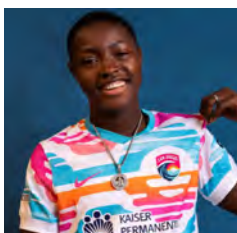


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SPORTS

Chiamaka Okwuchukwu:
Nigeria's rising star chasing
big dreams in NWSL



FASHION

**Understanding Hair
Loss: causes, myths, and
solutions**

PUBLISHER/EDITOR IN CHIEF

Frank Aigbogun

EDITOR

Tayo Fagbule

DEPUTY EDITOR

Lolade Akinmurele

FOUNDING EDITOR BD WEEKENDER

Lehlé Balde

DEPUTY EDITOR BD WEEKENDER

Ifeoma Okeke-Korieocha

CHIEF SALES AND MARKETING OFFICER

Ijeoma Ude

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER

Queen Nkwocha

COPY SALES MANAGER

Florence Kadiri

DIGITAL SALES MANAGER

Linda Ochugbua

HEAD OF DIGITALS

Nduka Asoh

DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION

Emmanuel Odo

(officialedenis@gmail.com)

CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Ochugbua

Chisom Michael

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa

Titilade Oyemade

Esther Emoekpere

Eyesan Toritseju is

Udy Osaro - Edobor

Anthony Nlebem

Charles Ogwo

Enquiries

weekender@businessday.ng

ADVERTS

Ijeoma Ude

+2348033225506

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LEGAL ADVISERS

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SPEAKERS



Olusegun Ayo Omosehin
Commissioner for Insurance/CEO, National Insurance Commission



Chizoba Ehigbo
Rector, College of Insurance and Financial Management



Aminu Tukur
Vice Chairman, Noor Takaful Insurance Limited



Abimbola Tihamiyu
Registrar/CEO, Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria



Samuel Ogbodu
Managing Director, SUNU Assurances Nigeria Plc



Adebawale Banjo
CEO / Co-Founder, MyCover.ai



Rashidat Adebisi
Executive Director, Technical & Client Services, AXA Mansard Insurance Plc



Noble Obasi
Team Lead, Capital Market, Merger & Acquisition, & Private Equity Practice Groups, Sten & Blan Partners



Rosetta Aryeetey
Head, Life Underwriting Leadway Assurance Plc



Dunny Semwayo
Executive Director, Technical, Stanbic IBTC Insurance Limited

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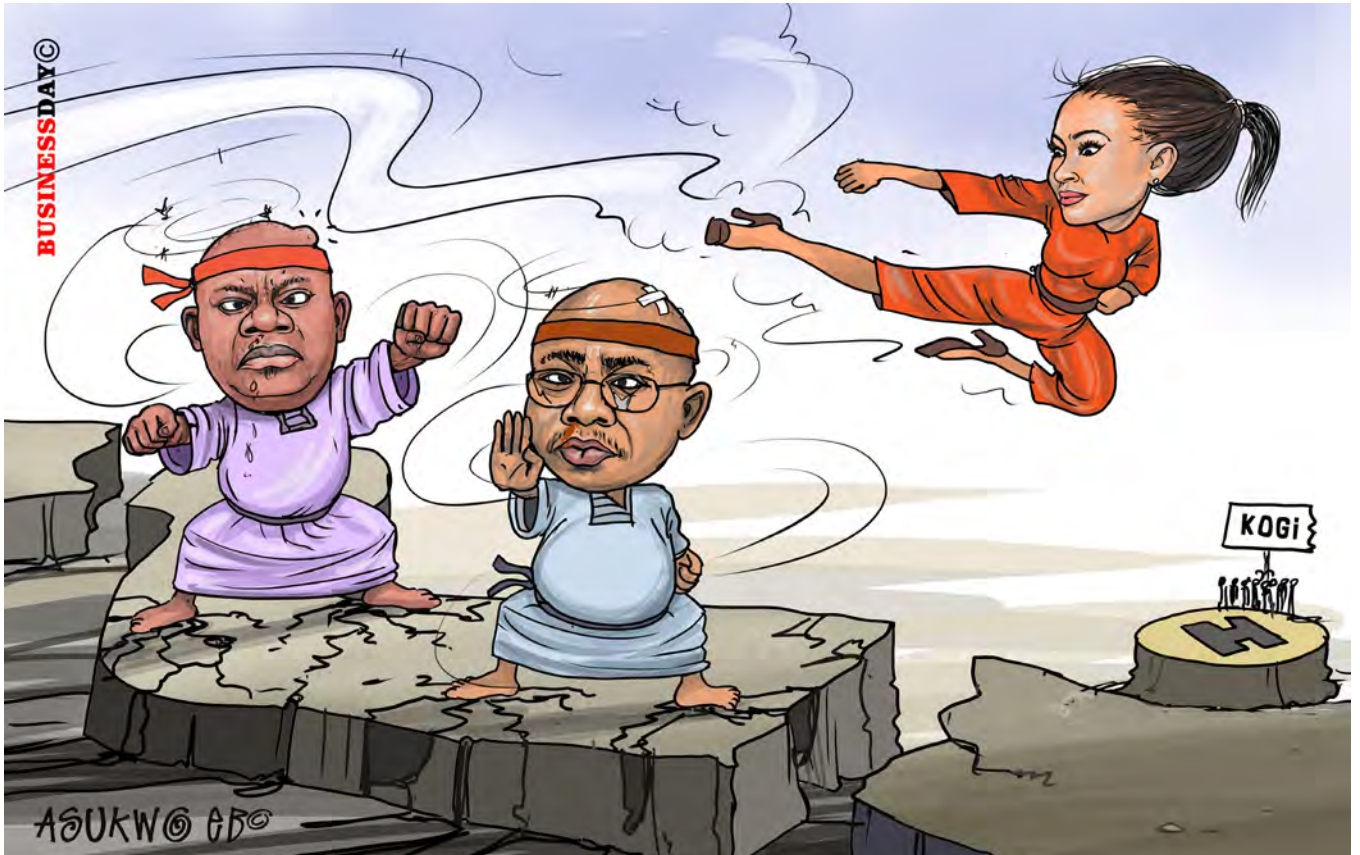
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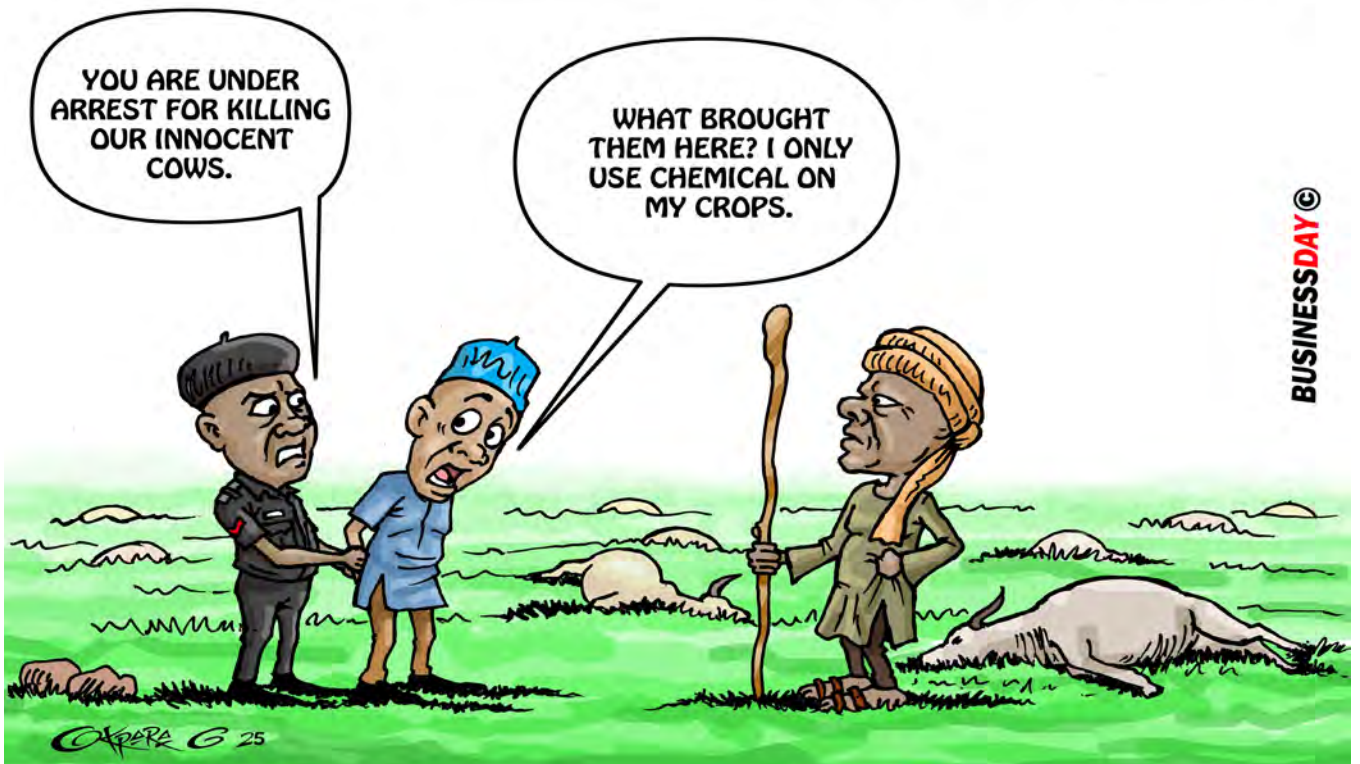
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BENUE FARMER ARRESTED FOR POISONING FULANI COWS RUINING HIS FARMS



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CHANGE OF BATON: Ojulari Takes over from Kyari



Change of baton: Mele Kyari, Former Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Ltd, (left), presenting handover notes to Bayo Ojulari, the new GCEO, (right), during a handover ceremony at the NNPC Towers, Abuja, on Friday.

The new Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Ltd) has officially taken over the reins of the company from his predecessor, Mele Kyari.

