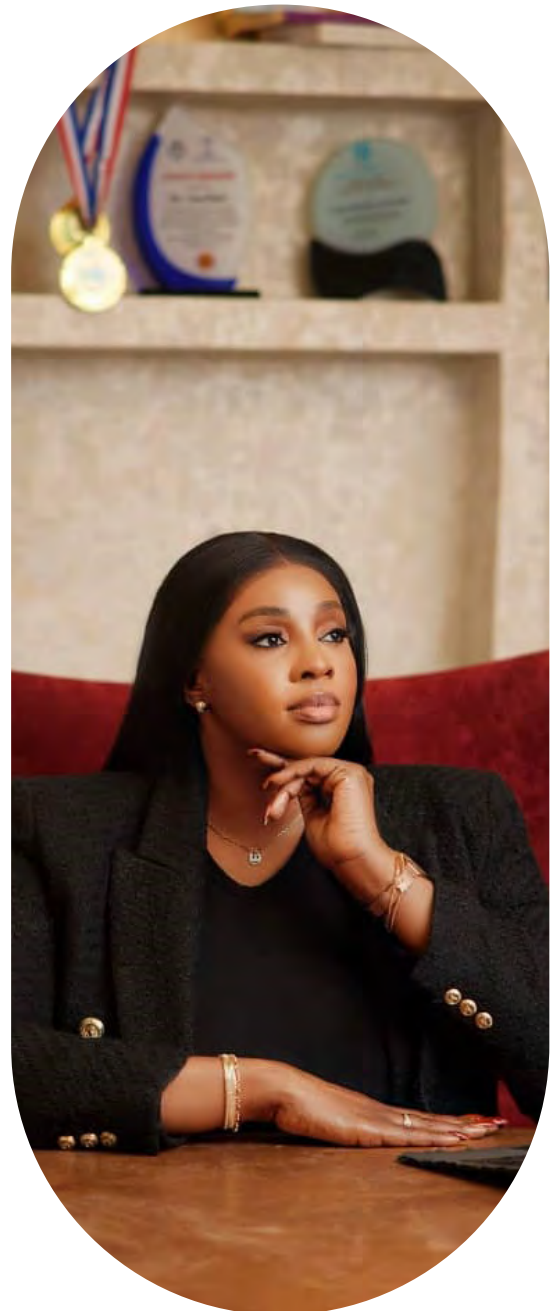
Furthermore, policies that promote local content participation and STEM education for young Nigerians will help develop a skilled workforce for this sector. Strategic partnerships with global mining and technology firms can also facilitate knowledge transfer and infrastructure development.

How would you rate women's participation in politics under this administration?

Women's participation in Nigerian politics remains below expectations despite ongoing advocacy efforts. While progress has been made in appointing women to government positions, representation at decision-making levels is still limited. The lack of gender-sensitive policies, cultural barriers, and financial constraints continue to hinder women's political ambitions.

To bridge this gap, women must actively engage in grassroots mobilization, advocacy, and mentorship programs to support female political candidates. Electoral reforms that promote gender inclusivity, such as quota systems and financial support for female aspirants, are also necessary to increase representation.

Building a political environment that supports gender balance will enhance democracy, ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are adequately represented in governance.





Take us through your personal journey in politics, public relations, and development?

My journey in politics, public relations, and development has been shaped by a deep passion for public service, strategic communication, and social impact. Starting from grassroots advocacy, I transitioned into public relations, where I helped shape narratives and policies that drive meaningful change.

Over the years, I have been involved in international dialogues on governance, sustainable development, and youth empowerment. Through my work, I have successfully organized high-level events, built strategic partnerships, and contributed to policies that promote economic inclusion, gender equity, and innovation. My commitment remains focused on creating opportunities, shaping impactful policies, and driving development across multiple sectors.

What is your opinion on the 'Japa' Syndrome?

The 'Japa' syndrome—the increasing trend of young Nigerians migrating abroad for better opportunities—highlights systemic challenges such as unemployment,

insecurity, and economic instability. While migration can offer personal and professional growth, Nigeria must work towards creating an environment where young people can thrive without feeling the need to leave. Addressing this issue requires policy reforms that improve job opportunities, invest in critical infrastructure, and support entrepreneurship. By creating a conducive economic environment, Nigeria can retain its skilled workforce and attract talents from the diaspora to contribute to national development.

What is your advice for women seeking impactful careers?

My advice to women striving for impactful careers is to be intentional about growth, build strong networks, and never shy away from leadership opportunities. Continuous learning, resilience, and mentorship are critical in navigating career advancements.

Women must also support each other in breaking societal barriers and advocating for policies that promote gender equality in the workplace. By embracing collaboration and pushing for systemic change, women can collectively drive progress in various industries, ensuring equal opportunities for future generations.

EDUCATION, EXPOSURE, EMPOWERMENT ESSENTIAL TO OVERCOMING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY - ADEOYE

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



graphy



Adesunbo Adeoye is a passionate entrepreneur and Convener of the annual Inspiring Change Conference, a platform where she impacts knowledge, inspires change and transforms the lives of men and women in business, with a focus on nation building.

The Inspiring Change Conference has evolved to become one of the most inspiring women conferences in the country.

Adeoye sits on the board of several companies and offer advisory services to SME from all industries. She is a mentor to many and recipient of numerous awards for her dedication and contribution towards progressive initiatives and humanity, in Nigeria. In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she shares major success stories she has achieved through the event and why she is interested in women empowerment.

Why the interest in women empowerment?

Because I believe women are powerful! When a woman is empowered, she builds a stronger home, raises confident children, and contributes to society. Women are multipliers—give her a little, and she will turn it into something great!

My passion is deeply rooted in my faith. Jesus empowered women in His ministry—He spoke to the Samaritan woman, defended the woman caught in adultery, and honoured Mary and Martha. I believe we are called to lift one another up. That's my mission.

Growing up as a teenager, what informed your career path, and how did you deviate from it?

Interestingly, I wanted to be an accountant! Numbers fascinated me, and I pursued it academically. But God had other plans—He led me into entrepreneurship, leadership, and ministry. Today, everything I've learned still plays a role in what I do, from financial management to business strategy.

Life is a journey, and sometimes, God redirects us to where we are needed the most. Jeremiah 29:11 reminds us that God has good plans for us—plans to prosper us and give us a future. I'm just walking in His plan!

Take us through your journey of founding the Inspiring Change Conference which has been on for 12 years now. How did it begin?

The Inspiring Change Conference was birthed from a simple yet profound desire—to see women rise above limitations and step into their God-given potential. I believe that when a woman is empowered, a whole generation is empowered! Over a decade ago, I looked around and saw so many women struggling, not because they lacked talent or passion, but because they lacked the right knowledge, mentorship, and opportunities. That's when I knew I had to act.

I started small, gathering women in a room to share knowledge, insights, and faith-based encouragement. With time, the impact grew beyond my imagination. What started as a conference became a movement, attracting thousands of women yearly, and evolving into free skill acquisition programs and business grants. Today, the Inspiring Change Initiative is a thriving platform for personal, professional, and business development for women. And this is just the beginning! Proverbs 4:7 says, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." That is exactly what this initiative is about—giving women wisdom and understanding to succeed.



Since you started the conference and free skill acquisition program, what have been the challenges you encountered and how have you navigated them?

Oh, the journey has not been without its hurdles! One major challenge is funding. Running an impactful initiative like this requires resources—venue costs, logistics, training materials, facilitators, grants—and for the most part, we have relied on personal funds and the generosity of partners. However, I've learned to trust God's provision. Each year, He raises helpers, and we keep pushing forward.

Another challenge is sustainability—ensuring that the women we train don't just acquire skills but also translate them into income-generating ventures. That's why we follow up with mentorship and networking opportunities to keep them accountable and on track. Share major success stories you have achieved through the event.

There are so many inspiring testimonies! One of our remarkable stories is Oluwatemilurun, a single mother who attended the conference and today owns Oretide Foods, a thriving business that exports across four continents! She has not only built wealth for herself but has become an employer of labor, heavily empowering women along the way.

Another powerful testimony is Hilda, one of our grant beneficiaries. She used the funds she received from Inspiring Change, added it to her savings, and was able to buy her own photography equipment. Today, she is doing exceptionally well and looking to open her own studio.

Beyond business, we have also touched the lives of young girls in 14 schools within the Agege community, empowering them with knowledge and providing them with free books, school bags, and stationeries. Because we must accelerate action to ensure the future is bright, equal, and successful for every woman.

These are the real wins for me—seeing lives transformed, women becoming financially independent, and families breaking free from the cycle of poverty.



What are you looking to achieve this year with the conference, and how many women do you hope to reach?

This year, our theme is Making More Money, because economic empowerment is key! We want to equip women with practical skills, financial knowledge, and access to resources that will help them scale their businesses and careers. We are trusting God to impact over 1,500 women this year, through the conference and the free skill acquisition programs.

Our goal is simple: More Women. More Knowledge. More Money. Because when women thrive financially, homes are more stable, communities are stronger, and the nation benefits as a whole.

Take us through some of the skill acquisition programs you hope to initiate this year for women.

This year, we are expanding our training programs to include: AI and Branding – Helping women understand the power of Artificial Intelligence in business and branding.

Forex Trading – Teaching women how to navigate the financial market and build wealth through forex.
Cake Making – A skill that turns passion into profit, with opportunities in event catering.

Wig Making & Revamping – Because the beauty industry is ever-growing, and we want women to tap into it. The idea is to equip women with skills that are not only relevant but also profitable.

How do you follow up with the women you invest in to ensure they make income from the skills they have learned?

We don't just train and leave them—we mentor, monitor, and connect them to opportunities. We have a network where they can engage with mentors, get business

advice, and even apply for seed funding.

Some of our participants also get opportunities to showcase their businesses at our conferences and other networking events, allowing them to access a wider audience and potential customers.

The focus of the Inspiring Change Conference is to enhance knowledge and educate women for an equal and purposeful future. What do you think are the central challenges regarding gender-related issues, both in the workplace and in the home? How might they be overcome?

One of the biggest challenges women face is economic inequality—not because we lack ability but because many women don't have access to the right opportunities. In the workplace, gender biases still exist. At home, many women struggle to balance family responsibilities with career growth.

To overcome these challenges, we need education, exposure, and empowerment. Women must be equipped with knowledge and confidence to negotiate better, take leadership roles, and own their financial power. I also believe that men should be part of this conversation—when they support and empower women, society wins!

As one with a keen interest in women's welfare, what advice would you give to women, especially with the situation of things in the country?

I would say this: Don't wait for things to get better before you take action. In tough times, there are still opportunities! Learn a skill, start a business, expand your network, and most importantly, trust God and move forward.

The economy might be tough, but women are tougher. We were built to adapt, evolve, and excel. Take that bold step, and watch God show up for you!. Where do you see the foundation in the next five to ten years?

By God's grace, in the next decade, Inspiring Change will be a household name, with training hubs across Africa, touching millions of women. I see us partnering with global organizations, providing scholarships, funding women-led businesses, and raising a new generation of wealthy, purpose-driven women. The best is yet to come, and I'm just excited to be part of this move!



DAMILOLA ERIC-OJO ADVOCATES STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH COMMUNICATION

...Convenes Bloom Up Confab 2025

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Damilola Eric-Ojo, therapist and relationship coach has emphasized the increasing disconnect in modern relationships, attributing it to poor communication and a lack of emotional awareness.

Speaking during the Bloom Up Conference 2025, which was held recently, she highlighted the need for people to be intentional about how they communicate, as healthy relationships do not thrive on assumptions but on learned skills and conscious effort.

"We cannot continue to assume that good communication happens naturally.

"It is something that must be taught, practiced, and refined. My hope is that everyone here walks away with not just knowledge, but actionable steps to strengthen their relationships," Eric-Ojo said.

In her keynote speech, "Speak to Connect," she outlined the importance of Authenticity, Active Listening, and Emotional Intelligence, stressing that these principles form the foundation of meaningful interactions.

Bloom Up Conference 2025 was a transformative gathering designed to help individuals build stronger relationships by fostering better communication and emotional intelligence.

Convened by Damilola Eric-Ojo, therapist and relationship coach the Bloom Up Conference 2025, themed "Love Without Borders," brought together experts, thought leaders, and attendees seeking to deepen their connections in both personal and professional spaces.

A significant highlight of the event was the panel session, which sparked engaging conversations around real-life relationship challenges and solutions. Panelists, including Olubori Paul (Finance Coach), Gloria Babarinde (Media Personality), and Yejide Oba (Host, The Alpha Mama Podcast), shared personal experiences and insights on navigating relationships in today's world.

Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including managing finances within the home, the influence of emotional wellness on relationships, how men can support high-achieving women, and navigating the expectations versus reality of every relationship.

The event featured insightful sessions from renowned experts also, including Unyime-Ivy King, Chairman, Protection Plus Service, Enahoro, CEO, GIG Mobility; Tosin Sanni, Soul Prosperity Coach; and Omotola Ade-Onojobi, Emotional Intelligence Coach.

