

BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

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PARENTING

Roots before wings:
Building strong
foundations through
involved parenting



INTERVIEW

Mother-Daughter
Bond: Blessing Amidu
and Emmanuella's
Animation Adventure

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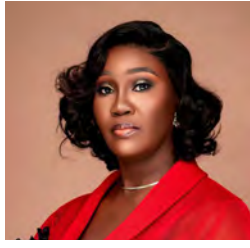
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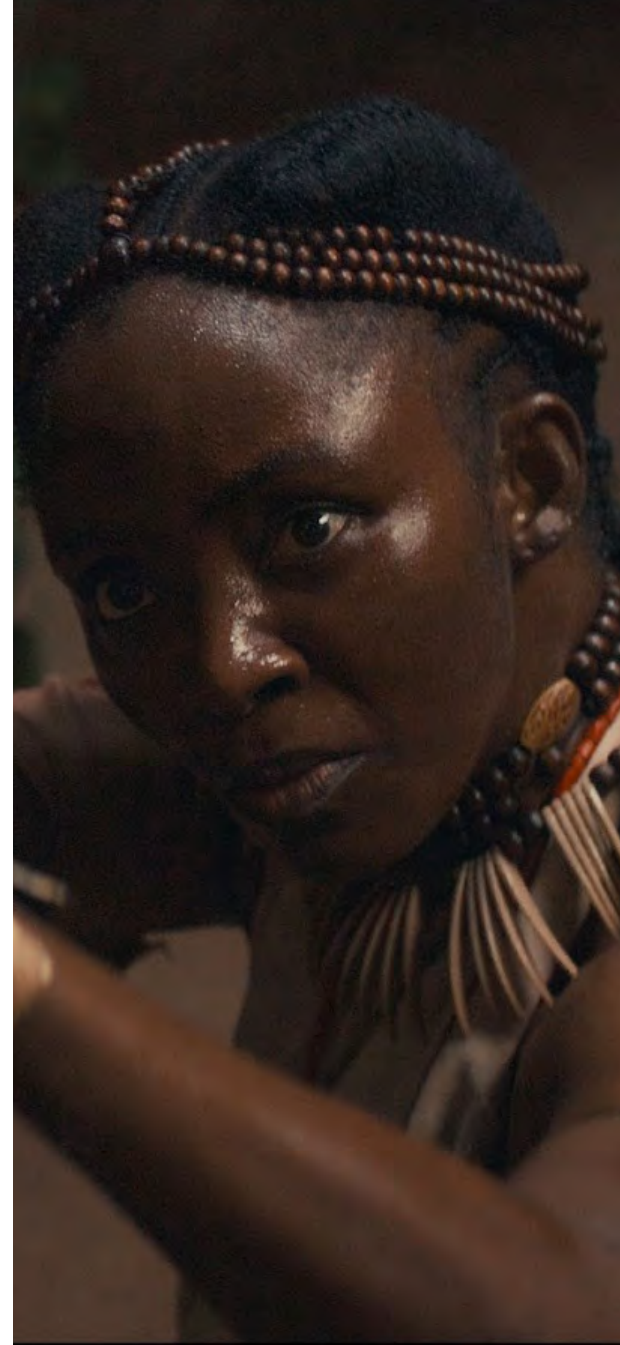
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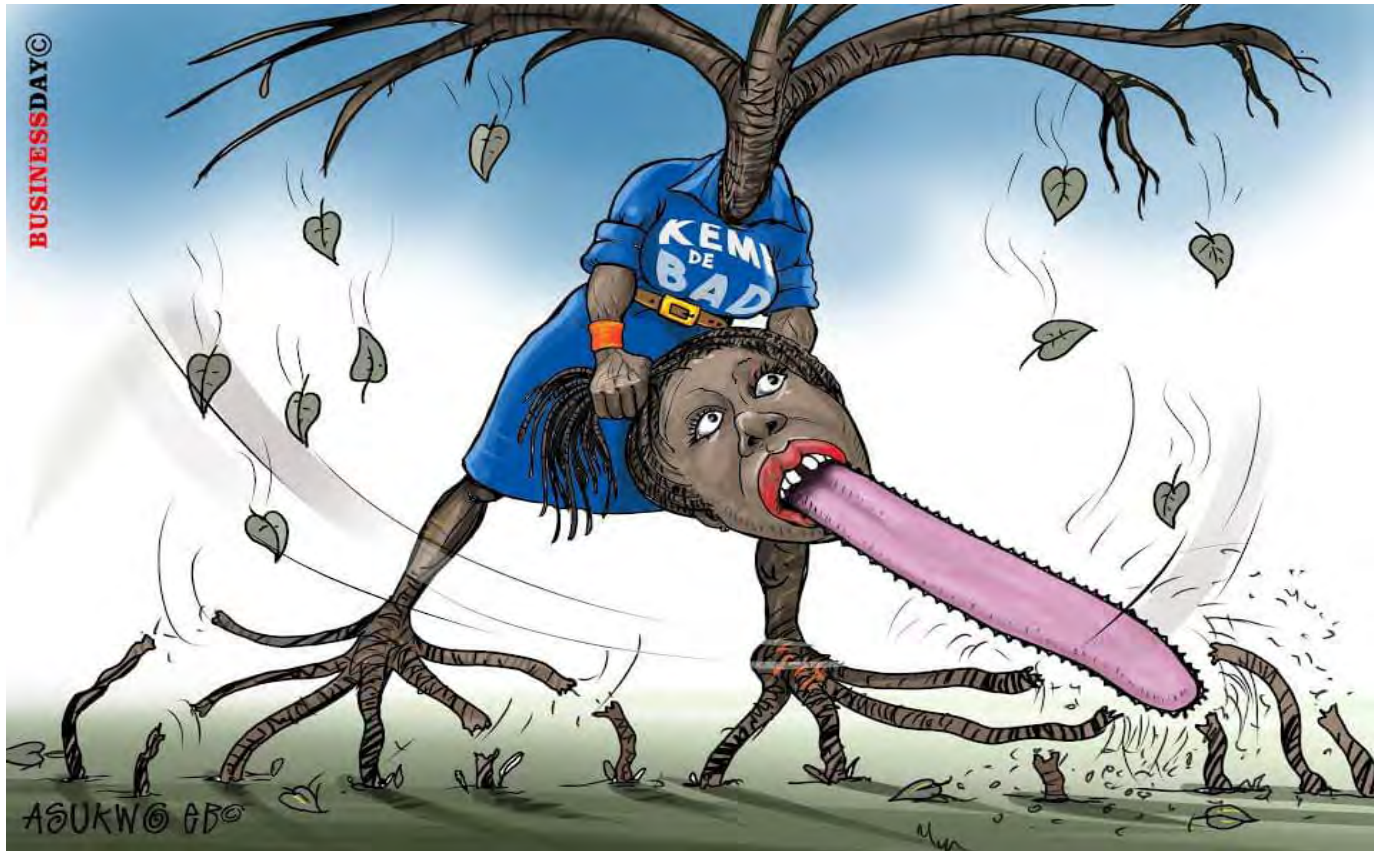




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THE STRUGGLE FOR NORTHERN VOTES, 2027



QUEENS OF AFRICA: CELEBRATING SUPER FALCONS' HISTORIC 10TH WAFCON CROWN

ANTHONY NLEBEM



When the 2025 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) kicked off in Morocco on July 5, few gave Nigeria's Super Falcons a real shot at glory. Doubts lingered over their squad depth, recent performances, and ability to bounce back from their 2022 heartbreak. But as the dust settled weeks later, the Super Falcons clinched a record-extending 10th WAFCON title and reasserted their supremacy in African women's football.

This year's edition, hosted in Morocco for a second consecutive time, featured 12 teams divided into three groups. The top two from each group, along with the two best third-placed teams, progressed to the quarterfinals. For Nigeria, the mission was simple: reclaim the title lost to South Africa's Banyana Banyana in 2022.

Rocky start in Group B

Drawn in Group B alongside Tunisia, Botswana, and Algeria, the Super Falcons faced a mix of familiar foes and rising

challengers. Their campaign began brightly with a 3–0 victory over Tunisia in Casablanca, courtesy of goals from Asisat Oshoala, Rinsola Babajide, and Chinwendu Ihezuo.

Despite the strong start, criticism resurfaced after a narrow 1–0 win against a low-rated Botswana, secured by Ihezuo's late strike. The team's final group game, a goalless draw with Algeria, fuelled further concerns, though the result was enough to see Nigeria top the group with seven points, four goals scored, and none conceded.

Quarterfinal statement: Falcons crush Zambia

Facing a formidable Zambian side in the quarter-finals, the Super Falcons delivered a resounding statement. Goals from Osinachi Ohale, Esther Okoronkwo, Chinwendu Ihezuo, Oluwatosin Demehin, and Florence Ijamilusi powered them to a stunning 5–0 win.



The dominant display shocked many across the continent, particularly as Zambia had been unbeaten heading into the clash. Nigeria's pace, precision, and ruthless finishing overwhelmed the Copper Queens.

Sweet revenge over South Africa

In the semi-finals, the Falcons secured a 2-1 victory against arch-rivals South Africa. It was a rematch of the 2022 final, and Nigeria were out for revenge. Captain Rasheedat Ajibade opened the scoring, but Banyana

Banyana equalised through Linda Motlhalo. As the match edged towards extra time, Michelle Alozie's late cross evaded everyone, including the goalkeeper, and nestled into the net in the 94th minute, sending Nigeria into the final.

Falcons conquer Morocco

Against hosts Morocco in Rabat, Nigeria faced adversity early, falling 2-0 behind within 25 minutes. Yet, in classic Super Falcons fashion, they refused to quit.



Esther Okoronkwo converted a penalty after the break, and Folashade Ijamilusi's equaliser levelled the tie. Then, in the 88th minute, Jennifer Echegini delivered the killer blow, slotting home the dramatic winner to complete an epic 3–2 comeback and silence the home crowd.

The victory not only avenged their painful 2022 semi-final exit to Morocco on penalties but also underscored the team's grit, heart, and unyielding spirit.

National honours and rewards

In recognition of their historic achievement, President Bola Tinubu hosted the Super Falcons at the Presidential Villa in Abuja. He conferred national honours, Officer of the Order of the Niger (OON), on all 24 players and members of the technical crew.

Additionally, each player received a \$100,000 reward (over N153 million), while technical crew members received \$50,000

(over N76 million). All recipients were also gifted a three-bedroom apartment in Abuja's Renewed Hope Housing Estate.

The Nigerian Governors' Forum joined in, awarding N10 million to each player in further appreciation of their efforts.

CAF recognition and continental dominance

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) on Monday announced the WAFCON 2025 Best XI, with four Super Falcons stars earning deserved places: goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, defender Michelle Alozie, midfielder Rasheedat Ajibade, and forward Esther Okoronkwo.

Nigeria's 10th WAFCON triumph not only extended their unparalleled legacy but also sent a clear message to the rest of the continent: the Super Falcons remain the undisputed queens of African football, regardless of the rising competition.

ROOTS BEFORE WINGS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS THROUGH INVOLVED PARENTING

...A lesson in growth that endures

CHARLES OGWO



In a world that often emphasises independence and achievement, it's easy to forget that a child's greatest strength lies not in how far they can fly, but in how deeply they are rooted.

According to Jessica Osuere, the chief executive officer at RubiesHub Educational Services, and one of the facilitators at Rubies Webinar, "Roots before wings: Building strong foundations through involved parenting" is a call to refocus on what truly matters, the steady presence, guidance, and emotional support that shape resilient, confident children."

Osuere emphasised that before children should begin to soar, they need to feel grounded. This journey, she said, begins at home, with parents who must choose to be present, engaged, and intentional.

"We live in a time where the world is eager to see children fly so quickly, brilliantly, and visibly. "From their earliest years, they are enrolled in advanced classes, coached to compete, and pushed toward high achievement. Society celebrates wings: the ability to soar, to dazzle, and succeed; but what happens when wings grow faster than roots?" she queries.

Speaking more on the webinar slated for August 16, she said, "The phrase "roots before wings" is a gentle reminder of a forgotten truth; that the strength to fly comes not just from the wings we build, but from the grounding we provide.

"Roots represent the unseen but essential: values, identity, resilience, emotional intelligence, cultural belonging, and faith. They are the principles and



“When a tree grows tall without deep roots, the first strong wind can bring it crashing down. The same is true for a child who has been taught how to perform, but not how to stand.

“A child given wings but no roots may chase every opportunity, but struggle with purpose. Such a child may have the tools to succeed, but not the inner strength to navigate failure or the character to handle power,” they say.

“Human parenting, experts argue, is a life-long journey. “It is something parents must do intentionally. Parents must have to be intentional, it’s a joyous task.

“To raise a whole child requires to first give such a child deep, nourishing, and steady roots. Then, in time, he/she will grow wings strong enough to soar and wise enough to know where home is,” they say.

This, according to the organisers of “Roots Before Wings”, is the true calling of parenting, teaching, and mentorship: not just to raise achievers, but to nurture grounded, thoughtful, compassionate humans who can thrive, not just survive, in the world ahead.

support systems that anchor a child in who they are, long before they take flight into the world,” she emphasised.

The virtual conference which will feature Olajide Komaiya, an EdTech educator and IT administrator, and Cecilia Adaja, a passionate educator, researcher and author, among others, is tailored to expose participants to the fact that a child like a tree can grow tall without deep roots, which experts say is dangerous to building a total child.

A portrait of Blessing Amidu, a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a red mesh jacket over a black top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOND: BLESSING AMIDU AND EMMANUELLA'S ANIMATION ADVENTURE

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



The entertainment industry is no stranger to family ties, but the collaboration between Blessing Amidu and her daughter Emmanuella on the upcoming animation series “Secrets of the Multiverse” is a truly remarkable story.

As a seasoned producer with a background in geology and over two decades of experience in Nigeria’s oil and gas industry, Blessing has made a historic leap in Nigerian cinema with her award-winning animated film “Lady Buckit & the Motley Mopsters.” Now, she’s teaming up with her talented daughter Emmanuella, a final-year student at Carleton University, Canada, pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Economics, to create something entirely new and exciting.

This mother-daughter duo is breaking barriers and pushing boundaries in the entertainment industry, showcasing the power of family bonds and mentorship. By working together on “Secrets of the Multiverse,” Blessing and Emmanuella are not only creating a unique and captivating story but also paving the way for future generations of young creatives. Their collaboration is a testament to the impact that parental guidance and support can have on a child’s development and success.

As a mother-daughter team, Blessing and Emmanuella bring a unique perspective to the table, blending experience and youthful energy to create something truly innovative. Their partnership is a shining example of how students can leverage the expertise of their parents to achieve great things, and how family ties can be a source of strength and inspiration in the entertainment industry.

With “Secrets of the Multiverse,” Blessing and Emmanuella are set to make a significant impact on the animation

industry, showcasing Nigerian talent and creativity to a global audience. Their collaboration is a pace-setter for the industry, demonstrating the potential for intergenerational partnerships and the importance of nurturing young talent. As we look forward to the release of “Secrets of the Multiverse,” we can’t help but feel excited about the possibilities that this mother-daughter duo will unlock.