In a brief handover ceremony at the NNPC Towers on Friday, the GCEO commended Kyari for his contributions to the growth of NNPC Ltd and his sterling service to the nation.

He disclosed that the objective of his management was to consolidate on the successes of his predecessor and take the company to the next level.

He said though the targets set for his management were quite challenging, he would be relying on the

cooperation of the Management and staff of the company, as well as the counsel of his predecessor to achieve the target.

“I will be counting on your support. I will need it. I will be coming around to seek your counsel,” Ojulari told Kyari.

Earlier in his remarks, Kyari congratulated Ojulari and thanked the Management and staff of the company for their support while in office.

He pledged to do everything in his power to support the new Management to succeed, stressing that he was only a call away.

CHIAMAOKA OKWUCHUKWU: Nigeria's rising star chasing big dreams in NWSL

ANTHONY NLEBEM



NWSL debut

Chiamaka Okwuchukwu, a 19-year-old Nigerian striker and CAF Young Women's Player of the Year finalist, has quickly made her mark in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). Her recent debut for San Diego Wave FC showcased the talent that has made her one of Africa's most exciting young prospects.

Okwuchukwu's NWSL debut was nothing short of spectacular. Coming off the bench in the 60th minute against the Orlando Pride, she wasted no time, scoring just 1 minute and 32 seconds later. Her 62nd-minute header, assisted by Kenza Dali, equalized the match, briefly stealing the spotlight in a 2-1 loss for San Diego. This goal marks the second-fastest debut goal in NWSL history, a testament to her immediate impact.

While the Wave ultimately fell to Orlando Pride, Okwuchukwu's performance was a major positive. The January signing from Nigerian Women's Premier League champions Rivers Angels FC had already garnered significant attention. She was recently featured at No. 17 on ESPN's "21 Under 21" list, a recognition fueled by her early national team debut at 16, her participation in two U-20 World Cups, and her nomination for the 2024 CAF Women's Young Player of the Year.

Early signs of stardom

Okwuchukwu's NWSL career is just beginning, but her debut goal offered a glimpse of her potential. Her speed, sharp instincts, and high soccer IQ suggest she could become a game-changer for the Wave as the season progresses.



to reach her best. What you are seeing is not the best of Chiamaka yet," Danjuma said.

"Progressively, you will see more of her potential. She already has instincts in front of the goal and an ability to take defenders on. What we're looking to add is an ability to provide assists and make the right passes and runs, and she's going to get there."

Chasing her dreams

"This tournament is a big chance for me to show what I can do and move to a bigger club in Europe; that's what I'm praying for, to be a professional footballer and to be a role model to fans and many people," Okwuchukwu said about her big dream after leading the Falconets to the Round of 16 in the 2024 FIFA U-20 Women's World

From rural Nigeria to world stage

In an interview with FIFA, Okwuchukwu shared insights into the development of her technique, movement, and finishing skills. "I can't really tell how things developed like this; I think it's a gift," she explained. She traced her roots to the rural town of Njaba, Nigeria, where she grew up as the seventh of eight children.

"When I was small, I didn't have someone teaching me, but I grew up loving football. Whenever I would see someone playing football, I would follow them and ask them to play, and it all started from there."

From playing in school and on the streets, she joined Port Harcourt-based Rivers Angels, a powerhouse in Nigerian women's football. Her talent quickly earned her a place on Nigeria's national team, where she became a key player for the U-20 side.

Her performances, including goals against Germany and Venezuela at the 2024 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup, highlighted her ability to get on the ball, take on defenders, and play with a positive, forward-thinking style.

A glimpse of untapped potential

When asked about her best quality, Okwuchukwu cites her speed. "Oh, it's my pace," she told FIFA.

Falconets head coach Christopher Danjuma has high expectations for Okwuchukwu. "She is yet

Cup.

A passionate admirer of Cristiano Ronaldo, she dreams of playing for Manchester United one day. "For me, I admire Cristiano Ronaldo so much, so of course, it's a dream to play for Manchester United. It's one of my biggest dreams to meet [Ronaldo] one day... even just to have a good handshake."

With a remarkable start to her professional career, Chiamaka Okwuchukwu's journey is just beginning. If her debut goal is any indication, the Nigerian prodigy is destined for greatness in women's football.



UNDERSTANDING HAIR LOSS: CAUSES, MYTHS, AND SOLUTIONS

CHISOM MICHAEL



Hair loss is a growing concern for millions worldwide, with genetics, stress, and lifestyle habits playing crucial roles in hair health.

Many Nigerians, particularly women, struggle with hair loss, often due to tight hairstyles, hair extensions, and weaves, leading to traction alopecia, a condition caused by excessive pulling and pressure on the scalp, studies indicate that traction alopecia, a common cause of hair loss in black women, affects 46.2 percent of women in Nigeria, However, experts from Aventus Clinic have

provided key insights into the most frequently asked questions about hair loss, debunking myths and offering real solutions.

Preventing Hair Loss: What Really Works?

Daily habits significantly impact hair health. A protein-rich diet, stress management, and avoiding harsh chemicals are essential in preventing hair thinning. Catching early signs of hair loss is crucial, as delaying intervention may lead to irreversible damage.

The Truth About Natural Remedies

While many natural treatments claim to prevent hair loss, most have limited long-term effectiveness. For instance, rosemary oil can boost scalp circulation by up to 54 percent, but popular supplements like biotin show minimal success in combating genetic hair loss. Experts warn that natural remedies alone cannot halt progressive baldness.

Hormonal Influence on Hair Loss

Hormonal imbalances, particularly the presence of dihydrotestosterone (DHT), are responsible for 95 percent of male baldness. DHT shrinks hair follicles by 75 percent, drastically shortening hair growth cycles. Women are also affected, with 70 percent of female pattern baldness linked to hormonal factors.

Stress: A Hidden Culprit

Severe stress can trigger a condition called telogen effluvium, forcing up to 70 percent more hair follicles into the shedding phase. Chronic stress can lead to permanent follicle damage if left untreated, making stress management a critical factor in hair health.

Side Effects of Hair Loss Treatments

While treatments like Rogaine and Propecia offer promising results, they come with potential risks. Rogaine can cause scalp irritation in 7 percent of users, and Propecia has been linked to sexual dysfunction in 3-4 percent of men. Experts stated that consulting a specialist before starting any treatment is essential.

Does Wearing Hats Lead to Baldness?

A common myth suggests that wearing hats causes hair loss. While regular hat use does not contribute to baldness, tight

headwear can lead to traction alopecia due to constant pulling on hair follicles. Choosing comfortable, well-fitting hats can prevent unnecessary hair damage.

Smoking: An Overlooked Hair Loss Factor

Smoking reduces blood circulation to hair follicles by 30 percent, increasing the risk of premature hair loss by 1.6 times. This lesser-known consequence of smoking contributes to overall hair thinning and follicle aging.

Medications That May Cause Hair Loss

Approximately 12 percent of hair loss cases are linked to medications such as blood pressure drugs, antidepressants, and acne treatments. Patients experiencing sudden hair thinning should consult their doctor to explore alternative prescriptions.

Nutritional Deficiencies and Hair Health

Modern diets often lack essential nutrients like iron, zinc, and protein, contributing to 30 percent of unexplained hair loss cases. Encouragingly, addressing these deficiencies has shown improvement in 60 percent of affected individuals within 3-6 months.

Can Hair Loss Be Stopped Naturally?

For individuals with genetic hair loss, natural treatments alone are unlikely to stop progression. While lifestyle improvements may slow the process, most cases require medical intervention for significant restoration. Advanced treatments now boast a 90 percent success rate, making them a superior option compared to natural remedies.

A portrait of Uwanma Odefa, a woman with long, straight blonde hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses, a red scarf, and a dark blue blazer. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. Her hands are crossed in front of her, and she is wearing a ring on her left hand and has colorful nail polish.

FROM NIGERIA TO ESTONIA: Uwanma Odefa Leads Integration Efforts for African Communities



Uwanma Odefa is an accomplished Human Resources professional with over 20 years of experience in people management, organisational culture transformation, and change leadership. Currently serving as the Integration and Adaptation Liaison at the Tallinn Migration Centre under the Tallinn City Social and Healthcare Board, she plays a key role in fostering cultural integration between the African community and Estonian society.

Beyond her public appointment, Odefa runs her own Career and Talent Management Consultancy, where she supports professionals and organisations in navigating career and workplace transitions, and building inclusive cultures. She is also the founder of a non-governmental organisation dedicated to strengthening Estonian-African relations through dialogue, cultural exchange, and community engagement.

With a diverse background spanning HR, media, and communications, Odefa uses her voice and visibility to promote inclusion, community building, and cross-cultural understanding. Through engaging content and grassroots initiatives, she bridges cultural gaps

while empowering others to thrive in new environments.

In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she speaks on how her experiences from your personal and professional journey have best prepared her for the position and how she hopes to encourage more African brothers and sisters to step out of their homes and be more visible in social settings, especially outside their own community spaces.

Can you tell us a bit about your background and how you were able to attain this new role?

I've built a career in Human Resources Management spanning two decades, with a focus on people management, organisational culture transformation, and change management. I've also dabbled in communications, media, and entertainment. All of these experiences have led me to where I am today.

At the end of 2021, after a brief stint in England, I moved to Estonia, a small but powerful and technologically advanced country bordered by Finland, Sweden, and Latvia. While I was rebuilding my career and adapting to the Estonian workspace, I also embraced the process of integrating into my new society. I leaned into my passion for content creation, networking, and people management to make meaningful connections.

My videos, posts, and articles on LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, as well as my in-person and virtual events, got me noticed. This led to media features, social media collaborations, partnerships, and more professional opportunities, including my recent appointment at the Tallinn Welfare and Health Care Department with Tallinn Migration Centre.

What experiences from your personal or professional journey have best prepared you for this position?