These speakers addressed various aspects of relationship-building, from the role of emotional intelligence to transforming mindsets for personal and relational success.

Throughout the session, speakers reinforced the idea that relationships require deliberate effort, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, with panelists offering practical advice on fostering stronger connections in personal and professional spaces.

The event was supported by leading brands such as Lipton Teas, Leadway Assurance, Beesline Nigeria, and Nigerian Breweries, further emphasizing the growing recognition of the importance of communication and emotional wellness.

Attendees left the conference enlightened and empowered, with many expressing excitement for the next edition of the Bloom Up Conference.

A portrait of MCEVA TEMOFE, a man with a full dark beard and mustache, wearing a blue turban with orange stripes, round glasses, and a dark blue jacket over a blue scarf. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera against a warm yellow background.

MCEVA TEMOFE - Transforming Africa's Economy through Innovation, Investment Opportunities





Envision an Africa where Africans take the reins of economic growth and development, fueled by innovation and empowerment. McEva Temofe, a visionary Nigerian entrepreneur, is turning this vision into reality.

As founder and convener of the African Economic Global Convergence (AEGC), Temofe unites business leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders to pioneer solutions, drive transformation, and revamp Africa's economic, security, and investment landscapes.

With the AEGC Global Summit looming, attention focuses on Temofe and the AEGC team as they spearhead Africa's economic revolution. Writes Ifeoma Okeke-Korieocha.

In a bold move to reposition Africa as a major player in the global economy, Nigerian entrepreneur and business leader, McEva Temofe, is championing a new era of economic transformation on the continent.

As the founder and convener of the African Economic Global Convergence (AEGC), Temofe brings together business leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and other stakeholders to advance innovative ideas, explore new solutions, and transform Africa's security, economic, and investment ecosystems.

"The time has come for Africa to take its rightful place in the global economy. We have the resources, the talent, and the determination to succeed. What we need now is a collective effort to drive economic growth and development on the continent", Temofe said.

The AEGC Global Summit, scheduled to be held on September 22-23, 2025, at the United Nations Headquarters and World Trade Centre in New York, is expected to attract global investors, development and trade partners, entrepreneurs, and policymakers from 54 African countries.

"Africa's economic renaissance is not just a possibility, it's a necessity. We must create our values, principles, and standards that will drive our economic growth and development. We must believe in ourselves and our abilities, and we must work together to achieve our goals", Temofe emphasised.

Temofe's vision for Africa's economic transformation is built on the principles of good governance, effective management of the economy, social life, legal structures, and institutions. He believes that Africans must take the lead and champion the course of the continent's development, rather than relying on external aid.

"We need to change the narrative about Africa. We need to tell our own story, and we need to take ownership of our development. We can't rely on others to do it for us. We must take the lead, and we must drive our own growth and development," Temofe said.

The AEGC Global Summit is expected to be a major catalyst for Africa's economic transformation. The summit will provide a platform for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to discuss Africa's economic future, explore new opportunities for investment and growth, and develop strategies for overcoming the continent's economic challenges.

"We're not just talking about economic growth, we're talking about sustainable development. We're talking about creating opportunities for all Africans, regardless of their background or circumstances. We're talking about building a better future for ourselves and for generations to come," Temofe said.

The AEGC is committed to driving meaningful change through various initiatives that promote economic growth, empowerment, and development.

By recognizing and honoring successful entrepreneurs and individuals who have made significant contributions to African communities, the AEGC aims to inspire a new generation of leaders. Additionally, the organization seeks to boost economic growth by connecting established business leaders with emerging talent, fostering innovative partnerships, and supporting initiatives in critical areas such as agriculture, education, technology, infrastructure, security, and business development.

Temofe's leadership and vision for Africa's economic transformation have been widely recognised and acclaimed. He has been invited to speak at the United Nations Headquarters, Mastercard Foundation, UNESCO, and other global platforms.

As a prominent Nigerian entrepreneur, Temofe has a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Africa. He has worked extensively in the private sector and has a proven track record of driving growth and innovation.

"I'm passionate about Africa's economic transformation because I believe in the potential of our continent. I believe that we have the talent, the resources, and the determination to succeed. What we need now is a collective effort to drive economic growth and development on the continent", he said.

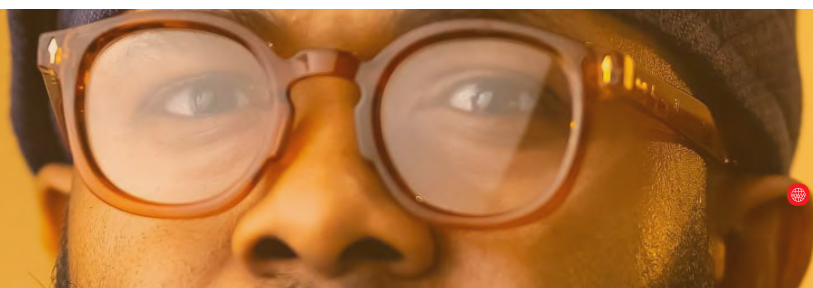
The AEGC Global Summit is a major step forward in this journey, and it promises to be a catalyst for Africa's economic renaissance. As Temofe noted, "This summit is not just about talking, it's about taking action. It's about making a commitment to drive economic growth and development on the continent."

With the AEGC Global Summit just around the corner, all eyes are on McEva Temofe and the AEGC team as they lead the charge for Africa's economic transformation. Will this summit be the catalyst for Africa's economic renaissance? Only time will tell, but one thing is certain - McEva Temofe and the AEGC are leading the way.

Temofe's commitment to Africa's economic transformation is not limited to the AEGC Global Summit. He has also been working tirelessly to promote economic growth and development across the continent.

As the AEGC Global Summit approaches, McEva Temofe remains optimistic about Africa's economic future. With his leadership and vision, he is inspiring a new generation of Africans to take charge of their economic destiny.

The future of Africa's economy looks bright, and McEva Temofe is leading the way.





INVESTING IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: A Path to Healthier Communities and a Stronger Nation

Imagine a Nigeria where every citizen regardless of their background or socioeconomic status has access to quality healthcare. A Nigeria where mothers can give birth safely, children receive essential vaccinations, and chronic diseases are effectively managed. This is not a distant dream, but a vision within our reach.

The pursuit of a healthier Nigeria begins with strong Primary Health Care (PHC). It is a journey that requires unwavering commitment and strategic action at all levels.

Robust PHC is the foundation of a healthy society. It's where healthcare begins, providing essential services close to communities and empowering individuals

to take control of their health. When people have access to quality healthcare, they are healthier, more productive, and contribute meaningfully to society. This translates to stronger families, more resilient communities, and a more prosperous nation.

However, while significant progress has been made toward strengthening PHC, challenges remain. Many countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries such as Nigeria, face obstacles including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, a shortage of skilled healthcare workers, limited and inefficiently allocated financial resources, and inequitable access to PHC services, particularly in underserved communities.



Strengthening PHC is not only a health imperative; it's a strategic pathway to achieving the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), impacting poverty reduction, education, gender equality, and more. It is an investment in our nation's future.

Foundation of a Healthy Nation: Investing in PHC
Revitalising PHC service delivery is not simply about building more clinics; it's about building a comprehensive system that delivers quality care, empowers communities, and addresses the root causes of health disparities. It starts with a strong commitment by leadership – to understand the issues.

A critical element of strengthening PHC lies in ensuring adequate and efficient funding. This involves not only increasing the overall allocation to PHC but also ensuring that existing resources are used effectively and transparently, reaching the facilities and communities that need them most.

Investing in PHC infrastructure is also essential. This means not just constructing new buildings but also equipping existing facilities with the necessary equipment, supplies, and technology to deliver quality care. Furthermore, a well-functioning PHC system relies on a well-trained and motivated workforce. Investing in the training and development of healthcare professionals at the primary level, including doctors, nurses, and community health workers, is crucial. This includes providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to address the specific health challenges facing their communities.

Beyond infrastructure and workforce, strengthening PHC requires a focus on service delivery. This means ensuring that essential services, such as maternal and child health care, immunization, and treatment for common illnesses, are available and accessible to all, particularly in underserved communities.

Finally, community engagement is paramount. Building trust and partnerships with communities is essential to understanding their health needs, empowering them to take ownership of their health, and ensuring that PHC services are appropriate and responsive to their needs.

Partnerships for a Healthier Nigeria
Strengthening Nigeria's Primary Health Care system requires more than just government action; it demands a concerted effort from all stakeholders. Philanthropic organisations, private sector companies, international NGOs, and community-based organisations have been invaluable allies, providing critical financial, technical, and capacity-building support.

At the Gates Foundation, we are deeply committed to improving the health and well-being of Nigerians, and we recognise that strong PHC is the cornerstone of achieving this goal. We have invested significantly in supporting critical PHC services, including strengthening immunisation programs to protect children against preventable diseases like polio, measles, and diphtheria. This has involved procuring life-saving vaccines, training healthcare workers in immunisation techniques, and supporting robust vaccination campaigns across the country. Additionally, the foundation supports efforts to combat infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis.

Investing in strong PHC systems is critical to achieving universal health coverage (UHC), and we believe that partnerships are essential to ensure its success. PHC is the cornerstone of UHC, with 91% of essential UHC interventions classified as PHC. Scaling up access to strong PHCs in low and middle-income countries could save 60 million lives and increase average life expectancy by 3.7 years by 2030. Yet, spending on

PHC in low-income countries is significantly less than in high-income countries, leading to higher out-of-pocket costs and poorer health outcomes.

24% of the global population lives in fragile contexts, including many regions within Nigeria, where delivering quality essential health services is extremely challenging. These communities often face significant security threats, displacement, and limited access to basic infrastructure, making it more challenging to deliver essential health services. A large proportion of preventable maternal, childhood, and neonatal deaths occur in these fragile contexts. Strengthening PHC in these challenging environments is crucial to ensuring that all Nigerians, regardless of their location, have access to the care they need to survive and thrive.

To further demonstrate this commitment, the Gates Foundation is proud to support initiatives like the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Fund (PHC-LCF). This strategic initiative recognises that strong political leadership is crucial for accelerating progress towards effective PHC and addresses critical leadership gaps.

This initiative, a collaborative effort between the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Nigeria Governors' Forum, and the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), with technical assistance from UNICEF and financial support from the Gates Foundation and the Aliko Dangote Foundation, empowers states to take ownership of their PHC systems.

The PHC-LCF encourages states to fully implement the "Primary Health Care Under One Roof" initiative, as well as the Abuja Declaration and Seattle Declaration, thereby solidifying their commitment to PHC strengthening. Their leadership, resource allocation, and effective implementation are essential for revitalising PHC systems and ensuring quality care reaches all communities within their jurisdictions.

By fostering strong partnerships and prioritising data-driven decision-making, we can ensure that all Nigerians have access to quality, affordable healthcare and build a healthier, more equitable future for our nation.

The Road Ahead: Overcoming Challenges and Seizing Opportunities

Despite significant progress, several challenges persist in strengthening PHC in Nigeria. One of the primary challenges is the lack of adequate PHC infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Many facilities lack the basic equipment, supplies, and resources necessary to provide quality care. This disparity in access creates a significant barrier for

many Nigerians and hinders the overall development of our communities.

Another challenge is the shortage of skilled healthcare workers at the primary care level, which can lead to suboptimal care and delays in treatment. This shortage is exacerbated by factors such as inadequate training opportunities, challenging working conditions, and the ongoing emigration of healthcare professionals seeking better opportunities elsewhere.

Financial constraints are another significant challenge. While increased investment in health is crucial, it is equally important to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to reach PHC facilities and programs. Marginalised populations, such as women, children, people living with disabilities, and those living in poverty or remote areas, often face significant barriers to accessing quality healthcare.

However, despite these challenges, Nigeria has a unique opportunity to leverage its growing economy and increase investment in healthcare. By prioritising PHC, strengthening partnerships, mobilising domestic resources, and implementing innovative strategies, we can overcome these obstacles and build a truly robust and equitable PHC system. The Gates Foundation remains committed to supporting these efforts.

The journey towards a strong PHC is a marathon, not a sprint. It requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and a shared vision. By working together, we can create a healthier, more equitable Nigeria where everyone has access to the quality primary healthcare they need to thrive.

Uche Amaonwu serves as the Nigeria Country Director for the Gates Foundation, leading efforts to deliver life-saving interventions and economic opportunities to Nigeria's most vulnerable populations.

Uche Amaonwu
Nigeria Country Director,
Gates Foundation

WASTE FOR GAS: LESSONS FROM GTCO ON SUSTAINABLE MEANS OF IMPROVING LIVES OF WOMEN, HOUSEHOLDS



Mama Kayode as she is popularly called, sells pure water in a remote area at Obafemi Owode Local Government Area Ogun State.

The widow with three children could barely cater for herself and her children since she lost her husband in 2022. Her neighbours could testify that she has been living from hand to mouth from her petty pure water business.

One morning, Mama Kayode woke up to the news around town that she could change her business to a better one, if only she could gather some waste plastics littered around her village in exchange for gas cylinders with burners.