It’s interesting to know that this is not the first time she has been working with her daughters. Her other daughter inspired the first animation, Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters.

In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, Blessing Amidu and Emmanuella speak on what necessitated the decision to produce the ‘Secrets of the Multiverse’ and the impact these series will have on young African audiences, especially girls.

What is your upcoming project, ‘Secrets of the Multiverse,’ all about?

Blessing Amidu

The ‘Secrets Of The Multiverse’ (SOTM) is a spin-off of ‘Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters’ (LBMM), which is the original title from 2020. This particular story is about leadership and all the sides to it, depending on how one wants to look at it in different situations. It can be mostly fear, a threat to life, maybe scarcity and aggravation. It basically looks at how far a leader is willing to go to protect his people and the choices that may stare him in the face. The series also explores the reasons behind the actions of leaders of society, basically the length a leader would go – and in this case, it is a futuristic world – to protect his people. It also weighs on the morality of these people; their actions, their choices, and the benefits of their citizens. And then it also bears to play critical thinking to determine the value of life and the extent of morality necessary to justify a wrong. Is it good to commit a crime as long as you know it benefits your people? Is that said crime justifiable? Is it unpunishable? So that’s pretty much a summary of what ‘Secrets of a Multiverse’ is all about.

You said earlier in your introduction that you consume a lot of story content, and you like to read a lot of stories and watch a lot of movies, and that goes into content creation. So how come you chose to have your niche in the stories of animation, not necessarily regular feature films? Why did you choose animation as your niche?

Blessing Amidu

That’s fine. I know I answered this question several times five years ago. Animation was just a genre I fell in love with, especially because I spent a lot of time with my kids watching cartoons during their growing-up years. And I was enticed or influenced by the characters on TV. And I could see that we didn’t really have African stories to showcase in Nigeria.

So that was how animation came to be. I started thinking, brooding over it. And then, just like a light bulb, we realised that there's no feature-length film in Nigeria, so we started from there with LBMM. My first daughter, who's a film studies graduate, just began to sketch those characters. She's quite artistic. By the time we slept in through the night and woke up the next morning, we had names for the first five characters. So that's how you know this whole thing started. I love animation so much. Who knows? Like I often say, I may branch off into the regular live-action someday. So I'm not just limiting myself, but right now, this is where we have started, and this is where we are.

What necessitated the decision to produce your daughter's story?

Blessing Amidu

First of all, after the premiere of LBMM, we knew we were going to have a sequel to that movie; we hadn't just found the right story. And I began looking for writers, talking to writers to get us a story. And the feelers I was getting, apart from the fact that it was quite expensive, I wasn't getting what I thought would be a good story. One of the things that set me off, actually, was when somebody told me that to write an episode of an animated series would be about \$3,000 per episode. This was about three years ago. I was shocked. I began to look inwards. I could write it, but I've been quite busy. I know my daughter writes stories, short stories.

Actually, I stumbled on my daughter's talents. I had asked her to write a few short stories, and as God would have it, one of the short stories she wrote added so much potential for expansion that I just asked her to write six episodes. The first episode she wrote was something else. It kind of blew me out of my mind. I sent that episode to Adebisi Adetayo, who was the director for LBMM in 2020 and who's also the current director for SOTM. Adebisi was surprised, and he asked me if this was AI, and I was like 'What do you mean?' He was really surprised, and then he asked my daughter to write another episode, which she did. To tell you how unserious I was about it, I made her use a free version of the writing software. Just write, and let's see how it goes. She wrote the first episode, the second episode. I couldn't comprehend. Adebisi himself was so surprised. We figured that this (her daughter's story) could really work. The more she wrote, the more blown away we were, and our confidence grew. After that, the rest is history.

Like I mentioned earlier, she already had some short stories which are yet unpublished. We're going to publish them quite shortly. I'm just so grateful to God. I asked her to increase the number of episodes to 13, and she did, effortlessly, too, I might add. Being creative just flows so easily out of her. I'm grateful to God that I have a daughter. I have a daughter like her. So, whose story would I publish or produce other than my daughter's? It has so much potential to do well in a market, and you will be so surprised at the depth of the story. For someone of her age, you'll be so surprised at the depth of the story. All the people I gave the story to read came back with the same feedback. I was sure, definitely sure, that this was something we could produce, and I could beat my chest for it.





Emmanuella, what inspired this story, and how was the creative process?

Emmanuella

I just wanted something different. I wanted something new. I wanted something that kids wouldn't be able to forget about, something that would blow their minds away, something that would go viral. Touch the hearts of children all over the world, and not just children, but also adults. Because let's be honest, adults watch our shows, and they enjoy them way more than their own shows. So I like to write from my heart. I like to write things that I've experienced in my life. I like writing about friendship, about love, about leadership, about strength and courage. So those are just some of the things that really inspired the story.

How was it balancing writing the screenplay and your studies?

Emmanuella

It was a lot, honestly. In university, there are lots of assignments, lots of tests, lots of exams. There were so many times when I had to put the script down and focus on school, because schooling abroad is expensive. It's much easier to focus on that. I always have time to come back to

the script, which is why it also took so long. So a lot of times I had to put it on the back burner. It was a lot, but I persevered because this is something I'm really passionate about. I like writing. I like telling my stories. I like connecting with people. I like it when people are blown away, when people are really interested in my work.

What impact do you hope this series will have on young African audiences, especially girls?

Blessing Amidu

The aim of this project, actually, is to remind teenagers and young adults that they can go on to do or to achieve anything they set their minds to. You will always achieve more with a little bit more determination and resilience. For the girl child, I think we need to focus a lot more on the girl child. Although this animation is not particularly about the girl child, per se, our protagonist is a girl.

SOTM will show them that they can do a lot more than they have set their minds to achieve, and also, with collaboration and relationships, with teamwork, they can always exceed their limits. So that's the impact I think this should have on young audiences.

I understand that you're working with a Nigerian director, Adebisi Adetayo and a Hollywood director, Robert Sledge. What inspired your decision to work with both Nigerian and international talents on this project, and what is the creative synergy like behind the scenes?

Blessing Amidu

I think collaboration is the way to go. It is about forging relationships and partnerships and expanding new frontiers, and getting to do more than plan. When you work together in partnerships, relationships or collaborations, it often tends to take you farther than expected. You tend to achieve much more than if you had journeyed alone originally. So I see it as an opportunity for both sides to learn from each other; knowledge sharing, technology sharing, so the creative synergy overflows easily.

We're already in pre-production, so we've already had the opportunity to share ideas, to exchange knowledge, so there's really an overflow, and we're working quite well. It's actually a win for everybody. We're learning from each other. They're learning from us while we're learning from them. And we hope that SOTM will go global. That's the intention: to go beyond our limits, to push beyond the continents, go global and gain new ground.

Emmanuella, as an African woman studying abroad, how important is it for you to tell stories that are rooted in African history or identity? And also, is writing stories what you want to do full-time, maybe after school, and what other stories should we be expecting?

Emmanuella

When children move abroad or people my age move abroad for a little while, it's easy to lose that connection with yourself, with your family, with your culture. So that's part of the reason I wrote 'Secrets of the Multiverse.' It was to remind me of who I am back home, all the things I've experienced, all the things I've learned, and it's also for people my age, both men and women, to remember what makes us proud Africans. And yes, definitely, I plan to be a writer full-time. It's my passion. I love it more than anything. If I get to do it for the rest of my life, I will honestly be so grateful.

I'd like to know your thoughts on the future of animation in Nigeria, and how your new series, 'Secrets of the Multiverse,' fits into that landscape?

Blessing Amidu

So before 2020, when we had 'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters,' we had shorts, a few minutes of animation here and there. Nobody had really come out to do something that big. Quite frankly, we had a lot of issues in the industry. From technical challenges to funding, to the right kinds of persons on board for the project and of course, the environment. Was the Nigerian environment ready for animation? For foreign animation, we probably were. But prior to that time, we weren't sure if Nigerians could produce something of great quality, such as we did with LBMM. So I would say that animation has come a long way. It's still growing. It's still a growing industry. It's still a green space. But if you want to check from 2020 up until now, we've had a few more releases. We've had 'Iwaju' and 'Mikolo.' So the industry is growing, and it's growing at a fast pace as well.

Another area where I think that something could be done is funding. The Creative Fund has been raised to cater for the industry as well, but you discover that it's not so easy to access. So animation has come a long way. It's still going to get better. It's going to go larger in the next five years, even before five years, and especially with the release of SOTM, I dare to say, by 2026 when we are going to release, the first six episodes of SOTM, you will know that the Nigerian animation space, has come to bear, you know, has come to maturity. Because I dare tell you that this script is explosive up to the extent that we have Robert Sledge from Hollywood. I mean, he has a lot of confidence. If they didn't think it was a good script, they wouldn't come on board. A lot of things are going to happen when we release these first six episodes next year. It's going to take the whole animation space by storm.



From a tech point of view, so animation across the world is going at lightning speed. We're having animation in 7D, shot or produced in 8k resolution and all of that. I just want to know the production quality and aspects of technology advancements deployed to make this particular production fit global standards.

The quality for LBMM was 4k resolution at a time when a lot of studios were not producing in 4k. Even Disney didn't release most of their animations in 4k at the time. Disney saw the production, and they testified yes via email that it was of good quality. So 4k is still a very good quality. Not all productions have been produced in 4k; you still have them in 2k and less. We're still going to do 4k again with SOTM. 4k is good; it's standard, and marketable. We're not going to go below 4k.

You mentioned earlier that animation is very big in Nigeria, but do we have a big pool of talent who work behind the scenes?

Blessing Amidu

Oh, believe me, we have so much talent in the animation industry. I can even speak right from 32AD animation studio to Magic Carpet to Spoof Animation. I've interacted with these guys, and I know there's a bundle of talent. We just



need to be heard. We just need the government to do more for our industry to make it easy for people, for us to express ourselves. I know a lot of people who have come to me in the animation space, and why they haven't come out is because of funding. But I can tell you that there's a lot of talent in the industry. And it's growing; before you know it, we're going to have studios coming from outside the country, or rather, companies from outside the country coming here to produce their own stories.

So funding is still a major challenge for the animation industry, right?

Blessing Amidu

Funding is still a challenge, except you're going to get the grants. Otherwise, you still need to meet the minimum requirements to raise funding for animation. Even with the Bank of Industry (BOI), you still need to meet a certain requirement to get the funding. Animation is very expensive when compared to regular live action. So you go to a bank like BOI, and they tell you that they are going to make the funds available but first you need a local commercial to send

them a letter of intent, and then that local bank, we need you to have maybe a cashback guarantee to access that funding from BOI, because they need to collateralize, you know, collateralize it. That's just the way it works. So, how many people can actually meet up to those standards?

It's a problem because I know we have lots of talents, and people can't just find a way to express themselves, because funding is a major challenge.

In what particular way do you want the government to help your industry?

Blessing Amidu

Well, for instance, I know the government has been doing a lot quite recently. You hear a lot of announcements in the media, and when certain persons go there to try to access this funding, it's either that the websites are not working, or you have to fill out those forms, and then they never get back to you, or something of the sort. I think they need to try to make it a lot easier for people to access these funds. We don't really have investment banking, or rather, investment banks in Nigeria that would want to put their weight behind the industry. It's not the same thing outside the country. We have people, organisations that could do these things very easily. Of course, I'm not. I'm not trying to compare both societies. But I feel the government should do more; go to the grassroots, call the creatives together. I know they've done that to an extent. But animation, for instance, needs special attention. I know there's the creative fund for movies, for the creative industry, but usually the other guys tend to access it a lot easier because the funding requirements are probably not as much as you require, for animation. That's just the way it is. And of course, they tend to think that they haven't seen the profitability or viability of the industry. Perhaps, when they begin to see it, then maybe they'll give animation a lot of backing.

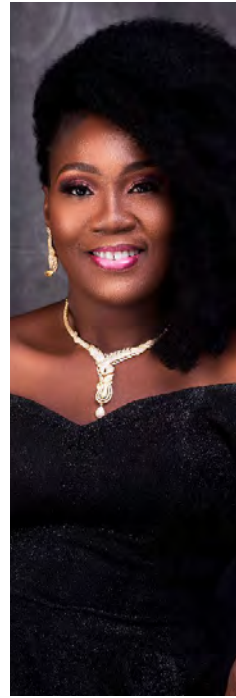
Can you give us a rough estimation of an animation budget?

Blessing Amidu

It will depend on the inputs. First of all, no two animated movies are the same, and this automatically translates to the budget.

Differences would come from criticalities such as production length, number and quality of cast, quality of technical crew, types of software for modelling, the story environments, special effects, and a lot more.

Animation could range from anywhere between maybe N500 million and above, depending on what you're putting in it or what you want to put in there. And when I say N500 million, that's a small budget. Outside of the country, animation can cost as much as \$10 million, \$20 million, or even \$1 billion. We know the budget that Disney brings to play in their animation movies, you know. You can also have animation for \$3 million to \$5 million.



Apart from funding, are there other challenges you faced in creating a project of this scale?

Blessing Amidu

I can only speak for myself. The main challenge I encountered initially for LBMM was the funding and the right kind of technical crew, because nobody felt they could get it done. I approached a lot of studios in Nigeria and abroad. Even the ones in Nigeria were asking me to go to Morocco, but I felt we could get it done, until Adebisi came along and we gave him a test, a proof of concept, and he passed with flying colours. We knew then that there were talents because I'd gone to every nook and cranny, and it wasn't looking like we were going to make headway. I'd spent money, about \$40,000, and not made headway until Adebisi came along. So animation is getting to that stage where we must be noticed. It's difficult not to notice us. That's where we are right now, especially with what SOTM is about to do. I can tell you that we're about to break barriers. That's what's going to happen with this story. I'm not saying it because it's Emmanuella's story. No, not at all. I will do it. I will do the same thing if it's another writer's story. The story is amazing. And we ask God for His help to help us interpret it properly.

How profitable is animation in Nigeria?

Blessing Amidu

Most of the things that certain persons have done are to use animation for, maybe advertisements, all those sorts of things, short stories. A major challenge has been a medium for distribution. With a good medium for distribution, will come good quality. You have to have good content quality, because Netflix, for instance, has a minimum quality for animation. LBMM far exceeded that criteria, and that was

why we could feature LBMM on Netflix. So a lot of people have produced stuff. They still have them in their studio, and they can't release them. There's a problem. They don't know where to sell it, who's ready to buy, or who's ready to pay for it. So it's a problem. If we had more access to distribution channels, which could really help. It's something we need to invest in, the distribution angle, and with distribution gradually, our stories will go global. Without access to distribution, you don't have good profitability. I have seen studios that sell to some small platforms, and they pay them peanuts. So it's still something that we need to look at. Other than that, we know the big platforms are Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Disney+ channels. Those are the major players. And if you can get on board the major players, if they are willing to pay good money for it, then it's viable.