I'm a people person. I've worked in a field that requires a deep understanding of human psychology. I'm also an immigrant who is thriving in a country still adjusting to the idea of African expatriates and professionals as fellow residents and citizens.



I'm very visible to both Estonians and the African community, and I've built a wide, strong, and carefully curated network on both sides. All of this has positioned me for this role, and that's exactly why I was approached for it.

What are your primary responsibilities as the Adaptation and Integration Liaison?

My primary responsibility is to support the successful integration of the African community in Estonia, from arrival to, hopefully, a true sense of belonging. I do this by raising awareness of and creating access to the integration resources available, helping people settle in and become active contributors to Estonian society. My strategy involves identifying key partners who have access to large groups or sub-communities of Africans living here and collaborating with them. So far, we've engaged with religious leaders, major employers, cultural groups, and social influencers.

What does this appointment mean for you personally and for the African community?

To me, it feels like I, and by extension, the African community, am being seen, heard, valued, and supported. And that the support doesn't come through ad hoc or intermediate measures, but are long-term and systemic. That's all anyone can ask for.

It's the feeling of being part of a community that recognises your potential and offers guidance to help you fulfil it, so you can, in turn, support others. This creates a system, a cycle, and a community that looks out for one another, grows together, and thrives in a positive, inclusive environment.

For example, in 2023, international students (including many Africans) contributed €23 million in tax revenue. A significant number stay after graduation, working and contributing meaningfully to the society. We add value.

What are the most pressing issues African communities face regarding integration?

Estonians are very conservative, and take their time opening up to strangers, and that includes fellow Estonians. This is a sharp contrast to most Africans who are outgoing and would hug a total stranger who said hello to them. Without opportunities for intentional and guided cultural exchange, most Africans feel snubbed and unwelcome, some even attributing their experience to racism, when in fact it's a simple case



of cultural diversity. In many cases, these experiences make Africans stay within the confines of their own communities where they have limited interaction with their Estonian neighbours. On the flip side, many Estonians are curious about the new people and cultures growing in the society around them but share that Africans don't interact consistently enough for them to get to know us.

The second most pressing challenge to integration for most Africans is the language barrier. Most Estonians speak English conversationally, but Estonia's first language is Estonian. It is the language of business, instruction and information. This is a strategy to preserve the language, culture and nationality of Estonia after years of occupation by other countries. And Estonians are fiercely loyal to their language, as they should be. Language is a form of identity. The tricky part is that Estonian language is a tad difficult to learn, and with minimal access to Estonians, practicing becomes an added obstacle for many African residents.

What are your top priorities as Adaptation and Integration Liaison?

My top priority is to help the Centre achieve its goal of supporting the African community in integrating as effectively and quickly as possible, while also helping resident Estonians adapt to the growing diversity around them, and see the benefits of it. This would incorporate a campaign that includes cultural exchange events between communities.

Can you share any specific programs or initiatives you plan to launch or already have?

Besides the adaptation support information sessions and courses, I'm currently developing a proposal for a cultural festival later this year. It will be a major collaborative event that showcases the richness of African cultures through food, music, dance, fashion, and, of course, vibes.

It will be a fantastic opportunity for our Estonian friends, colleagues, and neighbours to interact with us in a relaxed, joyful setting, and for us to get to know them as well.

What long-term changes do you hope to achieve during your tenure?

I hope that our work at the Tallinn Migration Centre and the Tallinn Welfare and Health Care Department, alongside other government institutions, will lead to a more integrated Estonian society, where Africans are recognised as valuable partners and contributors to the development of this remarkable country.

Are there specific challenges you want to tackle immediately?

Yes. I'd love to encourage more of my African brothers and sisters to step out of their homes and be more visible in social settings, especially outside their own community spaces. It is the quickest way to integrate; by interacting and engaging with others. This is particularly important during the darker and colder months, when isolation can really set in. It is my hope that the cultural exchange events, amongst others, will tackle this.

What policies do you believe are most critical for improving the African community's well-being?

In terms of mental well-being, one major issue is the inability of many Africans to have their friends and family from home visit them in Estonia. For example, in 2023, when I completed my MBA, I invited my siblings to attend my graduation. My brother, who lives and works in England as a medical doctor with the NHS, was denied a visa, even though his application included proof of employment, a letter from HR stating his vacation and return dates, his payslips, bank statements, flight ticket, hotel booking, and every paperwork he was asked to provide.

Despite the inclusion of my own invitation letter and documentation from my employer and school, the decision was that they were “unconvinced” he would return to England. It broke my heart that he couldn’t come.

Africans place immense value on family and community. Being cut off from loved ones can deeply affect our mental health and increase the feeling of isolation. I hope to see policies that allow easier, short-term visitation for close family members.

Another important issue is housing discrimination. There are reports of landlords refusing to rent to Africans solely based on their background. While I acknowledge that property owners have the right to choose their tenants, and that legislation exists to prevent such discrimination, there’s still a need for more open dialogue and education around the issue. Greater awareness is needed, both for tenants and landlords, about what constitutes discrimination, and where individuals can turn for support or redress when it occurs.

What does cultural integration mean to you, and how do you define success in this area?

To me, cultural integration means people of different backgrounds becoming open to, and aware of each other’s values, customs, and traditions, and finding common ground in our shared humanity.

Success is when I can talk about my culture openly with an Estonian, and they’re at least somewhat familiar with what I’m sharing, and vice versa.

For instance, I once told a colleague about Nigerian small chops. She hadn’t heard the term before, but once I described the snacks, she realised she’d tried poff-poff and loved it. She’s now officially a poff-poff ambassador. That exchange made me feel warm and fuzzy inside.

What advice would you give to other African leaders seeking to create change in their communities?

As cliché as it may sound, it really does start with you. You can’t show people a framework for change that you haven’t tested or walked yourself.

The most effective case study is you, your experience, your journey, and the results of your strategies.



CHEF VEE: PROMOTING NIGERIA'S RICH CUISINE, CULTURAL HERITAGE IN GLOBAL STAGE

CHISOM MICHAEL



Vanessa Cole, popularly known as Chef Vee, is a Nigerian culinary icon and hospitality entrepreneur who prides herself on promoting the country's rich culinary and cultural heritage locally and internationally.

As a dedicated advocate for the growth of Nigeria's hospitality and creative industries, Chef Vee has built a distinguished career merging business with cultural storytelling.

Through her platform known as the Ladies Brunch, she has continued to create opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the food and beverage sector, championing economic empowerment and innovation.

As a project consultant and food and beverage advisor, Chef Vee recently ensured the global stage experienced Nigeria's rich culinary and cultural excellence at the Nigeria Women's Day Conference and Fashion Exhibition held in New York, USA.

She solidified her status as a cultural ambassador by playing a key role in the event and using her expertise in culinary arts, hospitality, and event management to create an unforgettable experience for the global audience.

At the event, which was organised by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs during the 69th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), she curated a distinctive experience that showcased Nigerian heritage.

Chef Vee's contribution to this landmark exhibition underscored her reputation as one of the leading Nigerian professional and cultural ambassadors. "This was more than just a celebration of creativity and fashion; it was a powerful statement about Nigerian excellence and the role of women in shaping our industries," said Chef Vee.

According to her, "It was an honour to contribute to an event that elevated Nigerian artistry and told our story through the universal language of arts, food, and culture."

The conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and global influencers, celebrating Nigerian fashion, lifestyle, music, and cultural expression.

Chef Vee's role in steering the project's execution and curating an immersive culinary experience left a lasting impact, reinforcing the importance of Nigerian culture in international conversations. She is the founder of 'Setting The Standards Brunch,' an initiative that brings together women entrepreneurs to foster growth, mentorship, and networking. Through her work, Chef Vee continues to elevate Nigerian cuisine and culture on a global scale.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF SURVIVAL: THE ENDURING POWER OF ROMANCE IN NIGERIA

EYESAN TORITSEJU

In the words of one of the greatest musicians and cultural icons of our era, Rihanna, "We all need love." Nations have been brought to their knees for it, and people have traded their entire lives for what they believed to be a semblance of it. "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships, And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?"—this famous line from Doctor Faustus, referencing Helen of Troy, reminds us of love's ability to alter history on a grand scale. The Trojan War, as legend tells it, was ignited by a battle for her companionship, leading to one of the most infamous conflicts in ancient mythology.

Centuries later, love still had the power to shake empires. King Edward VIII of Britain gave up his throne to marry Wallis Simpson, an American divorcée. His love for her triggered a constitutional crisis, forcing him to abdicate and ultimately altering the course of British monarchy. His brother ascended as King George VI, paving the way for Queen Elizabeth II's historic reign. A near re-enactment of this situation is even playing out at this moment in time.

But beyond monarchs and myth, love has led countless individuals to make unimaginable sacrifices, defying family expectations, crossing continents, and reshaping entire lives for the promise of connection. Using my friends and acquaintances as a sample size, I can probably say that the pursuit or preservation of romantic relationships plays just as significant a role in japa plans as financial security or career ambitions. What is it about love and romantic companionship that drives us to seemingly disregard our better judgment and self-interest in our quest to attain and sustain it? How did it become such a defining force in the human experience? We all come to the world on our own, don't we? So why this deep, almost primal, longing for someone to walk through life beside us?

Love in a Time of Survival

Love has long been considered a fundamental part of human existence, but in Nigeria today, it is starting to feel like a luxury—something that requires both emotional and financial bandwidth, two things young Nigerians are running increasingly low on. For many in past generations, love and marriage were seen as inevitable milestones, woven seamlessly into the fabric of life. But for young Nigerians today, romance often feels like a privilege rather than a given. The demands of survival—rising living costs, unemployment, and the pressure to japa—are shifting priorities. Conversations about love are now laced with discussions about financial security, relocation plans, and the weight of expectations.