'Could this be true or just a means to get poor women like myself to keep the environment clean'? Mama Kayode had raised doubts about the news. However, reluctantly, she joined a few other women

to get to the task; at least with the satisfaction that she was contributing also contributing in making the environment clean.

Today, Mama Kayode is a proud owner of a gas cylinder and burner and it's the birth of a new business for her and a reasonable revenue to cater for her family going forward.

Like Mama Kayode, many other women have been alleviated from poverty through the Guaranty Trust Bank Plc's 'Waste for Gas' initiative.

A total number of 3,000 gas cylinders were distributed.

In addition to empowering women, access to clean cooking energy remains a pressing challenge in many underserved communities across Nigeria, where millions still rely on firewood and charcoal



for daily cooking. This reliance not only contributes to deforestation but also exposes households—particularly women and children—to harmful indoor air pollution.

Improving outcomes for communities

The 'Waste for Gas' project is expected to improve quality of life for households and empower women in underserved communities.

This transformative initiative distributes 3,000 3kg gas cylinders with burners to low-income households in Obafemi Owode Local Government, Mowe, Ogun State.

The Waste for Gas project underscores GTCO's unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for people and communities. By providing households with gas-powered cooking, the initiative simplifies daily routines, freeing up time for essential activities that support financial resilience.

The initiative also introduced a structured "waste for gas" exchange programme that promotes responsible waste management, fostering a culture of sustainability.

The project has been in two key phases, ensuring that it reaches those most in need. In the first phase, teams from GTCO, in collaboration with local government representatives, conducted door-to-door visits across 12 wards in Obafemi Owode Local Government from Monday to Friday, February 18th - 21st, 2025. These visits helped identify beneficiaries who relied on firewood and charcoal for cooking.

Participating households collected and returned plastic waste in exchange for gas cylinders and burners. In the second phase, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, February 22nd and 23rd, 2025, efforts was shifted to monitoring and increasing adoption of the new cooking method among the beneficiaries.

Speaking on the initiative, Segun Agbaje, Group Chief Executive Officer of GTCO Plc, stated: "At GTCO, we are committed to driving progress, not just through innovative financial solutions but by creating real impact in the communities where we operate. Waste for Gas is about making life easier for families, giving them more time for what truly matters—whether it's education, meaningful work, or personal development.

"Beyond this initiative, our goal is to continually evolve sustainable platforms that empower people, strengthen communities, and contribute to socioeconomic progress." Agbaje said that as GTCO continues to expand its CSR footprint, the Waste for Gas project serves as a blueprint for future interventions that drive meaningful, long-lasting impact in underserved communities.

Ogun State lauds initiative

Odeyinka Temitayo, Director, Admin & Supply, Ogun State Environmental Protection Agency (OGEPA); who represented Dapo Abiodun, Ogun State Governor described the gesture as laudable.

He disclosed the governor has embarked on various programmes to rid the environment of pollution. "If other banks can emulate this, Ogun State will be a haven of beauty. I want GTCO to replicate this in other Local Government Area of Ogun State," he added.



Ogunsola Adesina Lanre, Chairman Obafemi Owode Local Government Area also commended GTCO for the programme, said this is the first time a bank would reach out to the Local Government.

He encourage the bank to establish a branch in the Local Government.

Oba Kolawole Aremu Sowemimo, the Olu of Owode-Egba, however cautioned against selling the gas cookers. He assured, 'we are going to create gas stations where you can refill at discounted prices. We are meeting with the Chairman of the Local Government concerning this.'

Promoting responsible waste disposal

Apart from empowering women, the initiative also promotes responsible waste disposal.

Oyinade Adegite, Chief Communication Officer, GTCO Plc, said GTCO is committed to improving community well-being by providing access to clean and efficient cooking solutions.

Speaking further, Adegite said GTCO also incorporates a structured waste-for-gas exchange programme, encouraging responsible waste disposal and promoting sustainability.

Iyalaja General Obafemi Owode Local Government, Chief Ganiyat Oyelakin said the beneficiaries must exercise caution while using the gas cookers in order to forestall accidents.

The beneficiaries were also enlightened about the Do's and Don'ts of using the cooking gas cylinders.

Expressing their gratitude, the beneficiaries commended GTCO for coming to their aid.

One of the beneficiaries Taiwo Suraju said "We are excited. This gesture will make us stop using firewood for cooking."

Beyond giving back

Oyinade Adegite, GTCO's Chief Communication Officer, who spoke during the unveil/presentation event, highlighted that the initiative was designed to promote cleaner communities while enhancing household welfare.

According to Adegite, providing access to gas-powered cooking solutions will not only simplify daily routines but also free up time for other productive activities that support financial stability.

She further noted that GTCO conducted thorough assessments by visiting beneficiaries' homes to ensure that the support reached those who genuinely needed it.

"We visited various households across the local government and were surprised to find that some residents had already gone borrowing from money lenders just to afford gas cylinders, while some others were considering doing the same," she revealed.

She urged beneficiaries to use the cylinders for their intended purpose and not resell them, adding that GTCO would return for the second phase of the program. The bank's decision to expand the initiative would depend on how well the items are utilised.

HERE ARE TOP 5 COUNTRIES TO STUDY HUMANITIES

CHARLES OGWO



Choosing a university of study and course can be significantly important to one's financial and career success. Humanities is one of the university courses that offer one financial and career success.

These are academic disciplines that help us understand and appreciate different languages, arts, literature, history, and philosophy.

Humanities is a broad discipline encompassing several fields of knowledge in which one can specialise. The highest paying job for humanities students is being a lawyer.

Lawyers are at the top of the pyramid as far as financial compensation goes for humanities students. Still, it's important to note that there are other high-paying career paths available for individuals with a background in humanities.

If you are interested in learning about human behaviour and the moral, social, and aesthetic factors affecting human decisions, then a degree in the humanities is for you.

Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication, are skills that you will develop in studying the humanities and are sought after by employers from different industries such as journalism, advertising, performing arts, education, and international relations.

According to Global Scholarships, a platform for international students to search for scholarships around the world, the five top countries to study Humanities in the world are;

United Kingdom

Many universities in the United Kingdom are internationally renowned for providing excellent quality education. Graduates of any of the country's universities have high employability rates because a UK degree is recognised by organisations across the globe. Besides, universities in the UK are known for promoting inclusivity and diversity in their campuses providing a safe and supportive learning environment for international students.

Studying humanities in the UK will help applicants understand society, culture, art, literature, morality, and values from a critical perspective and provide them with skills that are sought after by employers.

Some of the best universities to study humanities in the United Kingdom are the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, King's College London, the University of St. Andrews, and the University of Edinburgh.



Singapore

Singapore is an excellent country to study the humanities. It has established itself as an education, business, and innovation hub in Asia. It is recognised as one of the best student cities in the world for its outstanding education, cutting-edge facilities in universities, safe environment, and high standards of living.

Most classes in Singaporean universities are conducted in English. Programs in the humanities involve classroom lectures, group projects, internships, fieldwork, exchange programs, and other experiential and collaborative activities to develop every student's professional skills and make them industry-ready.

Here are some of the best educational institutions offering humanities degrees in Singapore: the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, James Cook University – Singapore, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, and LASALLE College of Arts.



Germany

Germany has a long history of academic and research excellence. It is one of the most popular study destinations among the international student community not only for the high quality of education provided by its institutions but also because most public universities in the country offer free tuition for both German and non-German students.

Universities in Germany are known for applying the concept of "praxis" or learning through practice in all of their programs.

Students are provided with an in-depth understanding of different fields of humanities such as art, literature, politics, philosophy, history, and languages.

The academic experience of humanities students includes a blend of class lectures, interactive discussions, practical projects, research work, and internship programs. With this, Germany is truly one of the best countries in the world to study humanities.

Some of the best universities in Germany that offer humanities degrees are the Humboldt University of Berlin, Free University of Berlin, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Heidelberg University, and the Eberhard Karl University of Tübingen.

Australia

Australia is a country known for its cultural diversity, laid-back lifestyle, and beautiful natural landscapes. It is an ideal place to interact with people from many different backgrounds and cultures, explore the great outdoors, and do countless recreational activities.

The country is also home to several top-rated universities in global university rankings.

International students are very much welcomed in Australia. The country's universities, as well as the Australian government, provide different scholarships, financial assistance, and accommodations to foreign students who would like to pursue a degree in one of its universities. Humanities programmes are designed to impart transferable skills in research, critical thinking, communication, and leadership to make students ready for their chosen careers. Some of Australia's top universities for studying humanities are the University of Melbourne, Australian National University, University of Sydney, Flinders University, and Curtin University.

South Korea

South Korea is among global leaders in technology, innovation, and education. It is a popular study-abroad destination for its world-class education and for the opportunity to explore and appreciate the country's rich history, early traditions, contemporary culture, art, music, and cuisine.

Renowned universities in South Korea provide broad knowledge and understanding of different fields of humanities. Students learn to interpret various social phenomena and how they affect human behavior, literature, art, politics, and the like.

Some of the top universities in South Korea where students can study humanities are Seoul National University, Yonsei University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Kyung Hee University, and Hanyang University.

STUDY SHOWS 94% YOUNGSTERS HAVE SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE BEFORE AGE 13

... Danish government urge tech firms to protect children from addictive, inappropriate content

CHARLES OGWO



About 94 percent of youngsters have social media profile before age 13, despite that being the minimum age for many social media platforms, besides, nine to 14-year-olds spent an average of three hours daily on TikTok and YouTube.

This is according to the report by the Danish wellbeing commission, which was set up in 2023 by Mette Frederiksen, the Prime Minister of Denmark, investigate growing dissatisfaction among children and young people.

“94 percent of young people had a social media profile before they turned 13, despite that

being the minimum age for many social media platforms, and that nine to 14-year-olds spent an average of three hours a day on TikTok and YouTube,” the report shows.

“This increases the risk of children being exposed to, amongst other things, inappropriate comparison cultures, and pressure to be available and harmful content and features.

“At the same time it takes time and attention away from essential things in childhood and youth like leisure activities, physically spending time with friends and family, play and immersion in reading and other activities,” the report stated.



In addition, the commission states; “Tech companies, should be forced to protect children from “addictive” design and inappropriate content. Parents, meanwhile, should not give children a smartphone or tablet until they are at least 13.”

Consequent to the report, Mattias Tesfaye, the minister for children and education told Politiken, a Danish daily newspaper that the government need to reclaim the schools for learning and not otherwise.

“There is a need to reclaim the school as an educational space, where there is room for reflection and where it is not an extension of the teenage bedroom.

“There will be scope for local authorities to make exceptions, including for children with special educational needs, but he said mobile phones and personal tablets “do not belong in school, neither during breaks nor during lessons.”

In view of the above, the government recently announced its plan to ban mobile phones in schools and after-school clubs on the recommendation of a government commission that also found that children under 13 should not have their own smartphone or tablet.

The government said it would change existing legislation to force all folkeskole, comprehensive primary and lower secondary schools, to become phone-free, meaning that almost all children aged between seven and 16-17 will be required by law not to bring their phones into school.

The announcement marks a u-turn by the government, which had previously refused to introduce such a law. It comes as governments across Europe are trying to impose tighter regulations on children’s access to phones and social media.

The Danish wellbeing commission was set up by the Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, in 2023 to investigate growing dissatisfaction among children and young people.

Its long-awaited report, published on Tuesday, raised the alarm over the digitisation of children and young people’s lives and called for a better balance between digital and analogue life.

Among its 35 recommendations was the need for government legislation banning phones from schools and after-school clubs.

Tesfaye explained that the government had started preparing a legislative amendment. “Suddenly, screens were everywhere in school, and it was only afterwards that we started discussing the consequences.

“Both academic studies and commissions are starting to address the negative consequences. In the two years that I have been minister of education alone, we have become somewhat wiser,” he said.

Rasmus Meyer, the chair of the commission, compared the mobile phone ban to not allowing smoking in schools and said that the moment a child is given a smartphone “it will colonise the child’s entire life”.

2025 OMOGE ASA: PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE, NORMS AND VALUES OF THE YORUBA PEOPLE

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Omoge Asa is an initiative aimed at promoting and preserving the cultural heritage, norms, and values of the Yoruba people. The event is a celebration of the rich cultural traditions of the Yoruba nation, which is one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The South-Western institution culture queen fiesta, Omoge Asa, a brainchild of Professor Anjola Robbin under the auspices of the faculty of Arts, Lead City University in collaboration with Academy Suites is set to host the second edition of this year's edition of the pageantry and entrepreneurial event on April 10, 2025. Building on the success of the first edition, which

activated different people driven activities that celebration the revered cultural and norms, value and heritage Omoge Asa promises to step up standard to broaden the scope of the event.

According to Anjola Robbin, the Convener of the event, "Omoge Asa is not just a cultural beauty pageant; it is a platform for young African women to showcase their talents, celebrate our cultural heritage, and project the future we envision, especially as many aspects of our culture are fast eroding.