And another thing is the bias that they have against the kind of productions that come out of Africa. Sorry to say this, but I think the way they look at an animation production that is coming out of Nigeria is different. It's coming out of Africa, so they don't pay much attention to it.

Distribution is key. We need to work on distribution a lot more, then there'll be viability and profitability. People can tell their stories, they can sell their scripts, and they can bring in more foreign exchange. It's easy to put your live-action movies on YouTube, but it's not always the same for animation. So, distribution for animated content needs to be looked into.

What distribution platform will SOTM be on?

Blessing Amidu

SOTM is a series. It's a 13-episode animated series. It's going straight to streaming platforms.

HOW IDEMUDIA ORIAKHI USES TECHNOLOGY TO SCALE BEAUTY AND PROPERTY VENTURES

CHISOM MICHAEL





Visuals

Idemudia "Ideas" Oriakhi, Founder and CEO of Saluni and Ideas Immovables, is a tech-savvy entrepreneur reshaping Africa's beauty and real estate landscapes. With a strong foundation in cloud computing and multiple AWS certifications, Oriakhi combines deep technical insight with creative problem-solving to build scalable platforms that meet everyday needs.

Through Saluni, he connects beauty professionals to customers via a mobile-first platform, helping African beautypreneurs grow their clientele and digital presence. Meanwhile, Ideas Immovables is redefining real estate by merging architectural innovation with efficient living and working spaces.

In this exclusive interview with Chisom Michael, Idemudia shares his approach to building across two seemingly unrelated sectors, how he evaluates technology's role in business, and his belief in African-led models for sustainable development.

You lead two companies in very different industries. How do you identify patterns or shared principles between property development and beauty technology?

At first glance, real estate and beauty tech seem worlds apart. But they're both grounded in access. Access to quality housing or to verified beauty services. Both industries thrive when you remove friction and add trust.

I look for patterns in human behavior: how people discover, evaluate, and engage with services. Then I build around those patterns. Another shared principle is infrastructure. In real estate, it's physical. In beauty, it's digital. But the goal is the same, to create systems that empower providers and serve users at scale.

Both ventures rely heavily on technology. How do you decide which innovations are worth adopting versus which are distractions?

I evaluate innovation using three filters: relevance to user pain points, scalability, and alignment with our mission.

A tool may be exciting, but if it doesn't move the needle for our users or make us more efficient, it's a distraction. We don't chase shiny objects, we solve real problems better, faster, or cheaper. That discipline keeps us focused.

What role should African businesses play in redefining global standards in traditionally Western-dominated sectors? Africa shouldn't be trying to catch up, we should leap forward with models that reflect our own realities. We have unique market dynamics: informal economies, communal networks, decentralised systems.

When African businesses innovate within this context, we create solutions that are often more flexible and sustainable than imported models. Our role is to lead with context, not copy without questioning.

How do you balance profitability with social value in ventures meant to serve diverse communities?

For me, profit and social value aren't opposites, they're intertwined. The more accessible and inclusive our platforms are, the more people they serve, and the stronger the business becomes.

Take beauty vendors, for example. Helping informal stylists get online isn't just good for the community, it's good for business. We win when our users win. So we design with empathy, scale with integrity, and measure success beyond revenue.

Technology often moves faster than regulation. How do you manage ethical or structural gaps?

We stay proactive. Internally, we build safeguards: transparent pricing, clear data policies, user protections. Externally, we engage with regulators early.

You can't wait for the rules to catch up. You have to help shape them. And ethically, we ask: Does this solution empower or exploit? If it's the latter, we shut it down.

When looking at both urban development and beauty access, where do you see the bigger opportunity for employment and wealth creation in Africa?

Both are powerful. Urban development creates long-term assets and jobs in construction and services. Beauty tech, on the other hand, creates fast, low-barrier income opportunities, especially for women and youth.

The bigger opportunity lies in linking both: building urban spaces that support informal trades and equipping them with digital infrastructure. That's how you create inclusive, scalable impact.

How do you personally stay grounded while leading two high-demand companies?

I stay grounded on purpose. Whether I'm on a building site or in a product sprint, I remind myself why I'm doing this: to give people more control over their lives.

I also stay close to the users. A conversation with a stylist on Saluni or a first-time homebuyer at Ideas Immovables keeps me more focused than any KPI. And I protect my quiet time—that's when the real clarity comes.

What are the risks of relying too much on tech to fix structural problems?

The biggest risk is assuming tech is the solution. It's not. Technology amplifies what already exists. If the foundation is broken, tech just breaks it faster.

In real estate, for example, if land processes are corrupt, digitising listings won't solve the core issue. In beauty, if there's no training or standardisation, apps won't guarantee good service. So we combine tech with ecosystem thinking: partnerships, offline infrastructure, and capacity building.

Most entrepreneurs stick to one venture. How do you ensure diversification is a strength, not a distraction?

Diversification works when the ventures feed each other, either through shared insights or infrastructure.

For me, it's intentional. I didn't go into beauty tech because it was trendy. I saw a trust gap in service delivery, just like in real estate. I also built a team structure that allows each business to operate independently but under a shared vision.

If you could change one mindset among African investors or policymakers to accelerate growth, what would it be? I'd shift from risk aversion to calculated experimentation. Too often, we wait for certainty before supporting innovation. But game-changing businesses are built in uncertainty.

If policymakers and investors saw startups as labs for national solutions, not just vehicles for ROI, we'd unlock more creativity, more jobs, and more impact.



TONIA ODILI: NIGERIAN THERAPIST BRIDGING MENTAL HEALTH AND GLOBAL WELLNESS

ANTHONY NLEBEM



In today’s increasingly complex world, mental health has emerged as one of the most urgent public health issues. In Nigeria, the crisis is especially pronounced, with an estimated 60 million people living with some form of mental illness, yet only a small fraction receive adequate care due to a severe shortage of trained professionals, stigma, poor infrastructure, and lack of public awareness.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mental health is “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and

contribute to their community.” Yet, for millions of Nigerians, this definition remains an aspiration rather than a reality.

A New Voice for Mental Wellness: Tonia Odili
Among those driving meaningful change in the mental health space is Obiajurum Anthonia “Tonia” Odili, a Nigerian-born, U.S.-based Licensed Professional Counsellor Associate (LPC-A), whose cross-continental efforts are redefining how mental health is perceived and accessed, especially in underserved communities.

Tonia's work blends clinical expertise, cultural sensitivity, and a deep passion for healing, making her a standout figure in the global mental wellness movement.

From Youth Empowerment to Mental Health Advocacy

Before entering the clinical space, Tonia founded SM Jury Nigeria, a youth-focused empowerment platform that connected aspiring entrepreneurs with global mentors, investors, and resources. What began as a business mentorship hub quickly evolved into something more profound, a space where emotional struggles, identity crises, and burnout surfaced as recurring themes.

Through one-on-one coaching, Tonia discovered that many of these young Nigerians were not just seeking business advice; they needed someone to listen, support, and understand them emotionally. This realisation marked a turning point and planted the seed for her shift toward mental health advocacy.

Clinical Practice in the U.S., With a Heart in Nigeria
Tonia relocated to the United States to pursue a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counselling and has since worked across private clinics, psychiatric hospitals, and community centres. She provides therapy for individuals navigating trauma, grief, anxiety, emotional instability, and major life transitions.

A certified Play Therapist and Gottman Method Couples Counselor (Level 1), Tonia has been widely recognised for her client-centred care, warmth, and cultural competence, qualities that have helped stabilise clients in crisis and offer long-term healing.

Project H.O.P.E.: Healing Beyond Therapy
To extend her reach beyond the clinic, Tonia launched Project H.O.P.E. (Healing, Opportunity, Purpose, Empowerment); a mental health initiative aimed at underserved populations in both the U.S. and Nigeria. Through grief circles, wellness workshops, emotional resilience training, and mentorship, the project fosters healing in communities where mental health services are often inaccessible.

Project H.O.P.E. reflects her core philosophy: mental health care should not be a luxury, but a universal human right, accessible, proactive, and rooted in cultural relevance.

Recognition and Vision for the Future

Tonia's efforts have earned her accolades across continents. She has been profiled in leading platforms such as Voyage Houston Magazine and Bold Journey, where she shared her approach to destigmatising therapy, cultivating emotional intelligence, and honouring personal stories. She was also a recipient of the Nigerian Role Model Award, celebrating her contributions to mental health and youth empowerment.

Looking ahead, Tonia dreams of establishing a Mental Health and Resilience Center in Nigeria, a space that merges indigenous African healing traditions with evidence-based psychological therapies, tailored to the Nigerian context.

Mental Health in Nigeria: A Crisis Needing Urgent Action

Nigeria faces a mental health emergency. Despite the high burden of mental illness, access to professional care is dismally low. According to estimates, there is only one psychiatrist for every 500,000 Nigerians, with most located in urban areas. Stigma, misinformation, and cultural taboos continue to discourage people from seeking help.

But voices like Tonia Odili's are helping change that narrative, advocating for holistic wellness, local solutions, and a future where mental health is treated with the same urgency as physical health.

About Tonia Odili

Tonia Odili is a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate based in Texas, USA. She is a Certified Play Therapist, Gottman Level 1-trained Couples Counselor, and founder of SM Jury Nigeria and Project H.O.P.E. Her work sits at the intersection of mental health, cultural advocacy, and youth empowerment, with a growing focus on bringing accessible and inclusive emotional wellness services to Nigeria and beyond.

FROM CURIOSITY TO CONTAMINANTS: HOW NATHANIEL BOLUJOKO IS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WATER SAFETY THROUGH RESEARCH

CHISOM MICHAEL





In 2013, a six-month strike disrupted academic activities across Nigerian universities. For Nathaniel Bolujoko, then a second-year undergraduate at Ekiti State University, it became a discovery.

He accompanied his father, a civil engineer at the Kwara State Water Corporation, to work. There, he spent time with the water quality team, observing how real-world processes ensured a clean water supply; that experience planted the seed for a future career in environmental science.

Nathaniel's interest deepened during his master's program in analytical chemistry at the University of Ibadan. He was introduced to the growing issue of pharmaceutical and personal care products in the environment, compounds that often escape public attention.

These contaminants, especially antibiotics and parabens, enter water bodies through improper waste disposal and are difficult to remove using traditional wastewater treatment methods.

"My interest in environmental contaminants truly began during my master's degree at the University of Ibadan," Nathaniel said. "I wanted to understand what these contaminants were, where they came from, and how they impacted our surroundings. That curiosity grew into a passion for research."

Tackling contaminants in fertilizers and water systems

Nathaniel's academic background spans a bachelor's degree in chemistry education from Ekiti State University and a master's degree in analytical chemistry. His current Ph.D. research in environmental science at Oklahoma State University, USA, focuses on how antibiotics persist in nutrient recovery systems.

These systems are designed to extract valuable nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen from wastewater for reuse as fertilizer. However, the presence of antibiotics in such fertilizers poses risks to human health and the environment.

"The problem is, 30% to 90% of antibiotics consumed by humans and animals are excreted through urine and faeces," he said. "These compounds end up in the environment, often through wastewater systems that aren't equipped to treat them. When such waste is processed into fertilizers, there's a risk that antibiotics are carried along with it. That poses a long-term threat to health through antibiotic resistance."

The World Health Organization has described antibiotic resistance as a major global health concern, with 1.2 million deaths linked to it in 2019, a number projected to reach 10 million annually by 2050, including up to four million in Africa alone.

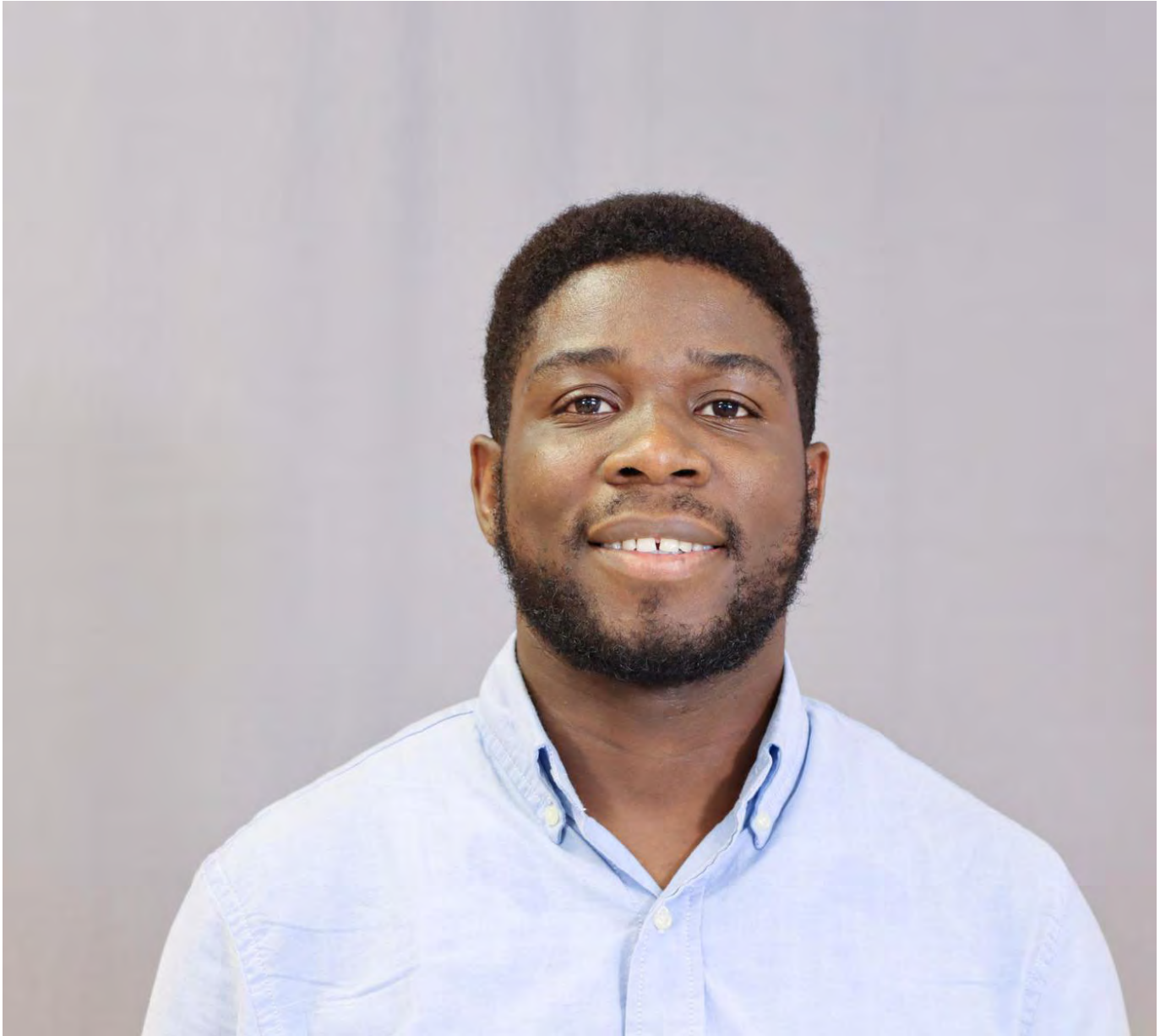
Nathaniel's research aims to reduce this risk by improving the safety of recovered phosphorus fertilizers through targeted removal of pharmaceutical contaminants during treatment processes.