Yet, for all these challenges, love refuses to be sidelined. Even in the face of economic hardship, social upheaval, and an uncertain future, love still commands space in our lives. From grand weddings to viral love stories, from long-distance relationships that stretch across continents to the quiet, everyday romances that bloom in the midst of struggle—love remains at the forefront of the Nigerian experience. Love, in its many forms, continues to shape the decisions young Nigerians make. Some

stay in relationships despite the odds, navigating long-distance love across time zones, battling visa restrictions, and enduring endless uncertainties. Others let go of relationships, not because the love isn't strong enough, but because circumstances simply don't align. In a world where many feel like they are constantly in survival mode, the idea of love as an anchor is as powerful as ever. It provides something to hold on to in a landscape that often feels unstable. Even when financial realities make traditional expectations around marriage and family daunting, young Nigerians are redefining love on their own terms, through relationships that prioritize mutual support over societal validation, and through partnerships that transcend borders.

Love in the Nigerian Psyche

Beyond romantic love, the African and, specifically, the Nigerian context has always emphasized communal love. In many ways, love in Nigeria has never been just about two people, it extends to family, community, and even cultural expectations. Here, love is rarely just personal; it is often a collective experience. Marriage is not just about the couple but about families coming together, about social structures reinforcing shared values. This is why, despite economic realities, love remains deeply ingrained in our collective psyche. Parents still urge their children to "bring someone home," weddings remain major societal events, and even within our modern, fast-paced world, love stories continue to dominate music, film, and pop culture. It is also why, despite shifting priorities, love in Nigeria still carries a weight that many cannot ignore. There's still a deep-seated belief that life is best navigated with a partner, that struggles are easier when shared, and that success, no matter how self-made, is sweeter when there's someone to celebrate with.

Love as a Force, Not a Luxury

The truth is, no matter how pragmatic we become, we are still wired for companionship. Love is what softens the weight of an often unrelenting society; it is what makes the pursuit of a better life feel worthwhile. Even when circumstances make it difficult, people still find ways to love by redefining commitment, adjusting expectations, and creating new expressions of partnership that fit within the shifting realities of our time. Because, despite everything, love remains undefeated. It is not just a luxury, it is a force. A force that shapes decisions, rewrites destinies, and continues to thrive in the hearts of Nigerians, no matter the odds.

About the Writer

Eyesan Toritseju is a graduate of Civil Engineering from Covenant University turned serial entrepreneur and corporate strategist. Passionate about society and the cultural ideologies that shape us, he explores how these forces propel or inhibit progress through his writing. In his column, *Cosmopolitan Nigeria*, Eyesan examines how young Nigerians navigate the complexities of culture, religion, and identity in a rapidly evolving world.

HERE ARE TOP 7 UNIVERSITIES IN ASIA FOR NIGERIANS, OTHER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

CHARLES OGWO

In the face of surging visa restrictions across many advanced countries, which has sparked the massive drive for alternative study destinations by many international students, especially from Nigeria and Africa, there is a dire need for insightful knowledge about the possible institutions in Asia.

Based on the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2025, the top seven globally ranked universities in Asia are: Peking University, The University of Hong Kong, National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Fudan University, Tsinghua University, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Peking University- China

Peking University is a public institution that was founded in 1898, though it was not known by its current name until 1912. The university's main campus, known as Yan Yuan, is located in the Haidian District in the western suburbs of Beijing, China's capital city. Peking University is ranked 31 in Best Global



Universities. The university housing is available for both undergraduate and graduate students. However, tuition costs are higher for non-Chinese nationals and vary by subject, with science subjects costing more.

The University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong SAR)

The University of Hong Kong is a public research university in Pokfulam, Hong Kong. It was founded in 1887 as the Hong Kong College of Medicine for

Chinese by the London Missionary Society and formally established as the University of Hong Kong in 1911. It is the oldest tertiary institution in Hong Kong.

The university was ranked 35 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025. The institution was established and proposed by Governor Sir Frederick Lugard in an effort to compete with the other Great Powers opening universities in China.

The university currently has 10 academic faculties and 20 residential halls and colleges for its students, with English being its main medium of instruction and assessment.

National University of Singapore (NUS) -Singapore

The National University of Singapore is a national public research university in Singapore. It was officially established in 1980 by the merging of the University of Singapore and Nanyang University.

The university is ranked 22 in Best Global Universities. NUS started out as a modest medical school with 23 students in 1905, founded by a determined group of businessmen led by Tan Jiak Kim, to serve the needs of the local community.

Today, more than 100 years on, as Singapore's flagship university, the university continues to be in service to the country and society.

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU) -Singapore

Nanyang Technological University is a public research university in Singapore. Founded in 1981, it is also the second oldest autonomous university in the country.

NTU, as it is popularly known, is ranked 27 in Best Global Universities. It is home to world-renowned autonomous institutes, the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering, and various leading research centres.

Fudan University-China

Fudan University is a national public university in Shanghai, China. It is affiliated with the Ministry of Education and is co-funded with the Shanghai municipal government.

The university is part of Project 211, Project 985, and the Double First-Class Construction. It became a private university in 1917, establishing specialised departments including Chinese literature, foreign literature, banking, business and administration, economics, politics, civil engineering and psychology.

In 1921, university preparatory education was ended and the university began to adopt an American-styled credit and elective system, per a national policy.

In 1928, Fudan was registered with the Ministry of Education of the newly founded Nationalist government. In 1929, it was organised into four faculties, namely Liberal Arts, Science, Law and Commerce. In 1937, it moved to Chongqing due to the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War.



FUDAN UNIVERSITY, CHINA

Tsinghua University –China

Tsinghua University, located in northwest Beijing, China, is a public institution that traces its roots back to 1911. The primary language of instruction is Chinese, though there are some graduate degree programmes offered in English.

For instance, the university has English-taught master's programmes in Chinese politics, foreign policy and international relations; mechanical engineering; and global business journalism, among others. Tuition costs vary by degree program and language of instruction.

The university's international students hail from more than 100 countries, with the bulk of them coming from Asia. Recently, 41 percent of the university's non-Chinese students were undergraduates, 29 percent were pursuing master's degrees, nine percent were doctoral students and the rest were participating in shorter-term programmes.



It is ranked 16 in Best Global Universities. The university comprises numerous schools and departments, which offer programmes across a variety of disciplines: science, engineering, literature, arts, history, philosophy, economics, management, law, education and medicine.

In all, there are more than 70 degree programs available to undergraduate students at Tsinghua University, as well as many more masters and doctoral programmes. It has more than 300 research institutions.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) -Hong Kong SAR

The Chinese University of Hong Kong was established in 1963 as a federation of three colleges, Chung Chi College, New Asia College, and United College, it is Hong Kong's second-oldest university, with the first being the University of Hong Kong.

The university is ranked 42 in Best Global Universities. CUHK is a comprehensive research university with most departments and schools organised into eight faculties, namely the Faculties of Arts, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, Science, and Social Science.



10 BUSINESS IDEAS FOR IMMIGRANTS TO START IN THE US

ESTHER EMOEKPERE

Embarking on a new life in the United States offers a wealth of opportunities, particularly in the realm of entrepreneurship. Immigrants have long been a source of strength in the US, founding businesses at rates significantly higher than the U.S. population.

In 2019, immigrant entrepreneurs made up 21.7% of all business owners in the United States, despite making up just over 13.6% of the population and 17.1% of the U.S. labor force. This entrepreneurial spirit is evident across various sectors, including professional and business services, retail, construction, educational and social services, and leisure and hospitality.

Notably, in New York City, immigrants own about 90% of laundry businesses and 90% of taxi and limousine services.

Here are ten business ideas tailored for immigrants seeking to thrive in the U.S. market.

Mobile food truck

Food trucks are a growing trend in the US. They offer flexibility and low overhead costs compared to traditional restaurants. If you love cooking and have unique recipes, this could be a great way to tap into the food industry.

Daycare services

With many working parents, there is always demand for reliable daycare services. Starting a small daycare or offering babysitting services can be highly profitable with the right licencing and care standards in place.

Transportation services

Provide taxi, or shuttle services, particularly in areas with limited public transportation. This venture requires knowledge of the local area and reliable vehicles.

Handyman services

Provide home repair and maintenance services. With the right skills and tools, this business can cater to homeowners needing assistance with various tasks.

Pet sitting and care

Many pet owners need someone to look after their pets while they are at work or travelling. This can be a low-cost, rewarding business, especially if you love animals. Pet daycare and grooming are also popular services.

Real estate agency

The US property market offers endless opportunities. As a real estate agent, you can help individuals and families find their dream homes, guiding them through one of life's most significant decisions. With the right training and local market insights, this venture promises attractive commissions and enduring client relationships.

Beauty Salon business

Establishing a beauty salon in the USA presents a promising opportunity, especially for immigrants seeking to leverage their skills and cultural insights. The beauty industry continues to thrive, with personal care services like hair salons and spas experiencing consistent demand.

Online courses and tutoring

The demand for online education has skyrocketed, especially after the pandemic. If you have expertise in a subject, creating online courses or offering tutoring services could be a sustainable business opportunity.

Homestay accommodation service

If you have extra space in your home, such as an additional room, starting a homestay accommodation service can be a lucrative business venture in the USA. This option is particularly appealing for immigrants, as it allows you to connect with fellow community members and provide a comfortable living space for students, working professionals.

Translation and interpretation services

Leverage your bilingual skills to assist businesses and individuals in overcoming language barriers, especially in multicultural communities. Shepelsky Law

By carefully considering your market, audience, and business structure, you can tap into these opportunities and create a profitable venture. Just remember to comply with local regulations, secure funding, and differentiate yourself from competitors for long-term success.

12 RANDOM FACTS YOU DID NOT KNOW YOU NEEDED UNTIL NOW

ESTHER EMOEKPERE

You know that feeling when you are minding your business, scrolling through Twitter, and you stumble on a question so good, you have to stop and check the replies? That is exactly what happened when one Mr Ola asked, "Does anyone have any random fun facts about a very niche subject? I'm bored and love learning random things."