"The Omoge Asa Cultural Beauty Pageant enables us to express ourselves through dance, spoken word,



and the celebration of our traditional attire, highlighting what makes Africa unique. The Pageantry serves as an avenue for empowering young African women who are ready to step forward from various universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education in the southwestern region of Nigeria.

She explained that “It is a collective effort to showcase our beliefs as a people while respecting our diverse cultures and origins. For us, it is a unifying strategy to bring everyone together in celebration of our cultural heritage.

“Additionally, there are rewarding prizes and opportunities for collaboration to be won by contestants in the Omoge Asa Cultural Beauty Pageant 2025.” This year, Omoge Asa is in collaboration with Lead City University and Academy Suite as its main sponsor.

“Academy Suite will be donating the prizes for the winners of the Omoge Asa and they have put everything in place to host the bootcamp for the contestants with their welfare inclusive for the period for their stay.

“We are also working with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Osun, Ekiti, Oyo, and Lagos states. The event will take place on April 10, 2025, at Lead City University.

“We are honored to have Chief Mrs. Tamunomini Olufunke Makinde, the First Lady of Oyo State, as our distinguished guest, along with the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism in Southwest Nigeria.

“If you are a talented young undergraduate in any institution in southwestern Nigeria—whether a university, polytechnic, or college of education—this is your opportunity to showcase your talent, gain empowerment, and network with others who share a passion for celebrating Africa’s diverse culture.

“This is not just a cultural pageantry; it’s a movement. Whether you are sponsoring, contesting, participating, or simply an enthusiast of our culture, join us on this incredible journey at Lead City University, Faculty of Arts. Let’s make history together!

In her remarks, Esther Aderinto, the Director of the Center for entrepreneurial Innovations at Lead City University Ibadan, expressed excitement about the center’s partnership with the Faculty of Arts for the 2025 edition of Omoge Asa Cultural Pageantry.

“This partnership aims to showcase the entrepreneurial skills and talents of our students in Africa through cultural arts. The event will cover a wide range of options, including Adire and Batik production, Aso Oke weaving, bead making, fashion design, shoe making, and other African crafts.

“Lead City University entrepreneurial initiatives stands to present viable economic opportunities which we give to our students to help them to bridge the gap between culture and innovation.

“The cultural pageantry will feature participants from all higher education institutions across the southwestern region of Nigeria. Join us as we celebrate this unique fusion of culture and innovation at Omoge Asa 2025 Cultural Pageantry.” Aderinto added.



AFREXIMBANK'S DOCUMENTARY SERIES, 'IMPACT STORIES' SPOTLIGHTS AFRICA'S GROWTH, ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

HOPE MOSES-ASHIKE

Afreximbank has launched its new documentary series titled - Impact stories, which aims to showcase the development impact of the Bank's interventions across various sectors and countries on the continent and in the diaspora.

Season One of the series consists of six episodes which went on air on Afreximbank TV on 27th February 2025.

Produced by the Afreximbank TV team and CNN's Create Studio services, the series aims to spotlight the Bank's interventions, incorporating multi-faceted narratives that bring the Bank's initiatives to life.

Through testimonials of individuals, businesses, communities and economies that have been positively impacted by the interventions, the series creates an emotional connection, and a shared commitment of an African vision focused on transforming trade and economic self-determination.

Filmed across six countries and sectors, the inaugural season consists of six episodes that showcase some of Afreximbank's development impact through inspiring short documentary-style films.

The episodes feature the Zimborders Beitbridge project which involves the expansion, upgrade and improvement of Beitbridge Border Post in Zimbabwe, exploring the transformative effect of Afreximbank's investment in modernising the border post, and showing how improved infrastructure is addressing trade inefficiencies, fostering intra-African trade and driving regional growth.

Other episodes include the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ) in Benin, a project led by Afreximbank investee company, Arise Integrated Industrial Platform (Arise IIP) focused on driving industrialisation, job

creation and end-to-end production on the continent; an episode on Oando PLC, showcasing their successful acquisition in a key Nigerian oil sector joint venture and its transformative impact on local content and economic prosperity, as well as other episodes focused on Eva's Coffee in Kenya, an SME business driving export development and local value chain expansion; Reine Ablaa - a rising music star and alumni of Afreximbank's CANEX Music factory initiative and an episode on the ongoing success of the Bank's Pan African Payments and Settlement System (PAPSS).

Anne Ezech, director of communications and events at Afreximbank emphasised the Bank's transformative role stating: "Afreximbank was founded to drive Africa's economic independence through trade and trade-enabling infrastructure.

For the past thirty-two years, we have consistently translated that mandate into impactful projects and initiatives across the continent. The Impact Stories series represents an avenue to showcase the tangible progress we are making to transform the economic fortunes of the African people while reminding us of the development challenges that remain."

Impact storytelling goes beyond traditional creative metrics; it's about people and economies whose everyday realities have been positively impacted by projects and developmental interventions. Compelling impact storytelling combines data, evidence, and personal stories, making them potent tools for advocating positive shifts and motivating others to champion a cause.

The first episode went on air on February 27, on Afreximbank TV, and new episodes will be released weekly.

HOW WOMEN ACHIEVERS AFRICA IS BUILDING A FUTURE WHERE NO WOMAN STANDS ALONE

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



For decades, women have been conditioned to compete for limited seats at the top. But as research shows, the real key to success is not competition but collaboration. “Women who support women are more successful in business,” a Forbes report read.

When women support each other, economies thrive, businesses grow, and leadership gaps shrink. A 2023 McKinsey report revealed that companies with strong female networks outperform their competitors by 25% in revenue growth.

Similarly, an Harvard Business Review publication found that companies with more women in leadership roles are more socially responsible and provide better customer experiences.

This message was at the heart of the Women Achievers Africa’s Nigeria chapter launch in Lagos, an event focused on building alliances that empower women across sectors. The event doubled as a powerful prelude to Women’s Month, featuring panel discussions on mentorship, gender inclusivity, and the importance of strategic alliance.

“Women must recognise that true leadership is not limited to personal success or achievements, said Olamide Adeleye, Global President of Women Achievers Africa. “It also involves paving the way for others.” With operations in 22 countries, the organisation is actively reshaping both the career and the business world for female entrepreneurship and leadership.

Economic Inclusion Through Strategic Alliances
Women Achievers Africa, founded by Victor Okwuadi, is not just a support network but also a movement. “Women are the most affected by poverty in Africa,” Okwuadi said in an interview with BD Weekender at the launch. “We must organise, mobilise, and ensure they have access to resources.”

The organisation has already made strides in East Africa, facilitating trade alliances between women in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi. It is also advocating for policies to ease cross-border movement within Africa, recognising that restrictive regulations disproportionately hinder female entrepreneurs. “It is very difficult to move across Africa, and these are some of the barriers we want to fix,” Okwuadi added.

A major conference scheduled for July 29-31 in Lagos will bring together women from across industries to accelerate this agenda.

Also at the event, Lagos State government representative Titilayo Oshodi underscored the crucial link between women’s economic empowerment and sustainability. “Women must step forward, recognise their value, and leverage commerce in the circular economy to drive financial empowerment,” she said.

She pointed to waste management as a billion-dollar opportunity, highlighting that Nigerian households generate an estimated five kilograms of waste daily. “Can we begin to establish businesses that collect, recycle, and repurpose waste? This is where economic empowerment meets environmental sustainability,” she noted.

Speaking further, Oshodi announced a collaboration between Lagos State and Green Place Africa to distribute six million clean

cookstoves, a project aimed at reducing deforestation and carbon emissions while boosting financial inclusion. “Women influence their households and communities. By adopting clean cookstoves, they drive sustainable practices and gain financial incentives,” she said.

Leveraging strategic alliances for success, growth
During a panel session at the launch, female leaders from diverse industries shared a common message, stating that strategic alliances are essential for success.

Simisola Alabi, a clinician and healthcare systems expert, highlighted the role of self-awareness in building valuable partnerships. Reflecting on her own journey, she shared how coaching helped her navigate networking as an introvert. “You must be clear and strategic,” she advised, urging women to offer value rather than simply seeking mentorship. Similarly, Ijeoma Ubosi, founder of Kontessa Group, emphasised that collaboration goes beyond friendships. It is about leveraging strengths for mutual growth.

Adding to that, Adekunbi Omotosho, co-founder of She Tech Alliance Africa, encouraged women to step into visibility and actively seek support. “We shortchange ourselves when we don’t showcase our work,” she said, recounting how a single introduction transformed her vision into a thriving nonprofit. Initially determined to build alone, she soon realised that partnerships were key to expanding impact.

This theme of strategic networking carried through to Ifeoma Udoh, founder of Shecluded, who stressed the importance of intelligence and legal protection in business. “Getting to the top is not the end, it is where the real work begins,” she said, urging women to separate emotions from business and invest in financial and legal expertise.

Udoh’s own experience demonstrated the power of high-level connections, adding that success is not just about skill but also about relationships and knowing how to leverage them.

4 INTERNATIONAL TV SHOWS ADAPTED FOR NIGERIAN AUDIENCES

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



The Nigerian entertainment industry has a history of adapting successful international TV formats for local audiences, alongside producing original content. These adaptations retain the core appeal of the originals while incorporating cultural nuances that resonate with Nigerian viewers.

As the demand for locally relevant content grows, more global franchises continue to find a home in Nigeria.

Here are 4 international TV shows that have been successfully replicated in the country.

The Apprentice Africa

The Apprentice Africa was the African adaptation of the American reality TV show The Apprentice, originally hosted by Donald Trump. The show debuted in February 2008 and ran for 18 episodes, ending in June 2008. It was hosted by Biodun Shobanjo, co-founder of Insight Communications and CEO of Troyka Group. The competition brought together 18 contestants from six African countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, and Guinea, to compete in various business tasks testing their corporate and entrepreneurial skills.

Filmed in Lagos, Nigeria, the show followed the original format where contestants were divided into two teams, with the losing team facing elimination in the boardroom. Contestants were gradually eliminated until Isaac Dankyi-Koranteng, a Sales and Marketing Manager from Ghana, emerged as the winner. He was awarded a \$200,000 annual salary and a brand new car, along with a position at Troyka Group.

Deal or No Deal Nigeria

Deal or No Deal Nigeria was the Nigerian adaptation of the popular international game show Deal or No Deal, which originated from the Netherlands. The show premiered in 2007 on M-Net Africa and was hosted by Nigerian actor and TV personality John Fashanu. The game involved contestants selecting one sealed briefcase out of 26, each containing a hidden cash amount ranging from a small sum to a jackpot prize. As the game progressed, contestants eliminated other briefcases, while a mysterious figure known as “The Banker” made cash offers to buy their case. The contestant had to decide whether to accept the banker's offer or continue opening cases in the hope of winning a higher cash prize. The show combined strategy, luck, and psychological tension.

Family Feud Nigeria

Family Feud Nigeria is the local adaptation of the globally popular game show Family Feud, which originated in the United States. The Nigerian version premiered in 2022 on Africa Magic and was hosted by actress and TV personality Bisola Aiyeola. The game featured two competing families of five members each answering survey-based questions to guess the most popular responses given by 100 people. Each round tests the contestants' ability to think quickly and predict common opinions. The family that accumulates the most points advances to the Fast Money round for a chance to win a cash prize.

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? is the Nigerian adaptation of the British game show Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?, which originally aired in the UK. The show premiered in 2004 and was hosted by Frank Edoho, becoming one of Nigeria's most iconic game shows. Contestants answered a series of multiple-choice questions, with the prize money increasing with each correct answer, up to a grand prize of 20 million. Players had access to three lifelines—50:50, Phone a Friend, and Ask the Audience which was later changed to Ask the Host—to assist them in answering difficult questions. The show became known for its suspenseful atmosphere, dramatic music, and high-stakes gameplay.

TOP 10 DESTINATIONS THAT TEST TOURISTS' PATIENCE

CHISOM MICHAEL

A recent study by DIPNDIVE has identified ten cities that present significant challenges for tourists, despite attracting large numbers of visitors. The study evaluated city-level data across multiple factors, including tourist density, population, noise levels, air quality index (AQI), restaurant prices, transport costs, taxi rates, and crime index.

A composite score was calculated on a scale of 0-100, with higher scores indicating cities where tourists face greater challenges due to environmental conditions, safety concerns, and cost-related factors.

"Tourists visiting high-density cities can benefit from exploring off-peak travel seasons or less crowded neighborhoods, which often offer a more relaxed and authentic experience while avoiding some of the common challenges highlighted in the data. Additionally, planning for local costs like transportation and meals can help travelers better manage their budgets in these demanding destinations," the report reads

The study highlights the impact of these elements on visitor experiences in some of the world's most visited cities. While these locations continue to attract tourists, the findings suggest that various factors contribute to making trips more demanding.

Here are the top 10 destinations that test tourists' patience

Las Vegas ranks first with a score of 95. The city records 187,000 visitors per 100,000 residents, making it one of the most crowded destinations. Noise levels reach 94, contributing to the challenges of navigating the area. Meals and transport costs are moderate, but the overall environment can feel overwhelming.