His work also addresses the practical challenges researchers face in Nigeria and other low-resource settings. Measuring pharmaceutical residues in environmental samples often requires solid-phase extraction methods, techniques that rely on costly equipment and materials. To make detection more accessible, Nathaniel has contributed to the development of cellulose-based adsorbents: cost-effective materials that perform well in contaminant extraction and have the potential for commercial use.

"Access to the necessary research instruments is one of the biggest challenges back home in Nigeria. Without proper funding, you can't carry out this kind of work," he said. "That's why part of my advocacy is not just about highlighting the issues but also working toward accessible solutions."

Bridging the gap between research and real-world impact

Nathaniel's research is not confined to academic journals. He actively seeks to translate scientific insights into real-world impact. By presenting at professional and academic conferences, he connects with industry stakeholders and policymakers, hoping to influence environmental practices and inform public policy. One of his long-term goals is to help build a national database of pharmaceutical and personal care contaminants in water to support data-driven decision-making.



Recognised for both his innovation and communication skills, Nathaniel was awarded first place in the 2024 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition at OSU's Ferguson College of Agriculture, a challenge that required him to explain his Ph.D. research in three minutes to a non-specialist audience.

He also received the prestigious Robberson Summer Dissertation Fellowship in 2025 for his contributions to environmental science.

Beyond the lab and academic circuit, Nathaniel prioritises personal development. He regularly attends workshops, seminars, and online courses to build skills beyond his academic training.

"I take out time to read, write, and take courses that help me grow," he said. "I also volunteer; it keeps me grounded and connected to real-world issues."

Looking ahead, Nathaniel sees the future of environmental research in Africa as one that must move from problem identification to solution deployment. He advocates for the use of locally available materials, like eggshells or agricultural waste, in low-cost treatment technologies, and for stronger collaboration between researchers, industry, and government.

"My long-term vision is to protect the environment and promote sustainability," he said. "Through my work, I hope to contribute to a safer world where water is clean, waste is treated responsibly, and people are not unknowingly exposed to harmful contaminants."

WHISKY, CRAFT, AND COLLABORATION: AN EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF GLENFIDDICH'S DUFFTOWN DISTILLERY





In the misty highlands of Dufftown, Scotland, where The Valley of the Deer holds centuries of secrets and amber streams whisper tales of craftsmanship, something extraordinary unfolded.

A carefully curated group of Nigeria's visionary entrepreneurs and whisky enthusiasts were welcomed into the sacred halls of William Grant and Sons Estate, embarking on an unforgettable journey through the heart of the Glenfiddich distillery.

This tour signaled an intimate dialogue between two cultures united by their appreciation for authenticity, their respect for tradition, and their unwavering commitment to pioneering the future.

Since 1887, William Grant first envisioned a whisky that would stand as a testament to patience and purpose. At Glenfiddich, every process becomes a ritual, every cask a promise kept across decades. This enduring commitment to excellence was reflected in the distinguished guests chosen to walk the distillery's sacred halls.

The select group included Osaghae Osahon of Rave Lavidia, Franklin Kelechi Obichendu, CEO of Simple Life Integrated Services Ltd., Amaju Pinnick, FIFA Council Member, CAF Executive Committee Member and

Chairman/Group CEO BrownHill Group; Subair Omotoyosi Rukayat of Liquors and Cans, Imasuen Bennet Amadin of Booze.NG, Olakunle Rotimi Oloidi co-founder of 2:45, and Ifeanyi Nwune, a renowned Nigerian fashion designer and founder of the I.N. Official brand, completed this remarkable gathering of connoisseurs, cultural shapers and collaborators of Glenfiddich.

The experience began where all great whiskies are born: on the malting floors, where Scottish barley is steeped, germinated, and dried to activate key enzymes. Here, the guests witnessed the ancient alchemy that converts starches into sugars, essential for fermentation and forming the subtle flavor foundation of every bottle.

The tour continued through each stage of the meticulous process, culminating in the hushed reverence of the maturation warehouses. In these hallowed spaces, selected casks are brought to marrying tuns, where master blenders harmonise flavours to ensure the consistent balance that has made Glenfiddich legendary.

As Scottish twilight painted the Speyside in shades of gold and amber, the experience transcended the traditional distillery tour. In an intimate tasting chamber overlooking the valley, the group embarked on a carefully orchestrated vertical tasting: a progression through Glenfiddich's most



celebrated expressions that told the story of time, terroir, and technique.

The 12-year-old revealed its signature notes of fresh pear and subtle oak; the 15-year-old Solera unveiled complex layers of honey and spice, and the opulent 21-year-old delivered rich fig and toffee notes that seemed to hold entire seasons within each sip. Each expression was thoughtfully paired with dishes crafted by Scotland's finest culinary artists, creating a symphony of flavours that celebrated both Highland heritage and global sophistication.

This Scottish sojourn marked something both strategic and symbolic Glenfiddich's evolving recognition of Nigeria as a vital market and a cultural powerhouse. In an era when Nigerian voices are reshaping global music, fashion, technology, and film, Glenfiddich isn't merely observing from the sidelines; it's actively collaborating.

Through the "Celebrate The Bold" campaign that spotlighted icons like Mr Eazi, Nancy Isime, and Ifeanyi Nwune, to fashion capsules that marry Highland heritage with African modernism, the brand has positioned itself not just as a purveyor of luxury, but as a partner in cultural progress.

As the evening drew to a close and the last notes of aged whisky lingered on their palates, it became clear that this gathering represented more than cultural exchange. It was a meeting of minds, a recognition of shared values, and a



celebration of the pioneering spirit that drives both Scottish distillation and Nigerian innovation.

Ready to discover the heart of Glenfiddich for yourself? The distillery in Dufftown, Scotland, offers exclusive experiences where craft meets culture and every detail tells a story. Book your journey into whisky heritage at www.glenfiddich.com/distillery/

Where will your next chapter begin?

HOW NOLLYWOOD BRINGS BENIN MYTHOLOGY TO LIFE IN 'OSAMEDE'

ANTHONY UDUGBA



Nollywood's epic film landscape has long been dominated by Yoruba mythology. Now, Gold Lilies Production is changing the game with *Osamede*, a groundbreaking film that puts Benin mythology in the spotlight. This shift marks a new direction for the industry, bringing fresh cultural narratives to streaming platforms and cinemas.

In an exclusive interview with BusinessDay, Nigerian actress and filmmaker Ivie Okujaye Egboh shares insights into her role in the upcoming film "Osamede." Set in the colonized Benin Kingdom, this film blends mythology, magic, and empowerment, telling the story of a young orphaned girl who discovers her superhuman powers tied to the sacred Aruosa stone.

Egboh discusses her journey from a childhood dreamer in Benin to portraying a superhero, the challenges of mastering the Edo language, and her vision for the film's impact on Nigerian cinema and cultural pride.

Introduction

and background

Ivie Okujaye Egboh is a prominent figure in Nigeria's entertainment industry, known for her work as an actress, film producer, scriptwriter, dancer, singer, and activist. She has starred in Africa Magic's television series *Hotel Majestic* and *Enakhe*, and her film *Tokunbo* debuted on Netflix in 2024. With a career built on talent and dedication, Egboh has become a respected voice in Nollywood, advocating for women and children alongside her creative pursuits.

"Osamede" stands out as a unique project, diving into Benin mythology—a lesser-explored narrative in Nigerian cinema.

Produced by Lilian Olubi, a finance and investment expert with 25 years of experience in Nigeria's capital markets, and directed by AMVCA winner James Omokwe, the film brings a fresh perspective. It follows *Osamede*, a young girl in the Benin Kingdom who uncovers her extraordinary abilities and embarks on a heroic journey, blending historical context with superhero elements.



Journey to ‘Osamede’

BusinessDay: Let’s dive into the interview. “Osamede” is an exciting project, especially with its focus on Benin mythology. Unlike the more common Yoruba epics, this film feels like a superhero story. Can you briefly share your acting background and how it led to this role?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: “Osamede” feels like a full-circle moment for me. I grew up in Benin City until I was 12, then moved to Queen’s College in Lagos. As a kid, I’d tie a cape around my neck and run around the compound, shouting, ‘I have saved Benin!’ My family thought my imagination was too wild—sometimes they even called it lying. That’s how I started creating fictional worlds, complete with imaginary friends.

In secondary school, I joined theatre arts. My first play was at 13, acting as Joseph in a nativity play at an all-girls school. That was it—no turning back. My dad, a surgeon, hoped I’d follow his path since my grades leaned toward science. But I couldn’t see myself as a doctor—I was already living for the stage. We compromised on social sciences, so I studied economics and statistics at the University of Abuja, though I spent most of my time in the theatre department.

In 2009, I auditioned for the Amstel Malta Box Office Competition—my first ever audition. I didn’t expect to win; I just wanted the experience. But they kept narrowing it

down—top 100, 50, 25, 10, then 3—and suddenly, I was one of the winners alongside Shade Olu. I hadn’t even packed clothes for an overnight stay! That victory changed everything, proving to my parents I was serious about acting, not chasing fame.

When James Williams approached me for ‘Osamede,’ their confidence in me was contagious. I’m respected for my craft, but I’m not the biggest name out there. Still, they believed I was the one. Growing up in Benin, I spoke Ishan—not fluent Edo—but James assured me I could do it. They paired me with Mr. Osagie Elegbe, and for weeks, we had one- to two-hour calls every night except Sundays, translating the script line by line. He was strict, drilling me on intonations. It was tough, but exciting—a chance to live out a childhood dream.”

Preparing for the Role

BusinessDay: Beyond learning the language, did you do any research to prepare? With the film’s historical tie to Benin culture, how did you bring your character to life?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: “Usually, I’d dive into research myself, but James and the team had it covered. They built a support system around me. For the first four days, we didn’t even touch the language. We focused on the character and Benin folklore—stuff unrelated to ‘Osamede,’ just to soak in the culture. They handed me everything I needed; my job was to step into the role. It was a solid team effort.”

Filming experience

What were your favorite moments during filming?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: “The first thing that hits me is the scenery. The sets were so detailed, it felt like we’d stepped centuries back. Nothing was left to imagination or post-production—it was all real. That authenticity was inspiring.

It made me think about women back then—were they vocal or silenced by society? In ‘Osamede,’ this young girl stands up and says, ‘I’m not just leading; I’m getting us out of this.’ That felt powerful, especially in an era when women rarely led.

Next, the stunts. I love working out and dancing, so fight scenes were a thrill. There’s one where someone’s lifted by the neck and slammed down. Everyone was like, ‘Ivie, you don’t have to do this.’ But James and I said, ‘Let’s try it.’ It came out amazing.

Finally, meeting real Edo village people was special. I’d never connected with rural relatives growing up, so this was new. The young girls, 13 to 17, flocked to me. It hit me—I might have a role in guiding them someday. That was humbling.”

Boosting the character’s legacy

Osamede is a fictional character, like those from Marvel or DC. How can Nollywood elevate her story to inspire Benin and beyond—maybe even spark a sequel or universe?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: “This question stirs frustration in me. We embrace foreign superhero stories so easily, but when it’s our own, the excitement lags. That’s tough to see. The VFX, performances, and production in ‘Osamede’ match Hollywood standards—I’d stake my chest on it. I wish Nigerians felt that same hype.

In Edo State, kids are losing the language, and our stories are fading. ‘Osamede’ could be a revival, a chance for Edo people to take pride in our heritage. Historically, the Benin Kingdom was a powerhouse—British records even predicted it’d shape Nigeria’s future. Somewhere, we lost that. I hope James and the PR team push this hard. Us actors are ready to back them up—we’re all in.”

Themes and Representation

The story showcases a powerful woman in a historical context. What does that mean to you, especially as a mother of three daughters?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: “When James pitched ‘Osamede,’ I imagined her using powers in every scene—lasers from her eyes, the works. But in the script, she only uses them a few times. Reading it again, I saw the point: her real power is her inner strength—resilience and grit. That’s the modern woman, and maybe always has been.

Women are natural leaders, but corruption here often keeps them sidelined. Those who break through prove what we’re capable of. I want more space for women in Nigerian politics—we’ve got the strength. Filming showed me young girls looking up to me, asking about my path. It’s made me think I could inspire more, maybe thousands. That’s a new journey I’m starting, though it’s early days.”





YouTube vs. Cinema Economics

You've built a YouTube channel with hundreds of thousands of views. How does its economics compare to cinema?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: "I was clueless about YouTube's potential until streaming platforms pulled out of Nigeria. Now, I wish I'd started sooner. Years ago, I did a YouTube show—How She Met My Brother—with Eku Edewor and Chris Attoh, but I didn't stick with it. Big mistake.

YouTube lets you create without massive budgets—no \$100,000 needed. I'm still learning the algorithm, but it's flexible. I can control my pace, balancing work with raising my three kids. The audience holds power, though. I'm figuring out how to tell my stories while giving them what they want. It's your risk, your reward—no middleman."

Audience expectations and impact

What do you hope audiences take from 'Osamede' in cinemas?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: "With 90 percent of the film in Edo, I want people to see this and think, 'Nigerians made this.' It's a showcase of our talent and imagination. Cinema culture's dipping here—I hope this revives it. The story's about escaping slavery, but it mirrors today—our resources and rights slipping away. I want viewers to feel inspired to fight back."

Any final words for viewers?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: "If you love great stories, top-notch acting, Nigeria, sci-fi effects, or heartfelt drama, 'Osamede' is for you. We've made a film with no weak storytelling or production flaws. It's time we support our own—watch it, enjoy it, and let it move you."

What's the most striking reaction you've seen to the teaser?

Ivie Okujaye Egboh: "My sister abroad showed the teaser to her Caucasian coworker, who asked, 'Is this the new Wakanda?' She was stunned it was Nigerian. That's huge—someone with no context for Nollywood saw it as world-class. It gave me chills. It's that good; we just need to value it like outsiders do."

Conclusion

Ivie Okujaye Egboh leaves no doubt about her passion for "Osamede" and Nigerian cinema. "We've made something flawless—support it," she urges. This film entertains, educates, and empowers, inviting audiences to reconnect with their heritage and see the potential of local storytelling. As "Osamede" hits screens, it's a call to celebrate Benin mythology and Nigeria's cinematic future.

7 MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR WORK VISA APPLICATION IN 2025

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Getting a work visa approved goes beyond securing a job, it is about proving you are fully prepared. With several requirements from identity verification to employer endorsements, immigration authorities around the world demand specific documents before granting entry. Yet many applicants delay or get rejected simply because they do not have the right documents ready.

Here are 7 most important documents for work visa applications, so you can stay ahead of the process and avoid costly setbacks.