And let me tell you, the internet delivered. People came through with facts so random, so oddly specific, you will wonder how they even know these things. But that is the beauty of it, pure, unfiltered knowledge you did not ask for but now can not unsee.

So, here are 12 of the most unexpected, mind-blowing, and wonderfully useless facts that will live rent-free in your head from now on.

Your brain forgets things on purpose as a survival mechanism.

This process, known as adaptive forgetting, helps us focus on important information and discard irrelevant or outdated memories. If we remembered everything, our brains would be overwhelmed with useless details.

The Earth actually takes about 365 days and 6 hours to complete a trip around the Sun.

For convenience, we ignore the extra 6 hours. Over four years, these accumulate to a full day (24 hours), which we then add as February 29th, creating a leap year.

October 31, 2000, was the last time all of humanity was on Earth.

Since then, there has always been at least one person in space.

The smell of old books comes from lignin, a compound in paper that's chemically similar to vanilla.

As books age, lignin breaks down and releases vanillin, giving them that nostalgic, slightly sweet scent. So next time you sniff a book and get hit with that nostalgic scent, just know your nose is basically detecting ancient vanilla-flavoured paper.

The smell of freshly cut grass is actually a plant distress signal.

When grass is cut, it releases chemicals meant to warn other plants of danger.

When crocodiles eat their prey, they sometimes "cry."

Not because they feel guilty, but because their sinuses get blocked while eating, causing involuntary tears, hence the phenomenon, known as "crocodile tears syndrome".. So, if a crocodile ever starts weeping in front of you, it's not having an emotional breakdown, it just had a really big lunch.

When a person's name is closely related to their profession, it is called an aptronym.

Examples include Usain Bolt (fast runner), Margaret Court (tennis player), and Bob Flowerdew (gardener).

There's a neurological condition called synesthesia that allows people to taste words, see music, or hear colours. This rare condition causes sensory overlaps, such as associating sounds with colours or tastes.

When you look at the Sun, you are actually witnessing the past.

You're seeing it as it was 8 minutes and 20 seconds ago because that's how long it takes light to travel from the Sun to Earth

The desire to escape slavery was once classified as a mental illness called drapetomania.

Yes, in 1851, an actual doctor coined the term drapetomania to describe enslaved people who wanted to escape. Because apparently, the idea of not wanting to be enslaved was so confusing that they just called it an illness instead.

If two clocks are separated vertically by 1 cm, the lower clock will run more slowly than the upper clock due to gravitational time dilation.

Time passes slightly slower at lower elevations because of the Earth's gravitational field.

The letter 'e' is the most commonly used letter in the English language.

It appears in approximately 11% of all words.

EMPOWERING FUTURES: INVESTING IN CLEAN WATER, HYGIENE SUPPORT FOR THE GIRL CHILD

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



L-R: Anthony Kila, Director CIAPS, Ronnie Dikko, Nollywood Actress, Bosede Adumashi (Representing The Comm For Basic Education Lagos State, Zainab Abdumalik-Mohammed, Co-Founder NMCF, Adedamola Kasunmu, representing Mudashiru Obasa and a guest at the annual Symposium/Grand Ball of NMCF at Marriott Hotel Lagos.

Women and girls in rural and by extension some urban parts of Africa and Nigeria spend a considerable amount of their day travelling long distances to collect water from unsafe sources and carrying heavy jerrycans back to their families.

Their journey to find water is often through dark, unsafe environments, exposing them to threats of violence, sexual abuse and other health hazards. Fetching water is one of the many domestic roles which are viewed as 'women's work' and primarily allocated to girls and women. The long hours spent collecting water reduce the amount of time spent on education, income generation and other productive endeavours.

Easy access to simple toilet facilities and washrooms is crucial for adolescent girls to stay in school and reach their maximum potential. Safe, clean and private facilities allow girls to maintain privacy and manage menstrual hygiene, which is key to ensuring school attendance.

In a bid to address this challenge and find lasting solutions to it, Nima Memorial Care Foundation holds an annual Symposium/Grand Ball event which brings stakeholders together to speak on the issues and raise awareness and funds for the course of healthy living and access to clean water for the average person in Nigeria.

Speaking at the 3rd Nima Memorial Care Foundation's (NMCF) 3rd annual symposium/ Grand Ball event in Lagos, Zainab Abdumalik-Mohammed, co-founder, NMCF said the foundation was set up in memory of her late daughter who was very passionate about youth, particularly girl child and water, because she believed water is life and there's nothing on earth anyone can do without water.

Abdumalik-Mohammed said her late daughter had passion for helping young children and the less privileged in the community at large. "So she wanted to provide clean water, hygiene and also girl child hygiene during their menstrual cycle. She used to go on Okpebi Ikeja. She introduced me to the female hawkers there. She used to give the girls sanitary towels and other things before her demise," she disclosed. She said her daughter passed on three years ago but before that, she founded a foundation but the name of the foundation changed to Nima Memorial Care Foundation.

"Doing this event first of all was to leave a mark for her remembrance. It gives me solace to continue her passion and to also carry on looking after the less privileged, the young children, youth education. She also used to go to orphanage homes to teach them reading ethics every Saturday.

"Then every Friday she has drinking water for everybody that wants to come to the house to pick up bags of pure water. We had done boreholes in communities before her demise and we're still doing that. We go to different states where water is needed.

"The next place we're going back to is Kwara where water is highly needed. So we've done about 23 boreholes since she was alive till date. I love that organisations have continued to partner to sustain this vision that we have," Abdumalik-Mohammed said.

She said they've had supplies of sanitary towels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, clothes, amongst

others, adding that over 300 girls have since been impacted.

"We've got some schools that we also take sanitary towels to. Before my daughter's demise, she picked girls, empowered them, trained them on makeup, hairdo, amongst others.

"We have a young boy in the hall but because he's underage, we can't show his face. We picked him up on the street. He's on his way to secondary school now. So this is about the less privileged. education, girl child hygiene, and sometimes widows as well.

Speaking on the theme of the symposium, 'Empowering Futures: Clean Water, Hygiene Support for the Girl Child,' Anthony Kila director, Commonwealth Institute of Advanced and Professional Studies (CIAPS) said the government needs to identify that the problem exists, and not pretend that it doesn't exist, and not lie they've done it, where they've not done anything.

"I think the government should deploy its representatives such as the national assembly, commissioners, local government officials, and indeed some civil servants, to do an audit of our communities and our areas, both local government areas, urban and rural areas, to say what is missing here.

"Once we do that audit, the next step is to look for partnership. I don't believe in big government spending. I think communities can sit down together and say, what is it you can do? How can we help you with this? Can we look for private partnership? Can we look for different ways of funding it?

"You know, these are professors. What are they inventing? What solutions are they bringing? I think everybody needs to understand that we have a general problem, and the only way to solve it is if everybody comes together to address the challenge," Kila explained.

2026 WORLD CUP: NIGERIAN SUPER EAGLES IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

... as maladministration clogs 'mundial' qualification

CHARLES OGWO



Some years ago, it would have been criminal to suggest that Nigeria would struggle to qualify for the 2026 World Cup in a group comprising South Africa, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Benin Republic and Lesotho, considering its avalanche of talents.

However, the reality is that the Super Eagles are struggling in a group where they would have dictating the pace, Nigeria is fourth in the log behind South Africa, Rwanda, and Benin, with just seven points out a possible 18 points after six matches.

More disturbing is the fact that the team has lost its style of play, and consequently its identity. The Nigerian Super Eagles that were known for their fast-paced, attacking style of football, characterised by skillful dribbling, quick transitions, and a focus on counter-attacking, are today adopting a 'kick-and-follow' style of play.

Nigeria's men senior football team, is known to prioritise scoring goals and often played with a high-energy, attacking approach. But today, the Super Eagles are just not very good anymore, and that boils down to having zero footballing identity.

Since the days of the Green Eagles, Nigeria has always had creative midfielders that feed their prolific strikers; and always operative from the wings to wreck their opponents defence.

Players such as late Mudashuri Lawal, Friday Ekpo, Austin 'Jay-Jay' Okoach, and Mikel Obi to mention a few had the team build around them; while wingers such as Segun Odegbami, Adokie Amasiemaka, Finide George, Emmanuel Amuneke, and Tijani Babangida, among others pivoted the attack from the wings, with goal punchers such as Rasheed Yekini, Victor Osinhem, Julius Aghahowa waiting to do the damage.

The truth be told, it is not the fault of the players but of the administrators, who prioritized personal gains to building a sustainable national team.

Amaju Pinnick, the former president at Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) seems to have orchestrated the evil wind that stripes off the Super Eagles' identity when he gave the country Sunday Oliseh as a coach.



Winning a football midfield war could be said to guarantee a team winning a match. Unfortunately, the Super Eagles of today, do not have the creative and visionary midfield which leaves the attackers frustrated.

Imagine, Osinhem and Lookman having the likes of Jay-Jay Okocha, Mikel, and/or Kanu feeding them with tailored passes upfront. It is not enough to assemble players from different clubs, the real work is in moulding a team. Nigeria is yet to get a team for the World Cup qualification. Having a team of individuals who do not have footballing identity will not take the country far.

Oliseh, a fantastic player in his days, did nothing but build a disunited team plugged into ethnic favoritism and an unattractive style of play. Instead of giving Nigerian football lovers the style of Pep Guardiola's style of football which Pinnick claimed he was coming to do, Nigerians were sucked in by what the new coach made of the team.

The Nigerian Super Eagles that would flow the ball in possession, dominate transitions, and used a creative playmaker as the team's attacking pivot, alongside two quick wingers who could come into the middle and share the goalscoring burden with the strikers.

Nigerians who wanted to see a replica of Daniel Amokachi, Samson Siasia, Nwankwo Kanu, and Victor Ikpeba, were disappointed, as the team's football ideology was mutilated.