San Francisco follows in second place with a score of 93. Tourists encounter dense crowds, poor air quality with an 82 AQI rating, and high restaurant costs averaging \$25 per meal. The crime index stands at 61.50, raising safety concerns. Despite its popular landmarks, these factors require visitors to exercise patience.



New York City ranks third with a score of 83.

The city records the highest noise levels on the list at 78. Dining costs are also the highest, with meals averaging \$30. Despite the challenges, millions visit annually, drawn by the city's diverse attractions.



London ranks fourth with a score of 82. The city has one of the highest transport costs, with an average ticket price of \$3.58. The air quality index stands at 50, offering some relief compared to other cities on the list. However, high costs remain a challenge for visitors.



Los Angeles ranks fifth with a score of 79. The city has the worst air quality on the list, with an AQI of 116. While transport costs are lower at \$1.88 per ticket, the city's size and environmental conditions make it difficult for tourists to navigate.



Zurich ranks sixth with a score of 77. The city is known for safety, with a low crime index of 23.30. However, it has some of the highest costs, with meals averaging \$27.79 and transport at \$4.89 per ticket. Visitors find the city clean and orderly but expensive.



San Diego ranks seventh with a score of 76. The city has high noise levels at 75 and moderate air quality. These factors impact the experience of tourists despite its reputation as a relaxed destination.



Milan ranks eighth with a score of 73. Visitors benefit from affordable dining, with meals costing an average of \$20.81, and transport at \$2.29 per ticket. However, crowding and a crime index of 51.80 require tourists to plan their visits carefully.



Portland ranks ninth with a score of 72. The city has the cleanest air on the list, with an AQI of 22. However, it also records a crime index of 57.40. While tourist density is moderate, safety concerns affect the visitor experience.



Paris ranks tenth with a score of 71. The city has the highest tourist density, with 273,000 visitors per 100,000 residents. Noise levels stand at 79, adding to the challenges of moving through the city. However, meals are the least expensive on the list, averaging \$15.61.



8 FOOD ITEMS NIGERIANS ARE BANNED FROM TAKING TO CANADA

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Travelling from Nigeria to Canada and want to bring a taste of home with you? Packing your favourite local delicacies might seem like a great idea, but not all food items are welcome at international borders. Strict import regulations in Canada prohibit certain foods due to health, safety, and environmental concerns. Failing to declare restricted foods can lead to confiscation, hefty fines, or even criminal charges.

It is important to check the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) website before travelling, as regulations can change at any time.

If you are preparing for your trip, here are eight common food items Nigerians can't take to Canada.

Homemade or unlabelled foods

Homemade meals, unlabelled snacks, and repackaged food items are not allowed. Only factory-sealed, clearly labelled food products from recognised brands can pass through customs.

Honey and bee products

Raw honey, bee pollen, and royal jelly are restricted because they can carry bacteria and diseases harmful to local bee populations. Processed honey from approved sources may be allowed in limited quantities.

Fish and seafood

While dried catfish, crayfish, and herring are permitted, fresh or frozen seafood without proper certification is banned. The restriction helps prevent contamination from bacteria and marine toxins.

Meat and meat products

Canada strictly prohibits most meat products, including fresh, dried, smoked, or cured meats like kilishi, ponmo, sausages, and bacon. Even meat-based seasonings and broths are not allowed. These rules help prevent

the spread of diseases.

Dairy products

Powdered milk, fresh milk, cheese, butter, and yoghurt are not allowed without special permits. The restrictions also help protect against diseases. However, commercially packaged hard cheeses from approved countries may be permitted in small quantities.

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Fresh fruits like apples, oranges, and agbalumo, along with leafy greens and herbs, are banned. These items can carry pests and plant diseases. However, some dried vegetables are allowed.

Eggs and egg products

Raw eggs and egg-based products such as custards and mayonnaise are not allowed due to the risk of salmonella and bird flu transmission. However, commercially processed egg products may be permitted.

Nuts and seeds

Unroasted nuts like raw peanuts, cashews, and sunflower seeds are banned to prevent pest infestations. However, roasted, salted, or processed nuts are generally permitted.

6 ASIAN COUNTRIES WITH VISA FEES UNDER ₦100,000 FOR NIGERIANS

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Visa fees can often be a major barrier for Nigerians looking to explore new destinations. The cost of obtaining a visa, combined with travel expenses, can make international trips seem out of reach.

However, some Asian countries offer surprisingly affordable visa fees, making it easier to embark on your dream adventure without draining your wallet.

Here are six Asian countries with visa fees under N 100,000

South Korea

The South Korean single-entry visa costs 60,000 for stays of up to 90 days and 90,000 for visits exceeding this duration. Prospective applicants are required to submit a passport valid for at least six months, a completed visa application form, and a recent passport-sized photograph. Evidence of financial capability, including a personal bank statement, credit card statements, or vehicle registration documents, must be provided. Additionally, applicants must present a confirmed flight booking, hotel reservation, and a photocopy of a National ID card, driver's licence, or voter's card issued within the last five years. The

processing period typically takes between 10 to 15 business days (2–3 weeks), with the fee deemed non-refundable, irrespective of the application's outcome.

Japan

As of April 2024, the visa fee for Japan was set at 12,500. Visa applications are strictly by appointment only and must be submitted in person at the Embassy of Japan in Abuja. Appointments must be booked at least 15 working days before the intended departure date, while applications must be submitted no later than 10 working days before departure. Required documents include a valid passport, completed visa application form, recent passport-sized photograph, flight booking, hotel reservation, and proof of financial capability such as a bank statement. Parents or guardians may schedule appointments for minor applicants, but all applications must be submitted in person by the applicant.

Singapore

Applications are subject to a non-refundable processing fee of \$30 (45,000), payable online using Visa or MasterCard credit/debit cards. Required documents include a valid Nigerian passport with at least six months' validity and two blank pages, a completed and signed visa application form, and recent passport-sized photographs meeting Singapore's photo requirements. Applicants must also provide a detailed travel itinerary, including flight reservations and accommodation bookings, along with proof of sufficient financial means to cover their stay. Additional documents may be required depending on the visa type. The processing time typically takes three working days, excluding the day of submission, although some applications may take longer.

Sri Lanka

Nigerian passport holders are required to obtain a regular visa before travelling to Sri Lanka.

The application process requires a passport photograph, a valid international passport with at least six months' validity beyond the travel period, proof of financial means such as a bank statement, and a detailed travel itinerary. The double entry tourist visa valid for 30 days costs \$50 (75,000), with all fees being non-refundable and non-transferable.

Vietnam

Nigerian passport holders seeking to travel to Vietnam must meet specific entry requirements, including a passport valid for at least six months from the intended arrival date and containing at least two blank pages. Visa fees for single entry and exit are set at \$25 (37,500), while the same fee applies to children under 14 years, regardless of the visa's validity period. Travellers are advised to ensure their documents are in order before submitting their application.

Thailand

Nigerian passport holders planning to visit Thailand can apply for a single-entry tourist e-visa, which costs 65,000. Applicants must provide key documents, including a passport valid for at least six months with at least two blank pages, a completed visa application form, a recent passport-sized photograph, proof of sufficient funds, a return travel ticket, and evidence of accommodation in Thailand, such as a hotel reservation or a host's address. Additionally, applicants must submit an original police clearance certificate and a copy of a drug clearance certificate. A travel booking confirmation, detailing return flight information with the applicant's name, departure and return dates, and all flights en route to Thailand, is also required. It is recommended to apply for a visa 4-6 weeks before the intended travel date, but applications should not be submitted more than three months in advance. All visa fees are non-refundable, regardless of the application outcome.

EXPERTS WARN REMOTE WORKERS ABOUT 6 GROWING SCAM TACTICS

CHISOM MICHAEL



Remote workers face scams that aim to steal money, data, and personal details. These include phishing, fake jobs, vanishing clients, and ransomware.

Scammers exploit remote work settings to deceive professionals. Workers should verify transactions, use official communication, and stay alert.

An expert outlines eight scams targeting remote workers and how to avoid them. Awareness and caution help professionals protect themselves from financial and data losses in a remote work environment.

“From fake clients to phishing scams, there’s a lot of fraud out there,” says Michael Moore, Chief Information Officer at Next Perimeter, a leader in cloud-first cybersecurity. Below, Michael explains the top scams to watch out for (and how to shut them down before they drain your bank account).

Here are 6 scams targeting remote workers

1. Phishing emails disguised as urgent requests

Scammers send emails appearing to be from employers, clients, or vendors, claiming that urgent action is required to update payment details. These emails often include company logos and professional formatting to appear credible.

Clicking on links in such emails may lead to fraudulent login pages designed to steal credentials or install malware. Experts advise against clicking on unexpected links or downloading attachments from unverified emails. Remote workers should verify financial requests by contacting the sender through official channels rather than replying to the email.

Spelling errors and unusual phrasing can also indicate fraudulent messages.

2. Fake tech support calls and messages

Scammers impersonate IT support teams from companies like Microsoft or Apple, claiming that a computer is infected with a virus. Victims are asked to grant remote access, allowing fraudsters to steal files, install malware, or demand ransom to unlock the system.

Legitimate IT support does not contact individuals unsolicited. Experts recommend avoiding engagement with such callers and reaching out to an official IT department or service provider to verify the claims.

3. Clients who disappear without paying

Freelancers sometimes complete work for clients who then refuse to pay and stop responding to messages. These scams often involve fake businesses promising high rates and tight deadlines before disappearing.

To prevent this, experts recommend having a contract in place before starting work. Requesting an upfront deposit, especially for large projects, can reduce the risk. Researching clients through online searches and LinkedIn can help identify red flags.

4. Ransomware attacks holding files hostage

Hackers use ransomware to lock a victim's computer files and demand payment to restore access. Even if victims pay, there is no guarantee that files will be unlocked.

Regularly backing up work on an external drive or cloud storage can mitigate the risk. Strong antivirus software and avoiding suspicious links or email attachments are essential precautions. If ransomware is detected, experts recommend disconnecting from the internet immediately and seeking professional assistance.

5. Impersonation on social media and websites

Scammers clone social media accounts and websites to impersonate businesses and professionals. They use these fake profiles to collect payments or personal information from unsuspecting clients.

Regular online searches for personal or business names can help detect impersonation early. Setting up two-factor authentication (2FA) on all accounts and reporting fraudulent profiles promptly can limit the damage. Verification on social media platforms also adds a layer of security.

6. Fake job offers that require upfront payment

Scammers advertise remote jobs with attractive salaries and minimal experience requirements. After hiring candidates, they request payments for background checks, training materials, or software before work can begin.

Legitimate employers do not ask employees to pay for job-related expenses. Experts advise against accepting offers that require upfront payments. Verifying a company's legitimacy before accepting a position can prevent financial loss.

THE WORLD'S (10) MOST POWERFUL PASSPORTS IN 2025

IMOH BRIGHT

A passport is far more than a simple document used for identification at border control—it is a powerful tool that dictates the ease with which a person can explore the world, seek business opportunities, pursue education, or even escape conflict. It is a reflection of a nation's global standing, diplomatic influence, and the degree of trust it commands in the international community.

As globalisation continues to evolve and nations forge new alliances, the ability to travel freely remains a key determinant of economic opportunity, personal freedom, and international influence.

The concept of passport power has gained heightened relevance in recent years as governments recalibrate their international relationships in response to political shifts, economic strategies, security concerns, and post-pandemic recovery efforts.

Countries that foster strong diplomatic ties, maintain economic stability, and uphold global security commitments tend to offer their citizens broader access to visa-free travel. On the other hand, nations embroiled in conflict, economic turmoil, or geopolitical tensions often see their passports ranked among the weakest, as their global trust level diminishes.

The Henley Passport Index, widely regarded as the most authoritative ranking of passport strength, bases its assessments on the number of destinations a passport holder can enter without needing a visa or by obtaining one upon arrival. In its latest 2025 rankings, here are the top 10 most powerful passports in the world, drawing data from the

International Air Transport Association (IATA) and extensive government research.

Singapore

Singapore once again holds the title of the most powerful passport in the world, granting its citizens visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 195 countries—the highest number ever recorded in the Henley Passport Index. The Southeast Asian nation has consistently strengthened its diplomatic ties and visa agreements with major economies, including the European Union, the United States, and China.

Singapore's rise to the top is credited to its strong diplomatic relations, stable economy, and global business influence. The country is a major financial hub, attracting skilled professionals, international students, and investors, which, in turn, has boosted its citizens' global mobility.

Japan

Japan, which held the top position for several years, now ranks second, offering visa-free access to 193 destinations. Despite this slight dip, Japan remains one of the most respected passports in the world, thanks to its low crime rate, strong economy, and robust international relationships.

Notably, Japan has restored visa-free travel to China, which was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. This move significantly enhances its global mobility standing, particularly within Asia. Japan's emphasis on technological advancement, innovation, and trade agreements continues to strengthen its diplomatic influence worldwide.

France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, South Korea

This year, six countries share the third position, each offering visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 192 destinations. The European powerhouses—France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Finland—have long enjoyed unrestricted access across the European Union and beyond, thanks to the Schengen Agreement and strong diplomatic relationships.