Employment offer or contract letter

An employment offer or contract letter is a critical requirement for any work visa application. It must be a signed document from a recognised employer in the country where you intend to work. This letter should clearly state your job title, a brief description of your responsibilities, salary details, the duration of your employment, and the employer's full contact information. Immigration authorities rely on this document to confirm that your job offer is genuine and aligns with the visa conditions.

Proof of educational qualifications

Proof of educational qualifications is often required, particularly for roles that demand specific academic or professional expertise. Depending on the job, you may be asked to submit degree or diploma certificates, academic transcripts, or evidence of professional memberships, such as a medical licence or engineering council registration. In some cases, you might also need to provide a credential evaluation from a recognised body to verify that your qualifications meet local standards.

Valid international passport

Your passport is the foundation of your entire application. Most countries require a passport with at least six months of validity beyond your intended stay and at least two blank pages for visa stamps. Always check the expiry date before starting your application process. Renew your passport early if it is close to expiry. Some embassies reject applications outright if validity is too short.

Police Clearance Certificate (PCC)

To ensure applicants pose no security risk, immigration authorities typically require a Police Clearance Certificate, also known as a Certificate of Good Conduct. This document is usually issued by your local law enforcement agency. It should be recent, generally issued within the last three to six months—and must be translated and notarised if it is not in English.

Medical examination report

A medical examination is often a mandatory part of the work visa process. You may be required to undergo this exam through an authorised or panel physician to confirm that you are medically fit to work and free from communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. The specific tests required vary by country but may include a chest X-ray, blood and urine analysis, and mental health screening. In addition, some visa categories also require up-to-date vaccination records as part of the health clearance.

Proof of funds

Many countries require proof that you can financially support yourself, and any dependants, upon arrival. This is particularly important for temporary work visas or roles with lower wage thresholds. Acceptable evidence may include recent bank statements (covering the past three to six months), pay slips, a letter from your employer confirming your salary, or an affidavit of support if you are being sponsored. Providing clear financial documentation helps demonstrate that you won't become a burden on public resources during your stay.

Language proficiency test

Language proficiency test results are often required, particularly if you are applying to an English-speaking country and your education or work experience has not been primarily in English. These tests help immigration authorities assess your ability to communicate effectively in the workplace. Accepted tests vary by country but commonly include the IELTS, TOEFL, or PTE Academic. Some visa categories specify minimum score requirements for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is important to ensure your test results are valid and within the accepted time frame.

6 THINGS AI STILL CAN NOT DO FOR YOU

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Let us be honest, AI is brilliant. It can tidy up your grammar, summarise lengthy PDFs, even help you sound like you have got your life together in emails. But before you hand over your entire brain to ChatGPT or whichever chatbot you are working with, here is a reality check: there are still things AI just can not do.

Not because it is lazy, but because some things are deeply human, and no amount of training data can replicate them. So, if you are banking on AI to solve everything from your existential crisis to your love life, this list might humble you.

Keep secrets

Sure, AI might feel like a safe space, it gives advice, doesn't judge, and seems to "listen" at odd hours. But unlike your ride-or-die bestie, it does not truly know you, and more importantly, it does not forget. Anything you type could be stored, analysed, or used to train future models (depending on the platform's policies). AI stores data, it doesn't swear loyalty. So, if you're telling it something you wouldn't want on a billboard, maybe don't.

Feel what you feel

AI can mimic emotion, but it can not actually feel a thing. It does not know heartbreak, joy, fear, or that gut feeling you can not explain. So, when it tries to write a comforting message or a passionate speech, it might sound convincing, but it is still just code dressing up as care.

Make value based judgements

Sure, it can weigh pros and cons, but morality? Ethics? AI has no lived experience or personal compass. It can tell you what most people might do in a situation, but not what you should do based on your values, background, or that voice inside your head that's louder than Siri. In a moral dilemma, ask your conscience, not your chatbot.

Understand context like a human

AI is good at patterns but terrible at nuance. It might not get sarcasm, cultural context, or that inside joke only you and your best friend

understand. It is improving, yes, but context is still a major blind spot, especially if it is shaped by lived experience.

Create from a place of experience

AI can remix, rephrase, and regenerate. But original thought that comes from personal failure, childhood memories, or that awkward phase you try not to talk about? Nah. True creativity is rooted in human experience.

Take accountability

Made a bad decision? AI won't apologise, because it can't take the blame. At best, it will offer a neutral "as an AI model, I..." response. Real leadership, real learning, and real growth require ownership. That's still a human thing.

COWBELLPEDIA 2025: ADEWOLE, AZUIKE EMERGES CHAMPIONS, POCKETING N5M EACH

...as both got all-expense-paid trip to Kenya

CHARLES OGWO



Brilliance took centre stage at the Cowbellpedia 2025 finals as Peace Adewole of Welkins International School and Kenechukwu Azuikwe of St. Gregory's College clinched the top spots of the junior and senior categories, respectively.

The duo emerged as champions in a thrilling display of mathematical excellence, each walking away with a grand prize of N5 million, and all-expense-paid trip to Kenya, and a full year supply of Cowbell, alongside laptops and projectors for their schools.

Francois Gillet, managing director of Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, speaking at the finale, congratulated all the winners, when he said, "I congratulate every student who participated in this competition. You have done something great for yourselves. No matter what happens, you are all winners."

Gillet emphasised that the company's goal to promote education in Nigeria, inspiring and empowering young people for the future, through Cowbellpedia.

Adebola Williams, marketing director at Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, in his address assured that Cowbellpedia will continue to be a beacon for STEM education in Nigeria and inspire the next generation of innovators.

Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, the quizmaster commended the students' resilience throughout the quiz show. He noted that every week, these students brought their A-game.

"They made the competition feel like the popular 'Champions League'. This season, Cowbellpedia didn't just reward brilliance; it re-envisioned how young Nigerians see education.

"Cowbellpedia 2025 delivered an emotional, high-energy journey that left audiences inspired, proving that Cowbellpedia produces the smartest secondary school legends in Nigeria," he noted.

Donatus Ukpai, the dairy category manager at Promasidor Nigeria Ltd, said, "These mega minds exemplify the power of problem-solving and the role of good nutrition, which Cowbell provides daily with VitaRich and Vitamin B9 which supports brain development."

The Cowbellpedia 2025, themed "The Mega Minds" came with a total prize pool of up to N100 million, as the 14-week show not only rewarded contestants from the preliminaries stage to the finals but also kept its audience 'mentally entertained'.

The iconic STEM and general knowledge quiz show continues to showcase and reward brilliance, wits, and intelligence among Nigeria's brightest secondary school students.

This year's season raised the stakes, attracting over 5,000 students aged 11–17 from secondary schools across Nigeria to participate in a computer-based test (CBT).

From this pool, the top 132 (66 students each from the junior and senior categories) students advanced to the elimination stage, with 48 students from both the junior and senior categories qualifying for the quarterfinals, 16 for the semi-finals, and eight for the finals.

According to the organisers, the competition featured 78 intense rounds of intellectual battle. It culminated in a grand finale showcasing four gripping segments, 60 seconds of fame, zone of power, Cowbellpedia

bank, and the decisive dignitary shots, where the finalists vied for the coveted top prize under the watchful gaze of guest dignitary Francois Gillet.

Peace Adewole, the crowned champion of the junior category answered the question in the dignitary shots segment in just 0.52 seconds, winning a cash prize of N5 million and an all-expense-paid educational trip to Kenya.

Haruna Salvin, who kept everyone on their toes throughout the competition, competed in the dignitary shots segment with a time of 0.88 seconds, earning him the position of first runner-up and a cash prize of N3 million.

Onyema Alexis, the only girl to reach the finals, emerged as the second runner-up and won N2 million, while Anyaeji Arthur finished as the third runner-up, earning N500,000.

In the senior category, Kenekukwu Azuiké claimed victory, with Fopefoluwa Adegboye, Prince Orji, and Lyon Awhaisoba, winning N3 million, N2 million and N500,000 to clinch the second, third and fourth positions, respectively.

Parents and teachers also shared in the winnings. Peace Adewole's guardian, Beckley Adebayo, topped the junior parents' segment, winning N500,000, while Remi Adegboye led the senior parents' segment, winning N500,000.

Outstanding teachers such as Babayode Samuel from St. Gregory's College and Egbeyemi Stephen from Ambassadors College each walked away with N1 million and brand-new laptops.

At the Cowbellpedia Café, show host, Linda Ejiofor-Suleiman, cheered the students who were not crowned champions with affirmative cards, reminding them that they are winners regardless.

Promasidor was founded in 1979 by Robert Rose, who left the United Kingdom in 1957 for Zimbabwe to pursue his African dream.

It has grown with a presence in over 30 African countries. Promasidor Nigeria has achieved tremendous growth since it commenced operations in 1993 with the 'flagship brand' Cowbell being a household name in Nigerian homes

THE BIAS AGAINST POLYTECHNICS: A BARRIER TO NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT

CHARLES OGWO



Beneath the surface of Nigeria's education system lies a quiet but deep-seated hierarchy, one that places universities on a pedestal while relegating polytechnics to second-tier status.

This institutional bias has shaped public perception, influenced employment opportunities, and reinforced structural inequalities for decades.

For decades, Nigeria's tertiary education system has operated on a two-tier track, universities on one side, and polytechnics on the other side.

The debate

The debate surrounding the university-polytechnic dichotomy in Nigeria highlights concerns about parity and recognition. While some argue that graduates from both institutions should be treated equally, others point to differences in admission standards, curriculum, and academic rigor.

Nubi Achebo, director academic planning at the Nigerian University of Technology and Management (NUTM), stressed that though both university and polytechnic graduates contribute to Nigeria's workforce and economy, the polytechnics focus on practical skills, which are valuable in certain industries. He said that the apostles of parity believe that equal recognition could promote inclusivity and diversity in the job market.

However, he maintains that the decision to place graduates from both institutions on the same level depends on various factors, such as industry needs, academic standards, and societal values.

"A nuanced approach, considering both perspectives, might be necessary to address this complex issue," Achebo said.

Busayo Aderounmu, a senior lecturer at Covenant University, Ota expressing her views on the subject, said, "Well practically speaking, I think they should be placed on the same level because those in polytechnic will spend four years to get HND, aside the IT years, which is equivalent to a four year course in the university."

Besides, she said that graduates from polytechnics, have wealth of experience gained from industrial trainings, which makes them at times stand out than majority of their colleagues with university degrees.

Rabiu Ahmed, a public affairs analyst, emphasized that the certificates from both institutions can never be equated because of the philosophy of both institutions differs, the admission requirements, mode of knowledge impartation, and curriculum goals, among others.

"University requires five credit including Mathematics and English Language, while polytechnic requires four credit including Mathematics and English Language. Universities operate more on theories while polytechnic is more practical in nature.



“University has more of more detailed curriculum than polytechnic, hence, it’s not everyone that has the intellectual capability to pursue the rigorous university works,” he said.

However, he emphasised that developing countries such as Nigeria need more of polytechnic graduates because of their technically knowledge which aids developments.

“The technical knowledge of polytechnics graduates enhances rapid developments in all ramifications,” he said.

The paradox of admission process

Both the universities and polytechnics aim to produce skilled graduates, however, one continues to be viewed as superior.

Despite policies aimed at bridging the gap, the admission process still widens the gap, reinforcing societal bias and limiting opportunities for thousands of qualified candidates.

The heads of the various tertiary institutions, the vice-chancellors, provosts, and rectors are the ones fixing the cut-off marks.

For the 2025/2026 academic session, the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) set the minimum cut-off mark for university admissions at 150.

While for the polytechnics and colleges of education, the minimum cut-off is 100. This divide not only undermines the value of technical education but also deepens class and career inequalities in a country that desperately needs skilled manpower.

As a matter of fact, the paradox is that, the same authorities that are asking for equal treatments to graduates from universities and polytechnics are the ones pegging admission benchmarks for polytechnics at 100, while universities are at 150.

Achebo toeing the path of those against the parity, said, different admission standards, 150 for universities verses 100 for polytechnics, may imply varying levels of academic preparedness.

In addition, he pointed out that curriculum and academic rigor differ between universities and polytechnics, potentially impacting graduates’ skills and knowledge.

Victor Usifor, a legal practitioner said that the battle for equal privileges between polytechnics and university graduates can be resolved by adopting uniform entry requirements; besides, by standardising their curricula.

“Polytechnics can’t take advantage of lower entry requirements and then claim equivalence with institutions that have higher standards and higher entry requirements. I strongly disagree on that,” he said.

Aderounmu, reiterated that the benchmark score portrays that the excellent students were given admission into university while the average student get admission into polytechnic.

“This already brings about the discrimination from the onset. So the benchmark score should be looked into to avoid discrimination in place of work.

“Also, employers can measure productivity of their staff by their impact or contribution to the growth of the organisation instead of by degrees,” she noted.

Potential solutions

To address this issue, Achebo urged policymakers to establish clear guidelines for equivalency and recognition of polytechnic qualifications; implement bridging programmes or certifications to enhance polytechnic graduates’ skills.

Moreover, he said there is a need to foster collaboration between universities and polytechnics to promote mutual understanding and respect.



TOP 7 COURSES ABROAD THAT ARE GAINING ATTENTION IN 2025

CHISOM MICHAEL



As global industries evolve with shifts in technology, climate action, and ethical concerns, several new academic programmes have gained relevance among international students.

These courses are not only growing in popularity but are also linked to high-impact jobs and policy developments worldwide.

Here are seven fast-rising courses abroad shaping future careers:

1. Climate tech and sustainability engineering — Germany

Germany continues to lead in climate innovation, with universities now offering engineering courses focused on renewable energy, decarbonisation, and environmental systems. These programmes integrate policy and technology, preparing students to work in industries committed to net-zero goals. With the European Union expanding green funding and industries pivoting towards sustainability, demand for climate professionals is increasing across Europe.

2. Ethical AI and sociotechnical computing — United States

With artificial intelligence growing rapidly, several American universities now offer degrees that combine computing with social sciences, law, and ethics. These courses focus on building AI systems that are transparent, inclusive, and fair. Students are trained to design technology that responds to real-world risks, discrimination, and policy gaps. The field is expanding as companies and governments look to address the ethical consequences of automation and algorithmic bias.

3. Neuromarketing and consumer behaviour — Netherlands

Dutch institutions have introduced programmes that merge neuroscience with behavioural economics and marketing. The courses explore how human decisions are shaped by brain activity, habits, and emotion. Students learn how companies use these insights in branding, advertising, and digital campaigns. With major brands focusing on consumer psychology, graduates are entering roles that link research with product strategy.

4. Digital health and telemedicine — Canada

Canada is expanding its health education to include remote healthcare delivery and tech-enabled diagnostics. These programmes focus on telemedicine, wearable devices, data platforms, and digital patient care. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for digital health experts has increased in both the public and private sectors. Students are being trained to improve healthcare access and efficiency using technology.