In what looked like a masterminded election, Pinnick hand over leadership of the glasshouse to Ibrahim Gusau, who looks lost from the appointment of Finidi George to the masterstroke that brought in Eric Chelle, who is reported to be planning to run away like Oliseh did when the chips were down.

It takes gangsters to win a tournament, and comes with cohesion and strategies. This is the identity the team had under Clement Westerhof, when the Super Eagles' style of play often took even the European teams by surprise, as they were known for their flair and ability to execute intricate plays.

The administrators should put on their thinking caps, seek out the secrets of the 1994 Super Eagles and 1996 Atlanta Olympics all conquering Eagles, and their style of play that caught the attention of the world.

Afterwards, the NFF should get Nigerians a world class coach that has what it takes to transform the team to a winning one.

Nigeria finished the 1994 World as the most entertaining team and was ranked fifth in the world. There is a need for NFF to strategically return Super Eagles to the glory days.

After all, football is one thing uniting the country, despite its overwhelming wealth of cultural and religious diversity.



KETURAH OVIO ON AFRICAN ART IN EUROPE:

History, Controversy, and the Future

African art has long travelled across borders, but its journey into European collections is fraught with complexity. From early trade to colonial plunder and later, artistic inspiration, the way African art has been acquired, displayed, and interpreted in Europe has often been dictated by outsiders.

Today, however, the conversation is shifting. African art is no longer just an object of admiration or study—it's at the center of a global debate about restitution, representation, and historical justice. But what does this mean for curators—the very people responsible for shaping how audiences engage with these works?

To explore these evolving dynamics in this digest, we sat down with Keturah Ovio, the curator of small & Iconic miniature art exhibitions and a director at Patrons Modern and Contemporary African Art. With years of experience navigating the African art world, she offers unique insights into how African art is perceived, exhibited, and contested in European museums.

How did African art first enter European collections?

Keturah: It came through trade, colonial plundering, and later, artistic appreciation. In the 15th century, African artefacts were collected as exotic goods. But large-scale looting, like the British raid on Benin in 1897, massively expanded European collections. For decades, museums displayed these works as “ethnographic objects” rather than art. That changed when modernist artists like Picasso and Matisse drew inspiration from African aesthetics, helping elevate its status. Today, African art in Europe remains a topic of intense debate, with growing demands for restitution and decolonisation.



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Keturah Ovio, curator of small & Iconic miniature art exhibitions

How has the perception of African art changed in European museums?

Keturah: The shift has been significant. Museums used to treat African art as historical artefacts, separate from the “fine arts” of Europe. Now, we recognise its innovation, influence, and global impact. More institutions are working with African curators and scholars to tell fuller, more accurate stories. There’s also more focus on ethical collecting practices, transparency, and collaboration with African communities. That said, challenges remain. Some institutions are reluctant to address restitution seriously, and others still struggle to move beyond outdated colonial-era narratives.

Can you recall a moment when African art sparked a major debate in a European museum?

Keturah: Absolutely—the 2021 controversy over the Benin Bronzes at Berlin’s Humboldt Forum stands out. The museum planned to display these looted bronzes, but protests erupted, demanding their return. Public pressure and advocacy from Nigeria forced Germany to commit to repatriating over 1,100 pieces. This decision put enormous pressure on other institutions, including the British Museum, to reassess their own collections. The case of the Benin Bronzes isn’t just about returning stolen art—it’s about acknowledging historical injustice and reshaping the role of museums in today’s world.

What are some of the biggest misconceptions about African art?

Keturah: Many people still see it as something static, tied only to tradition. They think African art is just masks and wooden sculptures, ignoring the incredible diversity of media and styles. Another misconception is that African art is “tribal” rather than part of sophisticated, historical civilisations. This thinking ignores the long history of advanced artistic traditions in places like Mali, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. One of my key goals as a curator is to showcase African art across different periods—placing historical masterpieces alongside contemporary works—to highlight continuity and evolution.

How has the conversation around decolonisation and restitution influenced museum practices?

Keturah: It has forced museums to take responsibility for their collections. For a long time, institutions avoided talking about how these artworks were acquired. Now, we’re seeing more transparency, more research into provenance, and a real push for ethical collaboration with African institutions. Some museums are even

returning looted artefacts, which was unheard of a few decades ago. But there’s still resistance, especially from institutions that hold vast collections with colonial origins. The question isn’t just about returning objects—it’s about rethinking who gets to tell the stories behind them.

TOP PICKS FROM OUR COLLECTION



Title: Pepites

Artist: Aza Mansongi

Medium: Acrylic on cotton canvas, collage

Dimensions: 24 x 24 in | 61 x 61 cm

Available on request



Title: Little black diamond

Artist: Lambert Shumbusho

Medium: Ironwood

Dimensions: 45 x 48 x 28 in | 114 x 122 x 71 cm

Available on request



Title: On top of the world
Artist: Adeola Balogun
(Ph.D.)
Medium: Multiple
mediums
Dimensions: 15 x 12 x 10
in | 38 x 30 x 25 cm
Available on request

How do you ensure cultural context and respect when curating African art?

Keturah: Context is everything. I start with detailed provenance research—where did this piece come from? Who made it, and why? Next, I collaborate with African scholars, artists, and historians to present these works in ways that honour their origins. It's also important to amplify African voices—whether through exhibition design, multimedia installations, or artist-led interpretations. Museums should not just display African art but actively engage with the cultures and communities behind it.

What role do contemporary African artists play in shaping African art's narrative in Europe?

Keturah: They are reshaping everything. Contemporary African artists challenge outdated representations and bring new perspectives to the table. Their work proves that African art is not just a relic of the past—it's an evolving, dynamic force. These artists are addressing pressing social and political issues while using a range of media, from digital art to performance. Their presence in major European exhibitions helps break stereotypes and ensures that African art is recognized as part of the global art conversation.

Have you noticed changes in how European institutions acquire and display African art?

Keturah: Definitely. Museums are shifting toward contemporary acquisitions rather than just historical pieces. There's also a stronger emphasis on ethical collecting and working directly with African artists and institutions. Exhibitions are becoming more thematic and artist-driven, replacing outdated colonial narratives with more inclusive storytelling.

How can African and European museums collaborate for better representation?

Keturah: True collaboration isn't just about loans or one-off projects—it requires equal partnerships. African scholars, artists, and curators need to be at the forefront of these conversations. Joint research projects, co-curated exhibitions, and shared decision-making can help ensure that African art is represented with accuracy and respect.

What does the future of African art in European collections look like?

Keturah: I see a future where African art is more accessible, better understood, and ethically displayed. Digital platforms and new technologies will bring African art to global audiences in new ways. Collaborations between African and European institutions will continue growing, fostering deeper connections and more responsible stewardship of these works. But more importantly, I hope the conversation moves beyond ownership. The goal should be a cultural exchange—ensuring that African art is not just displayed in Europe but meaningfully engaged with audiences worldwide.

The conversation around African art in European collections is evolving rapidly. As calls for restitution grow louder and museums rethink their narratives, curators like Keturah Ovio play a crucial role in shaping the future of these collections. From amplifying African voices to challenging outdated perceptions, their work ensures that African art is not just seen but truly understood.

As this dialogue continues, one thing is clear—African art is not just part of history. It is a living, breathing testament to creativity, resilience, and cultural identity. The challenge now is to ensure that its story is told with the dignity, respect, and authenticity it deserves.



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.

UNDERSTANDING AND CULTIVATING BRAND LOVE

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

When people fall in love, they do so because of getting to know their partner's values, character and personality. The same holds for creating brand love. If you want to build a lasting, authentic and emotional relationship with your consumers, it must be based on who you are and what you stand for as a brand.

In the fast-paced commercial arenas of the 21st century and a world of quarterly reporting, data analytics and KPIs, many brands have lost sight of their purpose and have abandoned the top of the marketing funnel. It is still extremely important to build awareness and consideration before conversion. Simply put, a brand's success hinges not just on market reach or product quality but on the depth of emotional connections they can foster. This emotional cornerstone is best described as Brand Love.

What is Brand Love?

Brand love transcends the rudimentary preference for one brand over another. At its core, it embodies a consumer's emotional bond with a brand reminiscent of personal relationships. Similar to the unconditional loyalty, respect, and forgiveness we offer loved ones, brand love compels consumers to advocate for, remain loyal to, and even overlook minor flaws of their beloved brands. Brands such as Apple, Coca-Cola, and Nike exemplify this notion, as their followers are not just consumers but believers.

The Vitality of Brand Love

The allure of brand love isn't just conceptual; it offers tangible benefits. Customer retention is the first noticeable advantage. When a brand

resonates emotionally, the consumer's bond becomes less about transaction and more about connection, reducing the likelihood of switching. This loyalty, when deep-rooted, also transforms customers into brand ambassadors. They purchase, actively endorse, share experiences, and even defend the brand amidst criticism.

Moreover, when missteps occur – as they inevitably do – the reservoir of goodwill ensures they're met with understanding and forgiveness. Lastly, brand love can afford a specific luxury: premium pricing. Consumers often perceive additional emotional value in the products, making them more willing to pay a premium.

How to build brand love

Cultivating brand love is a nuanced endeavour. Authenticity stands paramount. In an era where consumers are equipped with myriad tools to dissect brand messages, authenticity becomes the bedrock of trust. Brands need to be genuine in intentions, actions and communications.

Invest in the long game

Allocate a portion of your budget (even if it's a small percentage), to your branding. Make sure that you're constantly reinforcing why you're better or different than the competition and that the messaging reinforces the brand strategy. The intangible and emotional connection that we subconsciously make comes at the time of consideration and purchase, so continuously investing in your brand story has eventual payoffs.

Create and reinforce your identity

“It isn’t the whiskey they choose, it’s the image.” David Ogilvy’s quote still rings true. The purpose of branding is to create a distinct and memorable identity that helps to differentiate and communicate your unique value proposition to consumers, build trust, and ultimately drive customer loyalty and preference. Great branding establishes an emotional connection, sets expectations and contributes to long-term success in a competitive market. Look to Coca-Cola and Apple as best-in-class examples.