South Korea has solidified its position as the highest-ranking Asian country alongside Japan, reflecting its growing global influence, especially in trade, technology, and culture. South Korea's K-culture boom, strong tech industry, and diplomatic engagement have contributed to the power of its passport.

Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden

European nations continue to dominate the list, with seven countries tied for fourth place, granting visa-free entry to 191 destinations. These countries benefit from their stable economies, high quality of life, and membership in the European Union, ensuring seamless travel across Schengen states and beyond.

Ireland's close ties with the United Kingdom and the United States have strengthened its passport, while Luxembourg remains one of the most globally connected nations due to its status as a financial hub. Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have long been ranked among the most travel-friendly nations, thanks to their strong diplomatic ties and high global trust levels.

Belgium, New Zealand, Portugal, Switzerland, United Kingdom

The United Kingdom, which once ranked first in 2010, continues its slow recovery after Brexit. While it now allows travel to 190 countries without a visa, it faces restrictions on movement within the European Union, affecting its global mobility ranking. However, new trade and travel agreements with countries like Australia and the US are gradually boosting its standing.

New Zealand maintains a strong position due to its stable government, low corruption rates, and favorable diplomatic policies. Meanwhile, Portugal's Golden Visa program, which attracts foreign investors, has played a role in strengthening its passport ranking.

Greece, Australia

Tied in sixth place, Greece and Australia grant visa-free access to 189 destinations.

Australia has consistently ranked among the strongest passports, thanks to its solid diplomatic relations, low crime rate, and strong economy. The country's visa-free travel agreements with the United States, Canada, the EU, and many Asian nations make its passport highly valuable.

Greece, as a European Union member, benefits from unrestricted movement across Schengen states and key global destinations. The country's rich cultural heritage and growing economy have also improved its diplomatic reach.

Canada, Poland, Malta (188 visa-free destinations)

Three nations share the seventh place, offering visa-free access to 188 destinations.

Canada, long regarded as a highly desirable passport, has maintained its strong ranking due to stable governance, strong international relations, and immigration-friendly policies. The country's dual citizenship laws and ease of travel to the US and Europe make it one of the most powerful passports globally.

Poland and Malta, both part of the European Union, enjoy extensive travel privileges within the Schengen Area and across other regions. Their strategic economic partnerships and high levels of global trust continue to enhance their passports' value.

Hungary, Czechia

Hungary and Czechia (formerly the Czech Republic) share the eighth position, granting visa-free access to 187 countries. These Central European nations have leveraged their EU membership and strategic diplomatic agreements to strengthen their global travel freedom.

Both countries have thriving economies, increasing foreign investment, and historical significance, making them attractive destinations for international business and tourism.

Estonia, United States

Estonia, a Baltic digital powerhouse, continues to rise in rankings due to its progressive policies, innovation-driven economy, and EU membership.

The United States, once ranked second in 2015, has now fallen to ninth place. The US passport currently allows access to 186 destinations, but increasing geopolitical tensions and reciprocal visa policies from countries like China have affected its ranking. Despite this, the US remains one of the most globally influential nations, and its passport still offers extensive mobility.

Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, United Arab Emirates
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has made the most impressive leap, climbing 32 places over the past decade to break into the top 10. This reflects the UAE's strategic diplomatic efforts, extensive global investments, and visa-free agreements with key nations.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovenia, all EU member states, benefit from Schengen mobility and strong European diplomatic ties, granting their citizens access to 185 destinations without a visa.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST INTERNET PENETRATION RATES IN FEBRUARY 2025

IMOH BRIGHT

In an era where connectivity defines economic success, social interactions, and access to essential services, internet penetration has become a crucial metric for measuring a country's digital development.

The internet is no longer a luxury—it is the backbone of modern civilization, fueling everything from education and healthcare to financial transactions and governance.

As of February 2025, global internet usage has surpassed 5.5 billion people, with some countries achieving near-universal access. These nations have successfully leveraged technology, infrastructure, and policy reforms to ensure that over 97% of their populations have access to the digital world.

Their achievements are not just about high-speed broadband and 5G connectivity; they reflect years of strategic investments in digital literacy, cybersecurity, affordability, and inclusion.

According to statistics obtained from Statista, the following ten countries lead the world in internet penetration, demonstrating how robust infrastructure, supportive policies, and a strong culture of digital adoption can propel societies into the future.

Denmark

Denmark has long been a global leader in digitalization, boasting an internet penetration rate of 99.0%, leaving virtually no citizens offline. This Scandinavian nation has built a state-of-the-art broadband network, ensuring high-speed internet access in both urban and rural areas.

One of Denmark's most remarkable achievements is its affordable and competitive telecom market, where multiple service providers offer high-speed internet at some of the lowest costs in Europe. Additionally, the Danish government has implemented progressive policies

that promote e-governance, allowing citizens to complete most government-related tasks online, from tax filing to healthcare registration.

Digital literacy is also a key focus, with coding and internet safety incorporated into school curriculums. The country consistently ranks among the top nations for online security, thanks to stringent data protection laws and strong encryption policies.

With advanced fiber-optic and 5G networks ensuring uninterrupted connectivity, Denmark stands as a model for the rest of the world.

Netherlands

The Netherlands has consistently remained at the forefront of technological and digital advancements, boasting an internet penetration rate of 99.0%. The country's position as a global digital hub is reinforced by its thriving digital economy, supported by one of the largest internet exchange points in the world, the Amsterdam Internet Exchange (AMS-IX).

Extensive 5G and fiber-optic coverage ensures high-speed connectivity in homes, businesses, and public spaces. The Dutch population is highly tech-savvy, with digital literacy programs integrated into both primary and higher education.

The government has played a critical role in promoting remote work, e-commerce, and smart city initiatives, making the Netherlands one of the most advanced digital societies in the world.

Norway

Norway's internet penetration rate of 99.0% is a testament to its long-standing commitment to digital innovation and rural connectivity initiatives. Despite having a challenging geographical landscape with mountainous terrain and fjords, Norway has ensured widespread broadband access through extensive fiber-optic expansion, reaching both urban centers and remote villages.

The country has also invested in satellite-based internet coverage, ensuring that no community is left behind. Government incentives have made internet access affordable and inclusive for all income levels, further solidifying Norway's place among the most connected nations.

A highly secure online environment, bolstered by strict cybersecurity policies, makes Norway a digital powerhouse.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's rapid digital transformation has propelled it to an internet penetration rate of 99.0% in 2025. The country's Vision 2030 initiative has placed heavy emphasis on technology, artificial intelligence, and digital infrastructure development, leading to the rapid expansion of its 5G network. This has made Saudi Arabia one of the first Middle Eastern nations with nationwide 5G coverage.

Public-private partnerships have played a significant role in funding large-scale digital projects, including smart cities like NEOM. The country's e-commerce and digital services sector is booming, with cashless transactions and e-government services becoming the norm.

Investment in digital education and cybersecurity ensures that the population is not only connected but also well-equipped to navigate the digital world safely.

Switzerland

Switzerland is known for its efficiency, security, and precision, all of which extend to its internet infrastructure. With a 99.0% penetration rate, Switzerland has built one of the most advanced broadband networks in Europe. High-speed fiber-optic internet is available in even the most mountainous regions, ensuring seamless connectivity for all residents.

The country's data protection laws are among the strictest in the world, making Switzerland one of the safest digital environments globally. With Zurich emerging as a global fintech and AI hub, Switzerland's thriving tech industry benefits from a highly educated workforce and a government that prioritizes digital advancement.

South Korea

South Korea has consistently ranked among the most connected countries globally, with an internet penetration rate of 98.8%. It was one of the first countries to introduce nationwide 5G and has one of the fastest average internet speeds in the world.

The government's heavy investment in digital infrastructure has made high-speed connectivity widely accessible, even in rural areas.

The country's digital economy thrives on e-sports, AI, robotics, and smart city innovations. The strong tech culture, combined with affordable internet services, has made South Korea a model for digital development.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom boasts an internet penetration rate of 98.6%, supported by widespread broadband access, 5G deployment, and digital inclusivity policies. The UK government has prioritized connectivity in rural areas through infrastructure grants and digital literacy programs.

With London being a major tech hub, the UK has a thriving startup ecosystem and a strong push towards e-commerce, remote work, and online education. Cybersecurity measures and regulations ensure a safe digital environment for its users.

Finland

Finland, known for its innovation in telecommunications, has an internet penetration rate of 98.5%. The country was one of the first in the world to declare broadband internet a legal right for every citizen. It has since expanded high-speed fiber-optic networks nationwide, ensuring universal access.

The Finnish government actively promotes digital education, cybersecurity, and internet literacy. Its tech industry, including major companies like Nokia, continues to drive advancements in global telecommunications.

Germany

Germany has made significant strides in improving its digital infrastructure, with an internet penetration rate of 98.3%. The country has invested heavily in fiber-optic expansion, smart city projects, and nationwide 5G coverage.

Germany's digital economy is thriving, supported by strong e-commerce, AI research, and fintech industries. The government continues to push for digital transformation, ensuring that businesses and citizens alike benefit from a highly connected society.

Canada

Canada rounds out the top ten with an internet penetration rate of 98.0%. Despite its vast geographical size, Canada has successfully expanded broadband access to rural and remote regions, thanks to government initiatives and investments in satellite internet technology.

The country's tech sector is booming, with major hubs in Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Digital inclusion policies ensure that all citizens, regardless of income level, have access to affordable high-speed internet.

5 MUST-ATTEND AFRICAN ART FAIRS AND FESTIVALS IN 2025

Did you know that the global art market is projected to reach \$585.98 billion in 2025?

According to Straits Research, the global art market was valued at \$552.03 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow from \$585.98 billion in 2025 to \$944.59 billion by 2033, making it a profitable economic field for Africans to participate in.

Collectors and investors view African art as a potentially rewarding investment. As African economies develop and more African artists achieve international fame, art from the continent is increasingly viewed as a form of capital appreciation. According to Artnet's 2024 Intelligence Report, overall sales of artworks created by African-born artists climbed by 46% between 2013 and 2023, with 2021 being the strongest year for the African art market, with \$101.3 million in sales.

Interestingly, art fairs and festivals across the African continent are the unsung heroes of this growth. They play a vital role in the growth of African art globally as they provide an opportunity to network and drive sales of African artworks.

In this digest, we will explore some of the must-attend art fairs and festivals in Africa this year.



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Title: Joko 1 (series)
Artist: Lambert Shumbusho
Medium: 300+ aged ironwood
Dimensions: 32 x 27 x 18 in | 81 x 69 x 46 cm
Available on request

TOP PICKS OF THE WEEK FROM OUR COLLECTION



Title: Les yeux sont la fenêtre de l'âme 3
 Artist: Falhane Ogoun
 Medium: Acrylic and pastel oil on canvas
 Dimensions: 11.8 x 11.8 in | 30 x 30 cm
 Available on request

1. RMB Latitudes (South Africa)

RMB Latitudes, South Africa's dynamic art platform, was launched in 2019 as a collaboration between Lucy MacGarry, Tamzin Lovell Miller, and Dali Tambo. With the goal of bridging the gap between African artists and collectors, it soon grew from a boutique fair to a thriving ecosystem that celebrates the continent's vast artistic diversity.

What distinguishes RMB Latitudes is its comprehensive approach to art, which combines actual exhibitions with digital experiences, as well as its

emphasis on mentorship and sustainability within the art community. The 2025 edition, scheduled for May 23–25, promises a varied mix of modern works that reflect the vibrant pulse of African art today.

2. Congo Biennale (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Born out of a wish to highlight the rich artistic talent of the Congo and the larger African continent, renowned Congolese artist and curator Vitshois Mwilambo started the vibrant celebration of modern art in 2019. With its bold, immersive

installations and provocative themes, the Biennale soon made a name for itself.

The Congo Biennale is truly unique in that it integrates art into Kinshasa's urban fabric, resulting in a conversation between the city's lively culture and the artworks on show. The 2025 edition, which will run from July 7 to August 30, aims to once again convert the city into a dynamic canvas, celebrating art's ability to inspire and transform public spaces.

3. FNB Art Joburg (South Africa)

FNB Art Joburg debuted in 2008 as the Joburg Art Fair, a pioneering event aimed at introducing South African and African art to a wider audience. Ross Douglas founded the show, which immediately established itself as a thriving hub for art fans, collectors, and makers.

The 2025 edition, scheduled for September 5–7, promises to once again be a dynamic gathering place for the best of African art. FNB Art Joburg stands out for its authentic celebration of the continent's diverse artistic voices, and its dedication to inclusivity and innovation is what makes it unique. It offers curated experiences such as Gallery Lab for experimental projects and the Lab for young collectors.

4. Lagos Photo Festival (Nigeria)

The African Artists' Foundation, led by the visionary Azu Nwagbogu, founded the Lagos Photo Festival in 2010. It is Nigeria's first and only international photographic arts festival. What began as a modest gathering of photography enthusiasts has evolved into a groundbreaking platform that brings together photographers from around Africa and beyond to share stories that challenge and reinvent narratives about their continent.