5. Space systems engineering — Australia

Australia's growing investment in space research has led to the launch of specialised engineering degrees in satellite design, orbital mechanics, and aerospace systems. These programmes are supported by collaborations with space agencies, research institutes, and private companies. Students are entering a sector that includes satellite communication, space robotics, and national space exploration projects.

6. Agri-tech and smart farming — United Kingdom

UK universities are offering new courses in precision agriculture, robotics in farming, and food sustainability. These programmes train students to use sensors, AI, and drones to improve crop yields and reduce environmental impact. As food security and climate change reshape global agriculture, more graduates are entering roles at the intersection of technology and food systems.

7. Cyber law and digital governance — Singapore

Singapore has introduced degrees focused on regulation, cybersecurity, and digital rights. These courses train professionals to develop policies that protect online data, manage cross-border digital trade, and respond to cyber threats. As countries update legal frameworks for digital activity, expertise in cyber law is gaining attention across the Asia-Pacific region.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES ADVANCING STARTUP GROWTH IN 2025

CHISOM MICHAEL

In 2025, the global startup landscape is evolving, with several countries maintaining strong ecosystems for early-stage businesses.

The United States remains the leading hub, with 221 cities ranked among the world's top 1,000, though its growth has slowed to 18.2%, the lowest among the top 50. The United Kingdom holds second place and is gaining momentum with a 26.3% growth rate, widening its lead over Israel. Israel remains in third place with steady but slower growth at 20.6%.

According to the Startup Ecosystem Index, there is a noticeable gap between the top three countries and the others. This reflects a maturing global ecosystem, where growth across regions has slowed to below 21%, even as competition among innovation hubs intensifies.

Despite this, countries continue to invest in policies, funding access, and infrastructure to attract and retain startups, shaping the future of global entrepreneurship.

Here are the top ten countries for startups in 2025.

1. United States

With an ecosystem growth of +18.2% and a total score of 254.05, the United States remains the global leader for startups, offering mature funding networks, wide market access, and strong support systems, with key startup cities such as San Francisco, New York, and Austin providing access to venture capital and skilled talent.

2. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom ranks second with +26.3% growth and a total score of 70.743, driven by a rise in activity across sectors like fintech and healthtech, supported by a stable legal framework and international market access, with London, Manchester, and Edinburgh emerging as hubs for innovation.

3. Israel

Israel records +20.9% ecosystem growth and a score of 62.167, with its startup ecosystem supported by strong links between research institutions and businesses, especially in fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and hardware.

4. Singapore

Singapore posts the highest growth on the list at +44.9%, with a total score of 54.682, benefiting from efficient government

policies, tax incentives, and strategic access to Southeast Asian markets, making it an attractive launchpad for regional and international startups.

5. Canada

With +18.8% growth and a total score of 45.438, Canada remains a key player in the startup space, particularly in artificial intelligence, clean technology, and fintech, with cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal offering public support, skilled labour, and immigration pathways for entrepreneurs.

6. Sweden

Sweden shows strong momentum with +30.7% growth and a score of 35.311, led by cities like Stockholm that are supporting startups in sectors such as music technology, climate solutions, and software, bolstered by government support and regional partnerships.

7. Germany

Germany reports +28.4% growth and a total score of 33.159, with its ecosystem growing around Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg, where a mix of innovation in manufacturing, green technology, and logistics continues to support the rise of early-stage companies.

8. France

France sees +30.2% growth and scores 32.417, with its startup scene expanding due to public-private collaboration, investor networks, and supportive programmes, particularly in Paris, which remains a central hub for founders across industries.

9. Switzerland

Switzerland ranks ninth with +31.8% growth and a score of 31.747, known for its strength in biotech, medtech, and research-driven startups, supported by high-quality institutions and a trusted business environment despite its smaller domestic market.

10. The Netherlands

The Netherlands rounds out the top ten with +26.2% growth and a total score of 30.872, offering a startup-friendly environment with strong infrastructure, international outlook, and a digital economy centred around cities like Amsterdam.

LEAD, REFORM, OR RUPTURE: NIGERIA'S ELITE AT A CROSSROADS

EYESAN TORITSEJU

In the global discourse on Africa's development, attention often gravitates toward structural dependencies, colonial legacies, imbalanced trade, or external debt cycles. However, in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, the gravitational center of stagnation lies within. At the heart of the country's dysfunction is an elite class that has, over generations, insulated itself from national hardship while extracting disproportionate benefit from state dysfunction.

This elite class: comprising political dynasties, oil tycoons, public procurement barons, and foreign-educated technocrats, commands disproportionate influence over Nigeria's public institutions, economic pathways, and social mobility. And while the class is not monolithic, its defining feature is insulation: from consequence, from scrutiny, and crucially, from the everyday reality of most Nigerians.

From Colonial Intermediaries to Postcolonial Extractors

The origins of Nigeria's elite lie in its colonial administration. Under British rule, local intermediaries were empowered to govern on behalf of the Crown—clerked, educated, and salaried to align more with London than with their communities. These “educated natives” formed the nucleus of what would become the post-independence political class. But while independence swept away formal colonial authority, it preserved the administrative logic of elite privilege and centralization.

After 1960, Nigeria's newly independent state quickly became a site of elite consolidation rather than mass enfranchisement. Power was increasingly captured by a narrow band of actors who substituted the colonial extractive apparatus with an indigenous version—one calibrated to convert state access into personal accumulation. As development economist Ricardo Soares de Oliveira notes, “the state has remained the primary mechanism for wealth accumulation rather than wealth distribution,” and Nigeria exemplifies this model.

The Political Economy of Privilege

Today, Nigeria's elite operates in a parallel ecosystem. Its children are educated abroad, its health emergencies are managed in London or Dubai, and its economic ventures, ranging from real estate to fintech, are often shielded from the volatility of Nigeria's regulatory environment through offshore structures. When systems fail, the elite does not fix them; it sidesteps them.

This elite insulation has direct consequences. It creates a governance disincentive: why reform a public university when your children attend MIT? Why overhaul primary healthcare when your family's physician practices in Harley Street? The result is a slow-burning institutional collapse, particularly in education, energy, and justice delivery, sectors most critical to inclusive growth.

Yet this is not a uniquely Nigerian phenomenon. What differentiates Nigeria and much of Africa, is the absence of a “developmental elite,” such as that found in mid-20th century East Asia. In countries like South Korea and Singapore, the elite played a central role in building industrial capacity, expanding education, and promoting shared prosperity. These countries forged a tacit social contract: elite control would be tolerated in exchange for national advancement.

In Nigeria, no such contract exists. Elite control persists without reciprocal responsibility. Attempts to challenge this, from the populist energy of the #EndSARS movement to technocratic reform efforts, have largely been absorbed or neutralized by the prevailing order.

The Geopolitical Climate Is Shifting

However, that order is now under pressure, challenged by the global resurgence of nationalism. Western nations, once the backstops for African elite exit, are experiencing their own internal reckonings. Rising right-wing populism, post-pandemic economic strain, and geopolitical insecurity have led to tighter borders and more nationalistic policies.

Britain's tightening Tier 4 visa regime, Canada's recent cap on international student admissions, the EU's evolving residency and citizenship scrutiny, all signal the end of frictionless elite globalization. Even second passports, once the hallmark of elite risk hedging, are being reevaluated under new transparency and security mandates.

The world is turning inward. And that spells trouble for those whose power has depended on external escape routes.

As Nigerian elites experience visa delays, flagged wire transfers, and increased scrutiny of offshore holdings, a sobering reality is setting in: the fallback options are shrinking. "For the first time, we're all being asked to live in the country we run.

The Cost of Deferred Reform

The implications are profound. For decades, Nigeria's elite has had little structural incentive to reform public systems because they did not rely on them. But as global insulation wanes, local dysfunction becomes inescapable. The roads matter. The hospitals matter. The currency matters. And so, for the first time in a generation, the elite may be forced to reckon with the systems they've long neglected.

Yet the inertia remains formidable. Institutions have been deliberately hollowed out, courts politicized, procurement processes compromised, civil service appointments traded like currency. Public trust is at historic lows. A 2023 Afrobarometer survey found only 23% of Nigerians believed their government acted in the public interest. In such a context, elite-led reform faces deep skepticism.

Moreover, the country's most capable minds continue to flee. Over 17,000 Nigerian doctors have emigrated in the last decade, and the Japa movement has become both a generational

aspiration and a mass protest. A nation that bleeds its talent cannot industrialize, and a nation that rewards connection over competence cannot innovate.

The End of the Gilded Lifeboat

The coming years will test Nigeria's elite like never before. Climate shocks will strain urban infrastructure. Youth unemployment, already over 40%, will fuel unrest. Global decarbonization will reduce the rents from fossil fuel exports. And international exit routes will continue to narrow. What happens when there is nowhere left to run? There are three possible outcomes. One, the elite doubles down, enforcing its power through securitization, censorship, and deeper patronage. Two, reform emerges, led by elite factions that see their future tied to national revival. Or three, a rupture occurs via mass protest, economic implosion, or civic breakdown, that forces a reckoning.

The first is unsustainable. The third is unpredictable. The second, while unlikely without pressure, is the only path that offers stability.

Conclusion: Redrawing the Compact
Nigeria does not need its elite to disappear. It needs its elite to transform, from gatekeepers to stakeholders. That requires political courage, a reorientation toward long-term national interest, and a deep investment in institutions that serve everyone. As the world turns inward and external lifelines fray, the elite must realize that the only sustainable power is shared progress. Insulation is no longer a guarantee. In a changing world, the true measure of influence will be the ability to shape resilient systems at home. Nigeria's elite must shift from managing decline to stewarding renewal, while there is still time.

Eyesan Toritseju is a Lagos-based strategist and cultural commentator. In his writing, especially through his column, *Cosmopolitan Nigeria*, he examines how African societies confront the legacies of their past while reimagining identity, influence, and progress in the present.

TAX ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA – A REVIEW OF THE 2025 NIGERIAN TAX REFORM LAWS

ADERONKE ALEX-ADEIPE

In furtherance of improving revenue generation and making Nigeria more investor friendly, the Nigerian President, on June 26 2025, signed into law four tax bills passed by the National Assembly. These include the Nigeria Tax Act, the Nigeria Tax Administration Act, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act, and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act (together the “Tax Laws”).

The Tax Laws aim to simplify tax collection, reduce the tax burden on compliant businesses, and reposition the country as a more attractive investment hub, while boosting revenue through a wider and fairer tax net. While the effective date of the Tax Laws is set for January 1 2026, this article highlights their key provisions and the potential implications on taxpayers, companies and investors.

THE NIGERIAN TAX ACT

The Nigerian Tax Act (the “NTA”) is a unified statute consolidating existing laws on companies income tax, personal income tax, value-added tax, capital gains tax, and other various tax enactments. The key highlights of the NTA include:

1. Relief for Small Companies

The NTA exempts small companies from payment of Companies’ Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax and Development Levy. For clarity, the NTA defines a small company as a company with an annual turnover not exceeding ₦100 million and total fixed assets not exceeding ₦250 million. This relief is however, inapplicable to companies that provide professional services notwithstanding that they meet the financial thresholds.

2. Introduction of Development Levy

The introduction of a 4% development levy on the assessable profits of all companies (except small companies and non-resident companies) is a novel introduction of the NTA. The Development Levy consolidates multiple taxes such as the Tertiary Education Tax (TET), Information Technology Levy (IT), the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) levy and the Police Trust Fund (PTF) levy.

This helps address the often unclear and multiple levies imposed under the existing tax regimes. It also helps ease the burden of computing various levies and interfacing with multiple government agencies.

3. Progressive Personal Income Tax regime

The NTA redefines the income brackets for personal income tax and applicable tax rates for each bracket. Under the new regime, individuals earning ₦800,000 or less per annum are exempt from tax on their income and gains, while higher income earners will be taxed up to a maximum of 25%. Additionally, all sums not exceeding ₦50,000,000 obtained as compensation for loss of employment or injury is tax exempt.

4. Taxation of Digital Assets

The NTA states that profits or gains from transactions in digital or virtual assets are chargeable to tax. Although in alignment with the recognition of virtual assets under the Investment and Securities Act 2025, the taxation of virtual assets will likely pose some challenges particularly in the areas of enforcement and valuation of the digital assets for tax purposes. Furthermore, given the decentralised nature of digital transactions, in the absence of a robust digital infrastructure, the National Revenue Service (NRS) may find it challenging to track digital asset transactions given the often-anonymized nature of these digital assets.

THE NIGERIA TAX ADMINISTRATION ACT

The Nigerian Tax Administration Act (the “NTAA”) outlines a uniform procedure for the consistent and efficient administration of the NTA to facilitate tax compliance by taxpayers and optimise tax revenue. Some key highlights include:

1. Mandatory Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) Registration

The NTAA requires all taxable individuals, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal, State and Local governments to register and obtain a Tax Identification Number (TIN). It also requires non-resident persons making taxable supplies to individuals in Nigeria or deriving income (excluding passive income from investments) in Nigeria, to register for tax purposes and obtain a TIN. There is an obligation imposed on persons engaged in the provision of financial services to ensure that every taxable person provides a TIN. Without a doubt, the TIN requirement is designed to adequately capture all taxable persons, including those in the informal sector and reduce tax evasion.

2.Monthly Return Requirement

The NTAA outlines the filing requirements for individuals and companies. In more specific terms, royalty payments for petroleum companies must be submitted by the 14th day of the following month, while the deadline for mining royalty and non-resident shipping/airline companies is the 21st of the following month. Petroleum license holders are required to submit annual returns for royalties paid during an accounting period, no later than five months after the period ends.

3.Digitalization of Tax Filing and Compliance

A key innovation in the NTAA is the introduction of the Electronic Fiscal System (EFS). The EFS is designed to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and transparency of tax administration. In this regard, all taxable persons are required to maintain accurate records of all transactions processed through the EFS. The focus on digital tax filing, is one of the most impactful reforms of the NTAA. By reducing human intervention, EFS aims to minimise errors, fraud, and inefficiencies in the tax process. This feature highlights the critical importance of embracing digitalization in tax administration towards ensuring better compliance and promoting a more efficient and transparent tax system.

4.Filing of Returns for Virtual Assets Service Providers (VASPs):

In keeping with the recognition of virtual assets under Nigeria law, the NTAA mandates all taxable persons involved in services related to the exchange, custody, or management of virtual assets through Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASPs) to file their tax returns. This is without prejudice to the power of the tax authority to request additional information at any time. Any VASP who fails to comply with the provisions of the NTAA will, in addition to having their licence suspended or revoked by the Securities and Exchange Commission, be required to pay an administrative penalty of ₦10,000,000 for the first month of default and ₦1,000,000 for each subsequent month that the default persists.

5.Transaction Threshold Reporting:

The NTAA authorises banks and other financial institutions to file quarterly returns to the relevant tax authority in respect of all new customers and in the case of existing customers, all individual transactions exceeding ₦25 million and corporate transactions above ₦100 million monthly.