Understand your competition and audience

As much as you hope for the immediate success of a campaign via lead generation or even better, sales, never lose sight of the fact that a product or service has to stand out in an oversaturated marketplace. Be sure you know who else is out there and how you measure up and can set yourself apart.

Narrative prowess is another essential ingredient. Emotional storytelling – creating relatable, compelling narratives – fosters deeper connections. It invites consumers to participate in the brand’s journey, making them stakeholders in its success.

Moreover, a consistent brand experience is non-negotiable. From product quality and customer service to digital touchpoints, a unified and predictable experience solidifies trust.

Engagement is the new marketing. A brand that listens, interacts, and values consumer feedback fosters community. Leveraging platforms like social media for meaningful two-way interactions can exponentially enhance this sentiment.

Today’s consumer is also a conscientious one. They are acutely aware of the broader impact of their purchasing choices. Brands that embed social responsibility within their ethos naturally find resonance with these consumers. Committing to environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, or community upliftment can make a brand liked and loved.

And to really make your brand lovable, make sure it’s always relevant to your target audience. You can do a yearly check-in, for instance, to make sure you are top of mind. It can be the difference between stale branding vs. great branding.

LAST LINE

Brand love is the lifeblood of enduring brand success in our contemporary world. When brands resonate on an emotional level, they become more than just a name; they evolve into a cherished narrative in consumers’ life stories.



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

MAN IN THE MIRROR

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

I was never the type to thrive in a 9 to 5 job so it was only a matter of time before I left the haulage company. On paper, the hours were fixed but in reality, the workload was exhausting and relentless.

Determined to carve my own path, I decided to put my talent for buying and selling to good use. That's how I found myself in the market running a small shop selling mirrors. Why mirrors? Honestly, I couldn't say for sure. After exploring different options, it simply felt like the right choice.

Business took off quickly. One shop turned into two, then three, then four. But instead of scattering across multiple locations, I wanted something bigger—a single space to house all my shops under one roof. That's when I made the bold decision to buy a building in the heart of town. It felt like the perfect move. Or so I thought.

Then strange things began to happen. At first, I dismissed it as exhaustion—long hours, managing staff, handling customers could do things to the mind. But the visions persisted. Every time I glanced into the mirror in my office, he was there—a man drenched in blood. Then came the complaints. My staff whispered about voices calling their names, doors slamming shut on their own and lights flickering. Some of my staff refused to work late; others quit without explanation. I could no longer ignore it. Something was wrong with the building.

Determined to uncover the truth, I delved into its past. It didn't take long to find the horror buried within these walls. Mr. Odewale, the previous owner, had been murdered in this very office. Stabbed repeatedly and left to die in a pool of his own blood. His killer or killers had never been caught.

Digging further, I discovered that the murder happened right in front of a mirror. His last moments had been spent watching himself die, his reflection bearing witness to the crime. And now, he was trapped. This realization hit me. Mr. Odewale wasn't just haunting this place. He was trying to communicate.

So one day, I summoned courage and stood before the mirror, heart pounding and I whispered, What do you want?

There was an eerie silence then the mirror darkened, his bloodied figure came out slowly. But this time, he wasn't just staring. His hand lifted, a trembling finger pointing to something behind me.

The office door was open. And on the floor, beneath the desk, something gleamed in the dim light. A knife. Rusted. Dried blood caked along the handle. My stomach twisted. This was the murder weapon. Hidden all these years.

Mr. Odewale wanted revenge. And I was the one who had to deliver it. I swallowed hard, my eyes locked on the rusted knife. My fingers trembled as I reached for it, the metal was cold against my skin.

Suddenly, a scene flickered to life on the mirror. I saw a man standing in this very office—a whiskey glass in his hand.

Then the attack. A blade flashing, plunging into flesh as Mr. Odewale struggled, his eyes wide with terror as blood splattered everywhere. His fingers clawing at the mirror as he tried to hold himself up.

The killer stepped forward. And that's when my blood ran cold. It was someone I recognized. Chief Adebayo. A respected figure in town. A man I had just signed a major deal with last week.

I was shocked. Mr Odewale's reflection stood there, watching me, his bloodied lips parting for the first time.

"Kill him." He said

The words echoed in my bones. I stumbled away from the mirror, shaking my head. No. No, I can't.

"Kill him... or you will never be free."

And if I refused...

"If you refuse, I will haunt you forever".

I was in a dilemma. I had a choice to make. And either way someone was going to die. I wanted to believe I had a choice. That I could just walk away, ignore Mr. Odewale's vengeful demands. But deep down, I knew I couldn't.

That night, I barely slept. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw him. Mr. Odewale, standing at the foot of my bed. Silent. Watching. Waiting.

The next morning, I found something that made my stomach twist into knots. A newspaper article, decades

old, slipped under my office door. It detailed Mr. Odewale's murder—how the case had gone cold, how Chief Adebayo had been questioned but never charged. The decision had been made for me, I didn't have a choice in this matter.

By nightfall, I was sitting in my car outside Chief Adebayo's mansion, the knife wrapped in a cloth on the passenger seat. My heart pounded against my ribs. "Kill him... or you will never be free." The voice echoed again. "He is inside. Go."

I grabbed the knife, my fingers tightening around the handle. This wasn't just about justice anymore. This was survival. My survival. I opened the car door. And stepped into the darkness.

The mansion's gates were surprisingly open as if inviting me inside. My legs felt heavy but something or someone kept pushing me forward. I didn't have a plan. I didn't even know if I could go through with it. The house was silent.

"He's alone, go inside."

I gripped the knife tighter and moved forward, my footsteps barely making a sound on the marble floor. Then I heard Chief Adebayo's voice. He was speaking to someone on the phone. I crept closer. The door was slightly open. I could see him now, seated at his massive desk, his back to me. The knife felt like it was breathing in my hand.

"Do it."

My fingers trembled. I took a step forward and the floor creaked under my feet. Chief Adebayo stiffened. Slowly, he turned as his gaze met mine.

"Who the hell—"

I lunged.

But I wasn't fast enough. The knife slashed through empty air. I stumbled forward.

"Are you out of your damn mind?" he screamed reaching for a gun in his drawer. But before he could grab it, the room changed. The lights flickered. The air grew thick. Then, the mirror above the fireplace exploded as the reflection of Mr. Odewale emerged from the broken fragments, his body bloodied, his face twisted in rage. Chief Adebayo's eyes went wide with fear.

"No!!" he gasped.

But it was too late. A force slammed him into the desk. Chief Adebayo clawed at his throat, gasping for air, his body lifted inches off the ground while an invisible hand

was squeezing the life out of him. His face turned pale. His eyes bulged. His feet kicked uselessly against the floor. And then with a sickening crack, his neck snapped. His body crumpled to the floor. Motionless. Lifeless. Silence followed. The room was still. The shadows retreated. And when I turned to the shattered mirror, Mr. Odewale was gone... it was over.

I exhaled sharply, my hands still trembling. Chief Adebayo's lifeless body remained on the floor. I needed to leave quickly. I wiped down the surfaces I had touched, taking careful, hurried steps out of the house. Sliding into the driver's seat, I rammed the key into the ignition with shaking hands. I reached for the gearshift, but then I heard a voice

"Going somewhere?"

The voice came from the backseat. My breath caught in my throat. Terrified, I glanced at the rearview mirror. There was someone there. A dark silhouette, barely distinguishable, sitting in the backseat.

"Who are you?" I questioned but the figure didn't move.

"You thought it ended in there right?" the voice responded

"You just involved yourself in something far bigger than you, my friend."

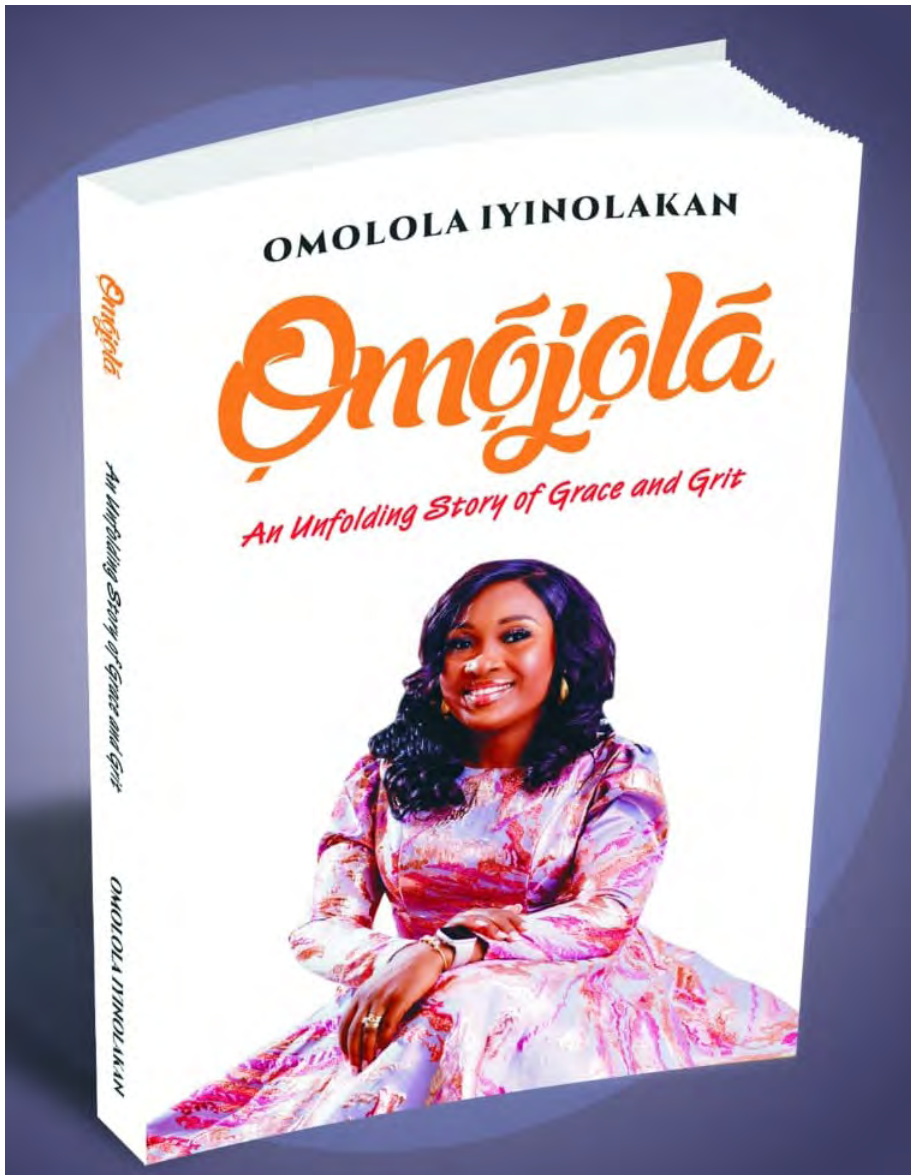
I wanted to run but I swallowed hard because I knew that there was no running from this anymore.