Lagos Photo Festival stands out for its commitment to utilising photography as a vehicle for social change, giving voice to marginalised stories and viewpoints. The 2025 edition will take place from October 24 to November 2, offering visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in a visual voyage that embodies the spirit of contemporary African life.

5. Art x Lagos (Nigeria)

Nigeria's biggest international art expo, Art X Lagos, started out as a daring idea in 2016 and was created by Tokini Peterside, a visionary who was passionate about introducing the world to West Africa's thriving art scene. Art X Lagos brings artists, collectors, and fans from all over the world to the vibrant city of Lagos every year, providing a vibrant stage on which modern African art is showcased.

The fair's dedication to nurturing new talent and pushing artistic boundaries has cemented its reputation as a must-attend event. Its innovative programming, which includes talks, curated exhibitions, and a dedicated platform for emerging artists, has set it apart. Mark your calendars because the 2025 edition of Art X Lagos is scheduled to take place from November 6 to 9, promising yet another unforgettable celebration of African creativity.

Attending African art fairs and festivals will always provide a firsthand look at the thriving contemporary African art scene. These events offer an opportunity to connect with artists, collectors, and industry leaders, making them essential for anyone passionate about African art. Whether you are looking to invest in African art, expand your knowledge, or simply enjoy stunning works, African art fairs should be on your calendar.

Keturah Ovio

Keturah Ovio is an Executive at Patrons Modern & Contemporary African Art. She is also an engineer and Founder of Dukka, a Fintech startup providing bookkeeping and payments solutions for small businesses. Keturah is passionate about African Art and has been collecting art since her early 20s. Now, she advises, curates, and manages collections for individuals and corporate organisations looking to start or diversify their wealth management through art collecting. She strongly believes that a fine marriage exists between Art and Technology.



HOW TO STOP ATTRACTING THE WRONG CUSTOMERS

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

You know the old saying: “Any business is good business”? Sounds like it makes sense, right? Wrong! These days, any business is not good business. In fact, in 60% of businesses, success seems impossible because of the wrong type of customers.

Understanding and figuring out who is your ideal customer is paramount to success. Narrowing your focus and restricting your buyer profile will do wonders. This may sound counterintuitive to most people. Why would you want to reduce the number of people who could qualify to give you their money?

Here are 3 steps to take to ensure you don’t attract the wrong customers:

1) Creating a focused buyer persona or target profile strategy

The first thing you would need to do if you are just starting your venture is to work out who your correct customer is. Even if you have been running your business for a while and are struggling with attracting the wrong customers, evaluating your existing customers and figuring out your ideal buyer persona is critical.

Targeting a broad range of customers is a recipe for a disaster. At the very least, it would mean mediocre business success. You have to really drill down and get to the core of whom you want to serve.

Granted that when you are starting out, it may seem like brand suicide to focus on a narrow niche and reject the broad world out there. But understanding who your ideal customer is very important and nothing else should be done till you nail this down.

2) Creating the right pricing and profit strategy

Do you know that nine out of ten times, when a business attracts the wrong customers, it is due to a bad pricing strategy? Most often it is due to pricing too low. Not knowing your value or the value of the products or services that you provide is all too common.

Most business owners simply price their products or services based on the competition or their need to grow the business.

Both these approaches are flawed. Basing your pricing on the competition means you are simply entering a dog race that is influenced by price wars and the race to the bottom. If your competition lowers their pricing, you are forced to do the same just to survive in the market. Economies of scale and a more efficient process may enable your competition to lower prices and still make a profit. That may not be the same case for you.

Basing your pricing on your needs to drum up some business is a serious flaw too. It just shows that you are not prepared to think long-term. If you do not have the means to survive a slow business growth then you should not be starting your business at that point in time. This may sound contrary to what most business gurus say. Waiting for the right time may be too late for a business.

Jump right in and then sort out any issue is the prevailing mantra. In my opinion, that is wrong. Having a buffer to survive at least six to eight months without cash flow is fundamental to any business. This allows you the luxury of looking at the value of your product or service and then pricing based on the value you bring to the market.

I am not advocating that you simply price your product or service high. I am saying that you need to reframe your business and your brand story to enable you to charge more. If you have a valuable product or service – even though it may be one of the hundreds of options out there – you deserve to set yourself apart through value storytelling. With the right kind of storytelling, you can charge more.

Charging more and increasing prices has always increased business and profits for a ton of brands out there – if done properly. So, take a serious look at your product or service and go for value-based pricing rather than trying to be the cheapest out there. By being the cheapest or lower-priced, you attract the wrong customers. You attract customers who make decisions based on price and not value. You do not want to work with such customers.

3) Create the right storytelling

Your brand narrative, the visual language, and your online presence all act as beacons in attracting the right or wrong customers. Telling the wrong story attracts the wrong customers. In fact, in most businesses, there is no story. They simply have a product or service and a sales pitch.

Often the sale pitch is not confident or focused. It goes back to point #1 above and tries to be generic and attract everyone or anyone. It is a watered-down to try and appeal to a broad range of customers. This leads to a message and story that are neither effective nor powerful.

So, what happens when you have a watered-down story or even the lack of a brand story. You end up attracting the wrong customers. You need

to step up and distill your brand essence that in turn helps you create a powerful brand story.

Dig deep to understand why you started the business in the first place. Understand your motivations and those of your brands. Find elements that make your brand unique. What sets you apart? What makes you stand out?

When telling your story, try and visualise the ideal customers. Craft your story to appeal to them. Introduce story elements that would filter out customers that are wrong for your business.

LAST LINE

Every business is different and everyone has different circumstances and my narrative above may seem a little too generic or black and white. This is about learning to say “no” to all types of business and trying to focus on saying “yes” to the right kind of business.



Feyisitan Ijimakinwa

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa is a Reputation and Perception Management expert. He is a prolific writer and researcher who, at different times, served as Head of Corporate Communications of top brands quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. A versatile communications specialist, he practiced extensively as a print journalist and was variously engaged in the broadcast media, working on radio and television. Feyisitan continues to write on corporate communications, brand reputation and perception management, and brand intelligence, among others. He organises the ‘Brand Intelligence and the Marketplace’ masterclass. Feyisitan advocates a pollution free and sustainable environment



FOUR AFRICAN WOMEN REDEFINING SPORTS BUSINESS AS FOOTBALL CLUB OWNERS

ANTHONY NLEBEM

The sports business landscape in Africa is rapidly evolving, and women are playing an increasingly influential role in shaping its future. From administration and media to marketing and athlete representation, African women are making strides in a historically male-dominated industry. Their contributions are not only elevating African sports on the global stage but also inspiring the next generation of female leaders. Here's a look at four remarkable African women making significant strides in sports business as football club owners.

Tems – Music Icon Turned MLS Club Owner

Nigerian-born Afrobeats star Temilade Openiyi, popularly known as Tems, has made history by becoming a part-owner of Major League Soccer (MLS) club San Diego FC. Through her company, The Leading Vibe, Tems has become the first African woman to hold ownership stakes in an MLS club.

The two-time Grammy Award winner and Oscar nominee joins other notable figures in the ownership

group, including World Cup winner Juan Mata. Expressing her excitement about the opportunity, Tems highlighted the club's celebration of creativity, culture, and community.

"I am thrilled to join San Diego FC's ownership group and to be part of a club that celebrates creativity, culture, and the power of community," she said. "Football has a unique way of bringing people together, and I am excited to help build something special in San Diego, a city that thrives on diversity and innovation."



Akosua Puni Essien

Pioneering Football Club Owner

Ghanaian businesswoman Akosua Puni Essien made history in 2017 when she became the first African woman to own a European football club. She purchased Italian third-division side Como at an auction for €237,000 after the club went bankrupt.

Her vision for the club was to restore its former glory and develop young talent.

“The new owner and her team wish to make both the first team and the youth team grow,” the club announced at the time. “They will put their efforts into creating conditions to take the team back to Serie B and to develop the club’s young talents.”

Although her ownership was short-lived, as the club was later acquired by the Indonesian consortium Djarum Group, Puni Essien’s milestone remains significant as she paved the way for other African women in sports ownership.



Eniola Aluko

First African Woman on an Italian Club’s Board
Nigerian-born British football executive and former player Eniola Aluko made history in 2024 by becoming the first African woman appointed to the board of an Italian top-flight football club, FC Como Women. She was part of Mercury 13, a \$100 million investment group that secured a majority stake in the club.



Mercury 13 aims to transform women’s football by acquiring and developing clubs across Europe and Latin America. Speaking on the investment, Aluko emphasized the need to shift the narrative around women’s football and create new opportunities. “We bought the majority stakes in Como Women; it was the sort of play on how we can shift the narrative of women’s football, how we can speak to a new audience, and how we can create a new world in women’s football by investing in it.”

Aluko, a former Sporting Director at Aston Villa Women and Angel City FC, has also built a successful broadcasting career, providing expert analysis on major football platforms.

Nneka Ede

Secured Ownership in Portuguese Football Club

In 2020, Nigerian woman Nneka Ede acquired a European football club, taking 100% ownership of Portuguese third-division club Lusitano Ginásio Clube, Futebol, SAD.

Ede, a former semi-professional footballer, aimed to not only build the club but also create pathways for young footballers.

“I am excited about this opportunity, and I hope that this new chapter will deepen the already great sporting relations between Nigeria and Portugal,” she said.

These four women—Tems, Akosua Puni Essien, Eniola Aluko, and Nneka Ede—are trailblazers reshaping the sports business landscape in Africa and beyond.

Through club ownership, investment, and executive leadership, they are breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of African women in sports. Their achievements underscore the growing influence of women in the industry and highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion in global sports governance.



WORLD CUP QUALIFIER: CHELLE DROPS IHEANACHO, LISTS 23 PLAYERS

... as he faces Rwanda and Zimbabwe on March 17, and 24 respectively

CHARLES OGWO

Eric Chelle, coach of the Nigeria Super Eagles have left out Kelechi Iheanacho, the latest Middlesbrough's signing after listing 23 players in preparation to the team's World Cup qualifier matches against Rwanda and Zimbabwe in March.

As the former Malian coach commences his task to qualifying Nigeria for the 2026 World Cup with matches against Rwanda on March 17, report has it that Chelle has submitted his preliminary list of players for the upcoming games without the name of Iheanacho, who recently left Sevilla FC to Middlesbrough FC in England's Championship League.

Since Iheanacho left Leicester City to Sevilla, the trajectory of his football career has been on a slope slide, even at national team level, which has left his prospective followers wondering if the 'Senior Man' is down and out of football.

His escapade in Spain with Sevilla was one with rather a sour taste and unpleasant memories. The 28-year-old has struggled to make any real impact since joining the Rojiblancos side, failing to score a single goal in nine La Liga games.

At the national team level, it was also obvious that Iheanacho has dropped form. And going by study it is difficult to succeed in the round game as a career when one's form and fitness is plummeting.

Over times under Austin Eguavoen, the interim Super Eagles coach, Iheanacho was under fire for his under-par performances for the national team.

However, his latest move back to England though with a championship side raise a ray of hope that probably, Iheanacho's football career is not over yet.

The 28-year-old has struggled to make any real impact since joining the Rojiblancos side, failing to score a single goal in nine La Liga games. BusinessDay finding shows that Chelle submitted a list of 35 players but will pick 23 players to prosecute the two matches fixed for March as instructed by the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

However, the Ibrahim Gusau-led NFF maintained that the list is subject to changes due to injuries and fitness concerns with some players on the 23-man list.

Pending any changes due to injuries and fitness challenges, the following players are penciled to prosecute the two matches; Ademola Lookman, Alex Iwobi, Wilfred Ndidi, Moses Simon, Samuel Chukwueze, Victor Osimhen, Williams Troost-Ekong, Ola Aina, Fiasco Dele-Bashiru and Semi Ajayi.

Others include Ahmed Musa, Stanley Nwabali, Frank Onyeka, Joe Aribo, Nathan Tella, Paul Onuachu, and Calvin Bassey, among others.

Some new young and new faces listed are Ethan Nwaneri (17years), George Ilenikhena (18years), Victor Udoh (19), Ahmed Abdullahi (20), and Kazeem Olaigbe (22).

Others are Ebenezer Akinsanmiro (20), Samuel Edozie (21), Tino Anjorin (23), Uche Chrisantus, and Chuba Akpom.

Nevertheless, it is still uncertain the players who will make the trip come March 17 and 24, 2025. Whoever plays, what Nigerian fans demand from Chelle and the NFF, is nothing but World Cup qualification.

TORN BETWEEN EGO AND IGHO

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR



From the first moment I laid eyes on Ego, I knew without a doubt that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her. She was sitting behind me in a restaurant, her laughter ringing out like music. I found myself shamelessly eavesdropping on her conversation with her friends, drawn in by her charm, her way with words. I even chuckled at one of her jokes before I could stop myself.