6.Revised VAT Sharing Formula:

Section 81 of the NTAA reviews the VAT distribution among the three tiers of government in the following order- Federal Government (10%), State Governments (55%), Local Governments (35%). However, the amount of the VAT revenue standing to the credit of states and local governments shall be distributed on the following basis:

Equality - 50%; Population - 20%; Place of Consumption - 30%. This reflects a broader principle of fairness in the VAT administration.

THE NIGERIA REVENUE SERVICE (ESTABLISHMENT) ACT

The Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act (the “NRS Act”) has the objective of providing a legal, institutional and regulatory framework for the administration of taxes and revenues accruable to the Federal Government. The NRS Act establishes the Nigeria Revenue Service (the “Service”) to take over the functions of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (“FIRS”).

The NRS Act empowers the Service to assess, collect, and account for revenue accruable to the Federal Government and related matters. Furthermore, the Service may, on request, assist any State of the Federation, the Federal Capital Territory or Local Government to collect or administer a tax which such requesting state is authorised to collect. Such request may however be subject to a fee required to defray the cost of providing such assistance. The Service under the NRS Act is the principal tax regulator on matters related to federal taxes and all obligations performed by the FIRS have now been effectively transferred to the Service and continued by it.

JOINT REVENUE BOARD NIGERIA (ESTABLISHMENT) ACT, 2025

The Joint Revenue Board Nigeria (Establishment) Act, 2025 (the “JRB Act”) is the fourth of the tax reform bills assented to by the President. The objectives of the JRB Act include:

- a) provision of a legal and institutional framework for the harmonisation and coordination of revenue administration in Nigeria.
- b) provision of a mechanism for efficient dispute resolution; and
- c) promotion of the rights of the taxpayers.

Conclusion

The Tax laws represent a clear effort towards achieving a fair, transparent, and growth-oriented tax system. The harmonization of Nigeria’s often disparate tax landscape while embracing digital modernization is an innovative feature of the Tax Laws. The successful implementation of the Tax laws will however, largely depend on judicial clarity on potential constitutional questions, and robust infrastructure development at both federal and state levels. It is therefore imperative for individuals and corporate entities to undertake a comprehensive review of their tax strategies, processes, and compliance frameworks to ensure readiness and resilience. If properly implemented, the tax laws could provide the much needed investor confidence, and redirect critical revenues to key sectors of the economy.

LOCAL SUPPLY CHAIN SUPPORT – FROM SEED TO SIP

ABIOLA LASEINDE



Abiola Laseinde is an Executive Director of the Beer Sectoral Group, Nigeria (BSG)

From the soil of Northern Nigeria from where grains are sourced, to the bubbling breweries in the South that bottle joy, and finally to your glass, beer is more than just a beverage.

It is a cultural artefact, a celebration of local entrepreneurship, and it is a sustainable force of development. As the world observes International Beer Day, what better time to spotlight the engine room of this golden industry: Nigeria's local beer supply chain.

The Nigerian beer industry is one of the most dynamic in Africa, and caters to over 200 million consumers. Yet, beyond the stream of iconic labels and festival commercials, lives a vibrant ecosystem that adds value. Farmers, transportation engineers, marketers, bar owners, recyclers, and innovators, are reliant on beer production and delivery for gainful employment.

Sourcing fresh grains from Nigerian farmers makes beer companies contributors to rural economic development, supporters of agronomic innovation and diversification, and a means of reducing import dependency.

Local sourcing alleviates food security and supports the building blocks of industrial self-reliance. Opening a bottle of beer in essence, is a silent salute to the thousands of farmers working across the rich, fertile lands of Nigeria. Beer binds cultures together, whether being toasted at a naming ceremony in Abeokuta or downed at the end of a long day in Jos, beer has become a nexus of community across tribes, religions, and class. Beer unifies people, encourages conversations, and often plays a backseat role in defining moments in one's life.

Beyond that, beer tells an indigenous Nigerian story. From the packaging that pays tribute to our heritage, to advertisements that mirror our humor, odds, and wins, beer serves as a lens into our identity. In many ways, when people engage with beer, they are not merely consuming it; they are experiencing it.

This layered value chain is also a training ground. Often, breweries will up skill employees with technical skills training, workplace safety protocols, and environmental sustainability, which means they are producing a skilled national workforce. It is an ecosystem where blue-collar and white-collar roles intersect, providing a balanced socio-economic impact.

Beer production today is being managed with the environment in mind. Increasingly Nigerian beer companies are looking to use renewable energy; treat wastewater; and implement circular packaging. Grains can be repurposed to animal feed, glass bottles recycled, and even introducing new technologies such as lighter-weight cans to mitigate carbon emissions. These actions are more than just corporate responsibility; they are commitments to Nigeria's future.

As we raise our glasses high this International Beer Day, we must recognize the leg of the journey from seed to sip. Beer is more than a drink; it is an industry that provides families with food and shelter, builds communities, shapes culture, and now, takes into account its footprint on the planet. The local supply chain is not only strong but also strategic!

In celebrating and supporting this industry, we do not just celebrate a product, we celebrate potential, resilience, and the Nigerian spirit of enterprise.

UUBO, LEX MUNDI EXPLORE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN LEGAL, POLICY IMPERATIVES AT GENERAL COUNSEL SUMMIT



L-R Eric Staal, Vice President, Global Markets, Lex Mundi; Aniekan Ukpanah, Senior Partner, Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie and Chairman, Lex Mundi Board of Directors; Ezra Davids, Chairman and Senior Partner, Bowmans; and Dr. Tayo Aduloju, Chairman, Nigerian Economic Summit Group, at the inaugural UUBO General Counsel Summit held on 29 July 2025 in

Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie (UUBO), one of the nation’s foremost full-service commercial law firms, hosted its inaugural General Counsel (GC) summit recently in Lagos, bringing together top legal minds, business leaders, and policy experts to address the evolving challenges faced by corporate counsel in an increasingly complex and fast-changing global environment.

The summit was held in partnership with Lex Mundi, a leading network of independent law firms.

Themed: “Confronting Complexity, Igniting Innovation, Reinventing Resilience,” there were conversations around cross-border Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A); AI governance and data protection, to

thought-provoking panels on regulatory risk, geopolitical volatility, and the growing strategic role of GC. The event interrogated critical intersections between legal, business, and policy imperatives shaping today's boardrooms.

In his welcome remarks, Aniekan Ukpanah, Senior Partner at UUBO and current Chair of the Lex Mundi Board of Directors, noted, "as a firm with a deep-rooted presence in Nigeria and strong relationships across Africa and beyond, we believe this summit creates a much-needed space for General Counsel to reflect, recalibrate, and reimagine their strategic roles. Through our alliance with Lex Mundi, we're privileged to draw on a global pool of expertise to support GCs navigating the new frontiers of legal risk."

Lex Mundi, Vice President, Global Markets, Eric Staal, and Director of Innovation, Andy McDonnell, delivered critical insights on the changing global legal landscape, especially in the context of AI, cybersecurity, and operational resilience.

Tayo Aduloju, CEO of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), spoke on the topic: 'Resilience in a Multipolar Era-Strategic Outlook for General Counsel.'

According to Aduloju, Africa is projected to reach a population of 2.5 billion by 2050, positioning it as a global demographic powerhouse and critical driver of labour supply, consumer markets and innovation potential.

He also observed that the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) represents the most ambitious trade integration effort since the formation of the European Union (EU).

They were joined by an exceptional roster of speakers from Lex Mundi member firms including Bowmans, Faegre Drinker, Bentsi-Enchill, and Bennani & Associés.

The key sessions include: A Cross-Border M&A Panel addressing real-world dealmaking challenges across Africa; tech Risk Roundtable focused on AI, data protection, and breach response, moderated by UUBO Managing Partner Jumoke Lambo.

A CEO Fireside Chat titled "The GC Every CEO Wants", featuring Seun Oni (AG Leventis) and Femi Badeji (FCMB Group), moderated by Folake Elias-Adebowale, Partner at UUBO

The summit reflects UUBO's longstanding commitment to empowering legal and business leaders through thought leadership and forward-looking engagement.

It also reinforces the firm's position as a gateway to African legal expertise, bolstered by its active participation in Lex Mundi's elite global network, comprising more than 150 member firms and over 22,000 lawyers worldwide.

With deep capabilities spanning fintech, capital markets, M&A, dispute resolution, energy, tech, and public policy, UUBO continues to advise leading local and international businesses through Nigeria's dynamic business terrain, offering world-class solutions tailored to local realities.

WHEN PURPOSE MEETS LOVE: THE STORY BEHIND PASTOR OLUTOYE DOLAPO'S UPCOMING WEDDING

CHIOMA ONUH



Every love story begins in a unique way. Some begin with fireworks, some others, dramatic twists. Then there are the quiet ones, the kind that unfold gently, slowly, and with purpose. The kind where you are not trying to impress anyone, you are just showing up ...fully, sincerely, and intentionally. That is the story of Pastor Olutoye Dolapo and Omotola, a couple whose wedding is set to take place later this month in Akure, and whose union is already stirring conversation across faith circles and beyond.

It started in 2018, not in a romantic setting, but on a quiet evening in church. Omotola was standing in front of the building, lost in her own thoughts, when she looked up and saw him...Pastor Dolapo, walking towards her. She dropped her gaze, not thinking much

of it. But within seconds, he was standing right in front of her, looking straight at her and asking, "What is your name?"

That was it. No rehearsed lines, no pressure. Just a curious smile and a simple question that somehow felt important.

"I answered him more easily than I ever had before," she recalls. "And from there, it was a series of beautiful events that brought us to this moment."

What followed was not a whirlwind romance. They stayed friends for years, talking occasionally, crossing paths, but never rushing anything. It was not until 2022 that their friendship began to shift into something deeper. The moment of clarity came during one of their casual conversations.

"I was telling him about another guy," Omotola says with a smile, "and he just looked at me and said, 'Can you try to forget about him?' I asked him why, and he said, 'Because I like you.' That was the first time I really looked into his eyes."

It was clear, intentional, and without drama. And from that point, everything changed. A love that had taken years to mature now moved with a sense of direction. Not fast, but forward. By 2025, they were preparing for marriage, not just with emotion, but with alignment.

For those who know Pastor Dolapo, founder of The Kings and Priests movement, this new season is an extension of his calling. Known for his passion for raising a generation rooted in spiritual identity and leadership, this union represents the same values he has preached for years... purpose, clarity, and covenant.

The wedding, described by organisers as a "kingdom shutdown," is expected to draw guests from across Nigeria. The planner from Advans Events put it plainly. "This is not just a wedding."



It is the kind of celebration that gives glory to God. We are glad to be a part of it.”

But strip away the event logistics, and what remains is a story that is refreshing in its honesty, no forced chemistry. Just two people who built a friendship, discovered something deeper, and chose each other.

Their relationship, like their story, balances faith and fun. They pray together, yes. But they also enjoy movie nights and argue about who will take out the bin. Their most memorable date? “The day he asked me out. Total heart-melter,” she says. “It still gives me butterflies.”

Their favourite meal? Amala and abula from AmalaPlace. Most unforgettable trip? A visit to Wales in the United Kingdom. Their dream honeymoon? Somewhere in East Africa. Tanzania. Kenya. Safari by day, stargazing by night.

These lovebirds are aligned on the big things (values, goals, family vision). But they also embrace the everyday quirks. “I am still trying to get him to dance,” Omotola laughs. “And he is still pretending he cannot. I am not giving up.”

Their story is rooted in faith but lived out in real moments. And in today’s present world where relationships are often filtered, choreographed, and rushed, theirs simply shows that there is still beauty in moving slowly, in asking the right questions, and in waiting for the right answers.

The wedding is days away, and this friendship that evolved into love has submitted to purpose.

It is so intentional.



IDENTITY MYTHS AND STORYTELLING AS KEYS TO BUILDING ICONIC BRANDS

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Many companies aspire to build brands that eventually get etched in the culture of the society and become cultural icons, but very few are able to achieve iconic status. Iconicity does not happen by chance, but rather has to be carefully planned and executed.

Identity myths and storytelling are keys to building iconic brands, but stories cannot substitute for great products and services.

The strongest brands are first rooted in product and service performance. In all categories, a minimum standard of quality is necessary to even compete. Second, these quality products and services are differentiated in a way that can help defend their market positions – often with innovation as an integrated component of their company culture. Third, they have all been running profitable and very well-driven operations that allow them to stick to a long-term plan, and not deviate when times get tough. This final dimension is a strong emotional connection.

A look at some of the most iconic brands in history such as Coca-Cola, Harley Davidson, Giorgio Armani, Apple, Chanel, IBM, L’Oreal, Louis Vuitton, Sony, Toyota, and Singapore Airlines reveals some very common characteristics. All these brands have been able to build, and sustain strong emotional bonds with their customers and stakeholders that are far greater than their strengths in quality management, innovation and operations could achieve on their own. These brands have created an enduring mythology about themselves. They have mastered the art of storytelling and passed the responsibility of sharing that story to their brand communities who do it for them. For any brand to attain iconic status, it has to create an identity myth.

Create an identity myth

Brands that resonate and show direction to the masses through brand stories and brand activities become inscribed in our culture. As such, to attract customers and make them actively participate in varied branding activities, brands should have a strong story that customers can easily identify and relate to. Such a story would not only provide authenticity to the brand, but allow customers to express their own unique sense of self, through their purchase or association.

Great brand stories that resonate with consumers and touch their lives in some way can be defined by a single word such as freedom (Harley-Davidson), power (BMW), design (Apple), elegance (Dior), imagination (Lego), audacity (Virgin), beauty (Estee Lauder) or safety (Volvo). These brand stories offer consumers a good reason to elevate the brand beyond a mere utilitarian role in the market. While logic opens the mind, emotions open the wallet.

Weave powerful brand stories

A compelling brand story begins with the brand’s purpose. To build an iconic brand, a company’s purpose must be a clear transcendent idea. A company’s first priority should be a clear point of view on what an organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage should be about. There is no competitive advantage in doing what others have done before.

Assuming a company gets its vision and mission right, how does it become a story? The answer: People. Like any traditional story, characters and heroes must interact with their setting, in pursuit of

a big idea or challenge that drives the plot. It is with people that a brand's story must begin. The brand perception, after all, is created out of thousands of experiences with products, services and systems created by people. Great storytelling outside the company starts with inspiring storytelling internally.

Rarely can a brand's mythology be arbitrarily imposed on employees by marketers. Instead, it should come from meaningful stories from the brand's history that make it authentic. It should begin with honest, sincere stories people tell within the organisation.

Brands must carefully nurture the culture that perpetuates its brand story. Rewards, process, strategy and structure must effectively support culture. Employees must understand the company's mission, vision, values and brand promise. They need to know in detail, who the target customers are, what they expect, their needs, desires and, most importantly, how their own role in the organisation contributes to delivering the differentiated customer experiences that are so sought after today.

Involve multiple story tellers

The message itself is the start, but you cannot forget about the messengers. It is no coincidence that some brands get more word of mouth than others. Dissemination of the brand story is critical for an iconic brand. You can have a great product or service, but without people to perpetuate the mythology on their own, the effectiveness of marketing activities will plateau. The four major authors of brand stories are companies, culture industries, intermediaries and customers. Each of these authors facilitates the brand to blend into the fabric of society.