Udy Osaro-Edobor

Udy Osaro-Edobor is the Content Creator for SoTV (Supernatural Online TV) Nigeria. She is a movie/scriptwriter, editor, and proofreader. She has several stories to her credit which she posts for free on her Ebook called Udy's Chapter. She is currently working on two short movies. Udy is also a wife, mother, and a "serial entrepreneur".

udy1717@gmail.com



Lessons from a 45 Year Old-A Review of Omolola Iyinolakan's Omōjōlā

Title: Omōjōlā
Author: Omolola Iyinolakan
Year of Publication: 2025
Number of Pages: 168
Category: Autobiography

OMOLOLA

TITILADE OYEMADE

The beautiful face on the cover of *m j la* by Omolola Iyinolakan is sure to capture anyone's attention at first glance. But beyond the striking image lies a wealth of wisdom, experience, and heartfelt lessons waiting to be discovered.

It's remarkable to realize that the stunning woman gracing the cover is 45 years old. Yet, as you turn the pages, she shares her life with remarkable honesty, offering profound insights, especially for younger readers. From her academic journey to relationships, career, and faith, Omolola lays everything bare, inviting us into her world with an open heart.

Each chapter marks a significant milestone in her life, and as you read, you may find yourself drawn to a favorite moment or experience. Friends who have wondered what she's been up to will find plenty of insights within these pages. If you are in her age group, some moments she describes will bring nostalgic memories, and for those familiar with her journey, spotting their names in the book might bring a warm smile.

Omolola is a masterful storyteller. Her writing is so engaging that before you realize it, you've been drawn into her world. She knows exactly when to pause, allowing the reader to reflect and absorb the depth of her experiences. Though the book is filled with stories, it is more than just entertainment, it is an invitation to introspection.

Her authenticity shines through in every chapter, making her story deeply relatable. She doesn't attempt to hide her flaws or vulnerabilities; instead, she pours her heart into every page, making you feel as though she's sitting across from you, sharing her story over a warm cup of tea. You don't just read, you listen, nodding along, completely engaged in her journey. Omolola's writing style is effortlessly simple yet captivating, making it accessible even to a 10 year old. The book carries a gentle tone, which gradually transitions into a more serious one, compelling the reader to sit up and pay closer attention. A subtle yet delightful humor runs through her storytelling, adding warmth to the story and making it even more enjoyable.

At times, Omolola comes across as desperate, but it's a desperation fueled by an unrelenting drive to succeed. As you read, you can feel her energy pushing through the pages, inspiring you to rise, take action, and work toward your own goals. Yet, she doesn't keep all the glory to herself. She proudly acknowledges those who have shaped her life and doesn't hesitate to mention their names.

Though she maintains a strong willed presence throughout the book, her discussion of romance offers a softer, more engaging side. It's the kind of chapter that makes you want to curl up on a couch and savor every word. Her reflections on love, relationships, and personal growth are touching and insightful.

While she hasn't accomplished everything on her wish list, Omolola's gratitude and determination shine through. Her story is a reminder that success isn't just about reaching the finish line, it's about appreciating the journey and embracing every lesson along the way. Her resilience and perseverance make this an essential read for young people navigating their own paths.

This book is a powerful reminder that everyone has a story to tell, no matter their age. And perhaps the most profound lesson is that stories are meant to be shared, because somewhere, someone might be desperately waiting to hear them. So, what are you waiting for? It's time to tell your own story.

Titilade Oyemade

Titilade Oyemade is a business executive in a leading organisation and holds a degree in Russian Language. She's the convener of the Hangoutwithtee Ladies Event and the publisher of Hangoutwithtee magazine.

She spends her weekends attending women conferences, events and book readings. She loves to have fun and to help other women have the same in their lives.

Email: titi.oyemade@gmail.com
Social: [@tiipreeofficial](https://www.instagram.com/tiipreeofficial)



WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEWS

BABY FARM (2025)

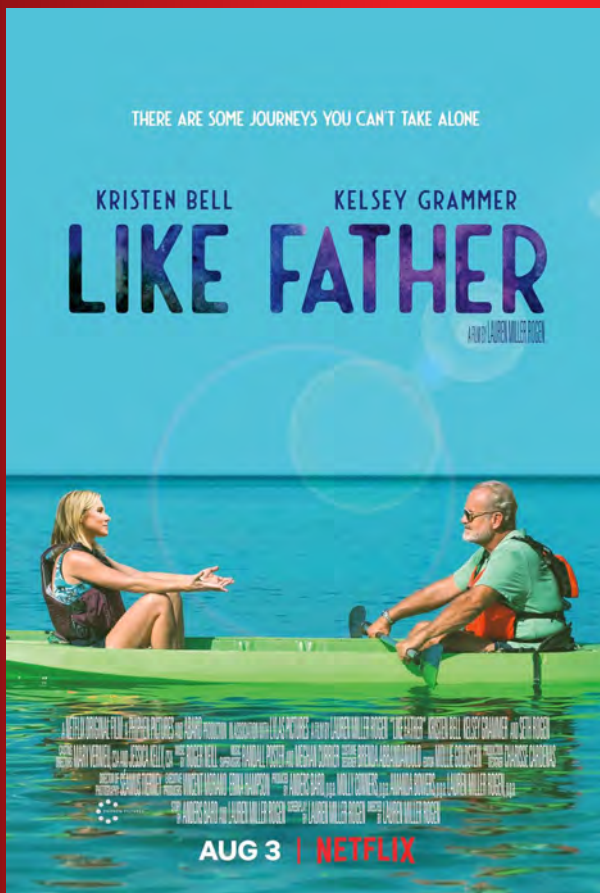
Although I am not a great fan of series, after much persuasion I finally made out time to see this limited series on Netflix, this Nollywood movie, revealed a lot about some illegal baby harvesting that was secretly going on. So, to the movie there was a very young lady called actually thought she was in love with her young boy friend Obinna, when she found out she was pregnant, it became very clear to her that they were not in love, when she found out, that he had relocated to Lagos, she decided to travel and go search for him, so that they could start life together. She couldn't take the shame and insult from her family and wanted to start afresh. When she arrived in Lagos, she couldn't find him, this was when her misery started. A friend introduced her to a big foundation, who would take care of her and her baby, little did she know that she was just about to enter a trap for life with no exit plan. Adama became a pain in the system constantly seeking a way out, she was bent on leaving with her baby and there was no way out, as her baby had already been sold. You will need to go check out this movie to find out if she made it out and with her baby, a very interesting one I must say. The 5 episodes series of about 35mins each drama, Nollywood, crime movie was directed by Walter Walterbanger Taylaur and Kayode Kasum and they featured Rita Dominic, Joseph Benjamin, Onyinye Odokoro, Geneveva Umeh, Langley Kirkwood, Jenny Stead, Folu Storms, Kiki Omeli, Tope Tadele etc.



Netflix and Chill

SLEEP OVER (2020)

Margot was a sweet perfect mom, that always thought her kids the right things, on one day as she volunteered in their school, a video that was created by some kids, it went on YouTube and went viral, that was how she was discovered by a group of bad guys she had worked with in her early days. One evening she was picked up from home along side her husband to accompany them on the last mission. Her kids will have to work together to read all the clues and signs to help safe their parents from the hands of the bad guys. You will need to check out this movie to discover how one simple night became total night mare and misery, it was a simple family movie, you can check this out if this is your kind of movie. The 103m family films, kids & family, comedies, mystery films, action, mild violence was directed by Trish Sie, they featured actors like Sadie Stanley, Maxwell Simkins, Ken Marino, Malin akerman, Cree Cicchino, Lucas Jaye, Karla Souza, Erik Griffin and many more.



LIKE FATHER (2018)

Rachael was a very vibrant, intelligent, smart and hard working lady, she was always working and constantly always on her phone, her finance had made this issue know to her on so many occasions, but she never listened, until he called off the wedding at the altar, when he found out she brought the phone and work with her to their wedding. That was absolutely devastating for her and she had no clue where to start from, unfortunately she will have to go on the romantic honeymoon cruise with her estranged dad who she never saw since she was seven. Well you will need to check out this movie to see how they managed the week together, is she was able to learn and if she changed her terrible phone habits, it was a simple nice movie to watch. The 98m drama, comedy movie was directed by Lauren Miller Rogen, they featured actors like Leonard Ouzts, Kristen Bell, Kelsey Grammer, Seth Rogen, Paul W. Down, Zach Appleman, Brett Gelman e.t.c.



Linda Ochugbua

WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Being present is easy when you understand that we live in time
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Being sincere is easy when you understand there is a God who sees and knows everything
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Being impactful is easy when you understand the reason you got knowledge is so you can share
..... WhispersbyTEN

4

Being joyful is easy when you understand privileges
..... WhispersbyTEN