On my way out, I stopped at her table, and introduced myself and we exchanged phone numbers. That night, I called her. We talked for two hours, lost in easy conversation. The next day, I called again. And again. Soon, Ego became a part of my everyday life. Six months later, I took her home to meet my father. I should have known it wouldn't go well.

Ego, ever respectful, greeted him, "Daddy, migwo sir." My father beamed, believing I had brought home an Urhobo girl. But Ego quickly corrected him. "I'm from Enugu State, sir."

His smile faded instantly. My father had always been openly tribalistic and despite my hope that he had grown past it, that night proved otherwise. Dinner was uncomfortable. He threw passive-aggressive jabs at Ego throughout the evening, barely masking his disapproval. Ego excused herself politely, but I knew she was hurt.

Perhaps I should have taken it as a sign, a warning. But I loved Ego too much to let her go. And she loved me too. She made one thing clear—she did not want to come between me and my family. I reassured her that she wouldn't have to. I promised to stand by her, to protect her always. And with that promise, she accepted my marriage proposal.

I adored my father. I honored him for raising me and my brothers as a single parent after my mother passed away. He had given us everything—our education, our first cars, our homes. But I loved Ego. I wasn't going to let her go.

My older brothers tried to intervene, urging me to reconsider. They had both married Urhobo women, as was expected of them. They couldn't understand why I was defying our father. But I stood my ground.

On the other hand, Ego's family welcomed me warmly. Her father even gave me an Igbo name, a sign of full acceptance. The contrast between our families was stark, but we pressed on. Despite my family's opposition, we got married.

For two blissful years, we built a life together. But then, the pressure began.

Ego struggled with hormonal imbalances, which delayed pregnancy. The doctors assured us that, in time, she would conceive. But my father and brothers weren't willing to wait. The whispers became louder, the taunts sharper.

"Ejiro, an Urhobo girl would have filled your home with children by now," they sneered behind her back.

One day, my brother Onome came to visit and made his usual snide remarks, this time, in Ego's presence. She had endured their jabs for too long but that day, she snapped. She met his insults with equal fire, refusing to cower.

Onome, a titled chief, felt deeply disrespected. The argument escalated. I tried to calm him, fearing for his health because his blood pressure had been a long-standing concern but he refused to listen. Furious, he grabbed his phone and stormed out, sending a voice note to our family's WhatsApp group, screaming that Ego had threatened him to deal with him.

Two hours later, my other brother, Efe, called me. Onome had collapsed upon reaching home. He was rushed to the hospital. He didn't make it.

The blame fell squarely on Ego. His voice note spread like wildfire among our extended family, fueling their resentment. They called her a murderer.

I knew the truth. I knew she had done nothing wrong. I had sworn to stand by her. But it was my word against my entire family. They gave me an ultimatum—divorce Ego after Onome's funeral, or lose them forever.

I was drowning in grief, torn apart by guilt and pressure. I had lost a brother. I wasn't ready to lose my entire family, too. So, I caved. I told my wife, the woman I swore to love and protect to leave. She didn't argue. Didn't cry. She simply gathered her things,

leaving behind the home we had built together. But I saw it in her eyes. The pain. The betrayal. And then, she was gone.

That was the last I ever saw of Ego. It was as if she vanished into thin air.

A year later, I married Igbo—the woman my family had chosen for me. She was everything they wanted. But she was my worst nightmare. The things I have endured in this short marriage, my lips dare not speak. I am a broken, frustrated, and deeply unhappy man.

Then, one day, Ego resurfaced. After months of silence, she returned to social media and she was breathtaking. She had completely transformed. A new image. Two additional degrees. A flourishing career. Her best revenge was becoming the best version of herself. And I? I was nothing but a fool who let her go. I stalk her profile endlessly, desperate for a glimpse into the life I should have fought for. She wears no wedding rings but I cannot tell if she has remarried. I doubt if she has.

Every day, I hover over the "message" button, wondering if I should reach out. Tell her the truth. Tell her how much I miss her. Tell her that I made a mistake and I still love her.

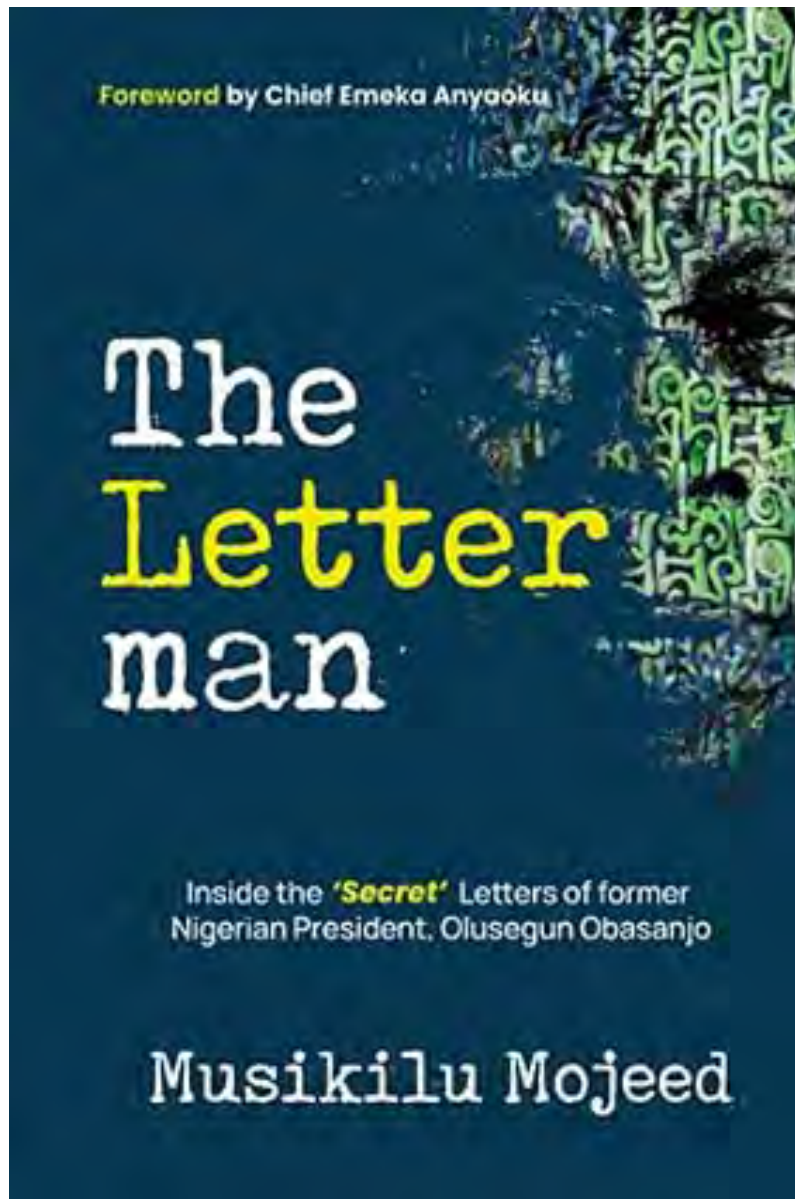
What do you think? Should I send that message?



Udy Osaro-Edobor

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A Journey through Nigeria's History, One Letter at a Time -A Review of Musikilu Mojeed's The Letter man

Title: The Letter man
Author: Musikilu Mojeed
Year of Publication: 2022
Number of Pages: 466
Category: Biography

THE LETTER MAN

CHARLES OGWO

If you're Nigerian, you already know that anything involving former President Olusegun Obasanjo is bound to be intriguing—often a mix of sharp intellect, humor, and controversy. Now, imagine a book that compiles the many letters he has written over the decades, offering a window into Nigeria's political and military history. That's exactly what Musikilu Mojeed delivers in *The Letterman*.

At first impression, you might assume this book is just a collection of letters. But don't be deceived—*The Letterman* is far more than an archive. It's an insightful, sometimes dramatic, and always thought-provoking journey through Nigeria's past, told through the words of one of its most influential figures. Mojeed, an investigative journalist, has meticulously compiled Obasanjo's letters from 1952 to 2000, curating a historical goldmine that every history and political enthusiast should discover.

Obasanjo's letters serve as both personal reflections and historical records, touching on major national and global events. From military coups to democratic transitions, from behind-the-scenes power struggles to moments of national pride, these letters provide an unfiltered look at leadership, governance, and the challenges of running a complex nation like Nigeria. His words evoke nostalgia, curiosity, and sometimes discomfort, as they document triumphs, failures, and the heavy burden of leadership.

One of the book's greatest strengths is Mojeed's skill in transforming these letters into a compelling account. His seamless storytelling ensures that *The Letterman* is not merely a historical record but a captivating read that vividly brings Obasanjo's thoughts and decisions to life.

What makes this book even more fascinating is the glimpse it offers into Obasanjo's personal interests. While the political and military themes dominate, there are lighter moments—such as his passion for football

and lawn tennis. He even took the time to write letters to his favorites in the sports world. These moments humanize him, reminding readers that beyond his tough exterior, Obasanjo was a man of varied interests.

His steadfast commitment to letter writing is another intriguing aspect of the book. Even during his time in prison, Obasanjo didn't stop writing. His letters reveal a man who was often misunderstood, but whose passion for Nigeria remained unshaken. Perhaps there's a lesson for Nigerians here—not just in patriotism, but in the lost art of thoughtful communication.

Mojeed's effort in compiling and curating these letters is commendable. *The Letterman* is truly one of a kind—a book that blends history, leadership, and personal insight in a way that is both educational and entertaining. The inclusion of carefully selected photographs adds a personal touch, allowing readers to visualize the man behind the letters.

By the end of *The Letterman*, one thing becomes clear: both Mojeed and Obasanjo share a deep appreciation for history, documentation, and the power of words. In an era of instant messaging and social media, this book serves as a reminder of how important letters once were in shaping political and personal relationships.

For younger readers, it may even spark inspiration to revive the lost art of letter writing. And for everyone else, it is a must-read—whether you love history, politics, or simply enjoy a good story told through the lens of real-life events.

If you want a book that informs, entertains, and leaves you with a deeper understanding of Nigeria's past and present, *The Letterman* is an absolute must-read.

WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEWS

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD (2025)

Welcome to the season of love, the famous valentine weekend, I am sure you have had a beautiful season of love and you didn't allow the pressure from social media take a toll on you, well the weekend was packed with romantic movies of 2025 and I tried to watch all I could lay my hands upon. Reuben worked for his dad's company, one of the biggest TV station in their country, he never agreed with any opinion from his dad and this rift always brought his dad pain. One day after, after work he was summoned to the hospital only to discover that his dad was gone, it was absolutely painful, as he wasn't prepared for all the expectations that lay on him as the only son and the heir to his father's wealth, to access this wealth the father asked that he must find the most beautiful girl in the country and get married within 6 months or lose his inheritance. Well you will need to go check out this movie to find out if he found his pretty bride and how he found her, it was a cool movie, I laughed hard because I could just tell that sometimes we travel far to search for love, only to discover that it was so close starring right at us in our faces. The 122m Indonesian, romantic comedies, romance movie was directed by Robert Ronny, they featured actors like Reza Rahadian, Sheila Dara Aisha, Kevin Julio, Indra Birowo, Jihane Almira, Bucek Depp Ira Wibowo and many more.



LOVE FOREVER (2025)

Well my next review was a Swedish, romantic comedy movie, the movie started quiet slowly but looked a bit cool towards the end, but I guess that this wasn't my time of movie, as I struggled to make it to the very end. Matilda was engaged to Charlie and they were so in love, or so we thought. Well they had planned and prepared in their hearts this beautiful wedding and were hoping that it will become a reality, the Stockholm couple had made plans to get married on the gorgeous island of Gotland, they had bought their beautiful wedding dress and suit and were hoping to look perfect, little did they know that charlie's family will impose their long term tradition on them and ruin all their plans, you will need to go check out the movie to see how they scattered this marriage. The 96m Swedish, comedy, romantic movie was directed by Staffan Lindberg, they featured actors like Matilda Kallstorm, Charlie Gustafsson, Doreen Ndagire, Phillip Oros, Babben Larsson, Claes Malmberg, Anja Lundkvist and many more.



LA DOLCE VILLA (2025)

This was another simple romantic movie, Olivia was the only daughter of her parents, when her mom passed on after a terminal illness, she decided to leave town and move to another city and start all over. On arrival she decides to buy an abandoned villa for one euro and reconstruct it to fit modern day standard. However, when her dad get the information, he travels immediately to Italy to go save his daughter from falling into the hands of scammers, little did he know that he was going to fall heads over heels with the city and that his visit will change his life forever, you will need to go check out the movie to see how it purchase turned after all. The 99m comedy, romantic movie was directed by Mark Waters, they featured actors like Violante Placido, Maia Reficco, Giuseppe Fugia e.t.c.



Linda Ochugbua

WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Show love; not because they deserve it. Show it, because it makes you fulfilled
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

It's never late to try
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

You can't quantify the impact of thanksgiving. We only know it is appreciated by the recipient
..... WhispersbyTEN

4

Consistency is a difficult task. However, it's a differentiator
..... WhispersbyTEN