Build strong brand communities

The objective and most important result of developing an iconic brand is not just the sharing, but the growth and strength of brand communities. A brand community is a group of loyal brand customers who are bound together by their loyalty for the brand and what it offers them. They are largely imagined communities that represent a form of human association within a consumption context. Such a group is different from other consumer groups in that a brand community shares not only loyalty towards the brand, but shared rituals and a sense of moral responsibility to one another, to improve their experience.

Last line

When people believe a brand is worth buying for reason far greater than its product, price, place or promotion, but because of a transcendent narrative that resonates with a consumer's core values, businesses have the foundational element of an iconic brand. Companies whose brands eventually become woven into the cultural fabric of society, and become enduring cultural icons, have mastered the art of storytelling and nurture communities who perpetuate and contribute to their tale.



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

ART ON THE MOVE: THE IMPACT OF AFRICAN MIGRATION ON VISUAL CULTURE



Migration doesn't just move people—it moves stories, dreams, and creativity. Ever wondered how African artists adapt their work after leaving their home countries? Or how their journeys shape what they create? Today, African migration is more than a statistic. It is a force reshaping global art scenes, gallery walls, and even city streets.

From Lagos to London, Johannesburg to Berlin, African artists are using their journeys as inspiration. Whether fleeing conflict or chasing opportunity, they carry memories that come alive through paint, metal, fabric, and film. Their art becomes a voice—sometimes loud, sometimes quiet—but always powerful.

In this digest, we will explore five key ways African migration shapes visual culture. We take a closer look at how these movements create meaning and stir conversation.

1. Diasporic Narratives in Visual Art

More recently, exhibitions like Afro-Atlantic Histories expand on this legacy. They connect African migrations with Caribbean and Latin American visual traditions. Featuring artists from over 24 countries, the exhibit proves that art tells the shared stories of oceans crossed, lands left behind, and identities reimagined.

Migration has long been central to African diasporic art. Jacob Lawrence's iconic Migration Series tells the story of the Black movement in America. Using flat shapes and bold colours, he chronicled African Americans' journey from the South to Northern cities.

This digest is brought to you by Patrons MCAA. Think African art, think Patrons. Patrons is Africa's leading art advisory and dealership firm with deep expertise in African art, helping private and corporate art collectors diversify their wealth through art collection, appraisal, packaging & transportation, storage, insurance, maintenance, and restoration. Purchase or general inquiry? Reach out: art@patronsmcaa.com.



Jacob Lawrence – The Migration Series, Panel No. 1

2. Migration as Muse: Contemporary Artists Leading the Way

Today's African artists often use personal and political migration stories in their work. Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui transforms found objects—like bottle caps—into massive tapestries. His works comment on waste, trade, displacement, and the movement of goods and people. Similarly, Nigerian artist Fatimah Tuggar fuses tech with traditional African craft. Her Fai-Fain Gramophone reimagines colonial sound tools with indigenous materials. She blurs the lines between African pasts and global futures.



El Anatsui's bottle-cap installation, "Behind the Red Moon"

3. Trans-African Collectives Driving Cross-Border Collaboration

Migration is not always one-way. Sometimes, it is a loop—a constant movement across nations. The Lagos-based Invisible Borders collective captures this dynamic beautifully. Their Trans-African road trips bring photographers together to document everyday life across borders.

These journeys produce photos, essays, and exhibitions that reframe how African nations connect. Their work has been shown at the Venice Biennale and Centre Pompidou, proving African migration is more than geography—it is a creative engine.

4. Art as Resistance and Visual Activism

Migration is not always welcome. That's why many artists use their work to resist stereotypes and spotlight injustice. The exhibition *A Movement in Every Direction* explores the

emotional legacy of the Great Migration. Twelve Black artists examine family, home, and history through personal and political lenses.

These works foster dialogue and empathy. They highlight what statistics miss—the personal weight of leaving.

5. Global Influence: How African Artists Shape the World

As African artists migrate, they bring their voices into new spaces. They influence global aesthetics through street murals, digital art, and installations. The *Stories of Migration* project in London uses comics and animation to give migrants from the global south a platform. It's a vivid, visual reminder that migration is not just movement—it is storytelling. Their presence challenges colonial histories and offers fresh perspectives in Western institutions.

African migration continues to shape visual culture in bold and beautiful ways. Artists use movement as a lens to explore identity, challenge narratives, and build bridges. Whether through storytelling, collaboration, or activism, their works travel further than borders ever could.

Art is on the move—and with it, is the spirit of Africa.



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

THE PROMISE

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

Doris and Mina were sisters bound by love, not circumstances. Orphaned at a young age, they grew up in different relatives' homes. Most of the time, they were separated. But each time Mina fell sick, she would only calm down when Doris was with her. Their bond was unexplainable— deep, pure and irreplaceable.

Life took a turn when Doris was married off by an uncle who used her to pay a debt. He owed a man and had no money, so he gave Doris as compensation. Though she didn't love the man, Doris saw it as a chance to finally bring Mina to live with her. She thought it was her escape from the constant shuffling between relatives.

Sadly, she was wrong. Her new husband, Donald, was just like her uncle. He believed a woman's worth ended in the kitchen, the bedroom and the delivery room. She was expected to cook, clean and most importantly bear him sons. Doris tried to please him, but after having two daughters, he became cruel and resentful. What made things worse was the fact that he already had four daughters from his previous marriage. Still, he blamed Doris for not giving him a son.

It got worse when Donald began to make inappropriate advances toward Mina, who was still a teenager at the time. Mina knew better than to stay and let him molest her. So, one morning, she packed the little she had and left. She had nowhere to go, but she'd rather be homeless than let her sister's husband violate her.

Before she left, Mina made a promise to Doris. She told her she would come back for her. Doris held her hand, crying and begged her sister to never forget her.

"Promise me you'll come back for me," Doris said. Mina replied, "Promise me you'll wait for me to come and get you."

That day, they both cried. It was painful to part but they believed in each other.

Mina started a hard life on her own. She did menial jobs to survive... cleaned shops, washed clothes, served food — anything that paid. In the evenings, she attended classes to improve her education. Many times, she was tempted to give up and take the easy way out. People around her joined

the streets and made fast money but Mina was determined. She wanted to become a successful woman — the kind of woman her sister would be proud of.

Eventually, she earned a national diploma from a polytechnic but she couldn't afford to continue. So she decided to learn tailoring. That was the turning point. She discovered her talent and passion for fashion. She poured her pain into her designs and slowly her work began to attract attention. Mina's couture brand became a household name. Celebrities, politicians' wives and society elites all wore her clothes. She had built a life she once only dreamed of. But something was missing — her sister.

She hadn't seen Doris in years. The last time they saw each other, neither of them owned a phone. After Mina left, Doris and her husband moved away without leaving any trace. Mina tried everything. She hired people to search for Doris, visited old neighborhoods but nothing worked.

Then, one unexpected day, a man walked into her boutique with his wife. He used to be friends with Donald, Doris' husband. He mentioned where they lived and Mina's heart skipped. She didn't wait. She packed bags full of clothes, food, toys and gifts for her sister and her children.

Mina could barely sleep that night. She pictured their reunion over and over. But when she arrived at Doris' house, Donald refused to let her in. He collected the gifts but wouldn't allow her see her sister. Mina felt broken but she didn't stop trying. She went to the house repeatedly but Donald always blocked her. One day, she managed to slip her phone number to one of the children.

Each visit hurt more than the last. The children looked malnourished, tired and pale. Mina feared the worst.

Then came the call. Doris' eldest daughter called to say their mother had died during childbirth — baby number seven, another girl. Donald had pressured Doris into having more children all in pursuit of a male child. That pressure had cost her life.

Mina was devastated. She had kept her part of the promise — she came back — but Doris couldn't keep hers. She didn't wait.

Mina made a decision. Donald was not going to raise those children. She reached out to some of her powerful clients, many of whom were women with influence. When Doris' eldest daughter confirmed that Donald had also been touching her inappropriately, it became clear: those children needed saving.

With the right legal and emotional support, Mina was granted full custody of all seven children. She moved them into her home and made it her mission to give them the life Doris always wanted for them.

Mina became their mother, their protector and their biggest cheerleader. She never stopped mourning her sister, but she found peace in knowing that Doris' children were safe, loved and thriving.

She had promised to come back — and she did.



Udy Osaro-Edobor

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A Journalist's Battle in Fiction -A Review of Olatunji
Olofade's Of gods and their claytoys

Title: Of gods and their claytoys
Author: Olatunji Olofade
Year of Publication: 2025
Number of Pages: 326
Category: Fiction

OF GODS AND THEIR CLAYTOYS

TITILADE OYEMADE

The moment you start reading *Of Gods and Their Claytoys*, it pulls you in and refuses to let go. Fast, urgent, and electric, it demands your full attention. Olatunji Ololade, a seasoned journalist with ink in his veins, writes like a man who's seen too much and is finally ready to spill. There's no warm-up here; he throws you straight into the fire.

And yet, for a book so alive, the cover doesn't quite match the heat within. It's the kind you might overlook on a shelf until you open it. Then it grips you tight.

Spanning decades and cities, Abeokuta, Lagos, Enugu. The story moves like a film, shifting between past and present with seamless flow. The descriptions are vivid sometimes almost too vivid. Ololade crafts his scenes with such care and force that you may feel swept up in it all. But if you stick with it, you'll find that every subplot, every side story, eventually connects to something important.

At the center is Remi, the relentless investigative journalist who could either be your hero or your headache. He's bold and impossible to ignore. He digs too deep, questions too much, and doesn't know when to quit. One moment you admire his fire, the next you're frustrated by his recklessness. But you're hooked either way. As the tension mounts, so does your anxiety: will he make it out alive? Will he ever stop pushing?

Remi swaggers through the pages with charm and confidence, but Ololade gradually reveals his depth. Beneath the surface lies pain, fear, and a past that never quite let go. As the plot deepens, you begin to understand what fuels him. Ololade skillfully connects personal trauma to public choices, offering insight into how pain can birth purpose.

The storytelling is unpredictable. At times, it reads like a memoir; at others, like a gripping novel. The switches might unsettle some readers but to others, they'll feel refreshing.

And then there's Ololade's take on the industry. Journalists will either laugh knowingly or shift uncomfortably in their seats because he doesn't hold back. He lays bare the profession with honesty and if you know the terrain, you'll know he's not exaggerating.

The cast is large, yet memorable. You'll marvel at how the author keeps track of them all and somehow, so do you. These characters don't just fill space; they enrich it. Their voices and distinct traits bring flavour to the story.

And the humour! Ololade's wit is sharp and effortless. From a character who "eats like a newly released convict" to a slum princess, the jokes land without feeling forced. The laughter offers welcome relief from the chaos and there is plenty of chaos.

Love? It's in there, but not the tidy, storybook kind. The main character drifts in and out of it, never quite sure if it's love, desire, loneliness, or something in between. It's the kind that can't be defined. Complicated, sometimes frustrating, the kind that makes characters feel painfully real.

And yes, betrayal waits around every corner. The book doesn't shy away from the dark: trauma, secrets, rejection, corruption, politics, greed. It's all there.

By the end, you're a little breathless, maybe a little overwhelmed but also strangely hopeful. Remi may be reckless, but his pursuit of truth feels pure. You see his scars, understand his fire, and root for his cause. When you finally close the book, it's with a sigh of satisfaction, admiration, and deep empathy.

Of Gods and Their Claytoys is chaotic and deeply honest.



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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

TO KILL A MONKEY (2025)

For all the fans of Kemi Adetiba, if you enjoyed "King of boys" from a few years back, then this might be worth your while, for me I totally enjoyed this movie as the story was so deep and it was worth my while. Have you ever had problems in life, to the extent that it looked like "you were hated by God" it looked so bad Efe's colleagues told him he had bad luck. In Nigeria we will say "problem no dey finish" meaning problem never end, the problems for Efe never came to an end, in the desperation to provide and protect his family Efe decided to partner with the most wanted criminal and to put his clean hands into very dirty deals, so, just at the point when they were beginning to enjoy the fruits of their evil labor, a huge disaster struck and that almost brought down the entire business and empire, well go check out this movie to see how it all went down all because of greed. The 8 Episodes drama, Nollywood, crime, thriller movie was directed by Kemi Adetiba she featured fantastic A list actors like William Benson, Bucci Franklin, Bimbo Akintola, Stella Damascus, Chidi Mokeme, Sunshine Rosman, Iretiola Akintola, Lilian Afegbai, Teniola Aladese, Micheal Ejoor and many more.



BRICK (2025)

If the movie maze runner of a few years back was your kind of movie, then this new movie will be worth your while, maybe not my kind of movie, but it was okay, when we finally got to the end, I was even more confused than when I started, I guess that was the concept. Tim and Olivia lived together and after the loss of their new born baby, the couple just couldn't talk about it or get past it and this put a toll on their relationship, one night Olivia decides that she wants them to relocate to Paris resign their jobs and travel, but Tim wasn't ready for that. The next day when Olivia wakes up and decides to leave, she discovers that the entire apartment has been surrounded by a mysterious brick wall and there was no way out, she was extremely furious as she was tired of the relationship. Well, you will need to go check out the movie to discover how they had to work with other tenants to find a way out of the building. The 99m drama, mystery, Sci-Fi thriller movie was directed by Philip Koch, they featured actors like Matthias Schweighfer, Ruby O. Fee, Fredrick Lau, Salber Lee Williams, Murathan Muslu, Sira-Anna Feel, Axel Wermer, Alexander Beyer etc.



ZIAM (2025)

If you can handle a lot of blood, fighting and killing from start to finish, then you are at the right stop. The excitement started from the very word go in this brand new Thailand horror movie, Vasu went for a delivery and by the time he got home his girlfriend had to leave for work as she worked as a doctor in a very big hospital, but on that faithful day a virus struck and got out of hand very quickly, to contain the virus, the government had to seal the hospital down completely to manage the situation. For everyone that made it out, they were shut down to stop the virus from spreading.

Well, you will need to go checkout this horror movie to discover how Vasu made it in and how he fought all the evil men just to save his beloved girlfriend, I must say he was indeed a brave man. The 95m zombie, horror, action, Sci-Fi, Thriller movie was directed by Kulp Kaijareuk they featured actors like Johnny Anfone, Nuttanicha Dundwattan Wanich, Mark Prin Suparat, Vayla Wanwayla, Pim Pimmada, Jason young, Suphachal Saenphong, Yok Sinimart and many more.



LINDA OCHUGBUA

WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Giving help to those who require it is not wasteful. It only registers you on a platform for continuous flow

.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Always remember that the world do not care about how long you have been sorrowful or have suffered, they are eagerly waiting for you to rise at the scent of water as God promised. Rise!

.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Don't live in frustration and sorrow rather turn it to an energy for greatness and intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Slowing down, reflecting on your life journey and taking action to improve is part of the benefits of writing the vision down.

.....WhispersbyTEN